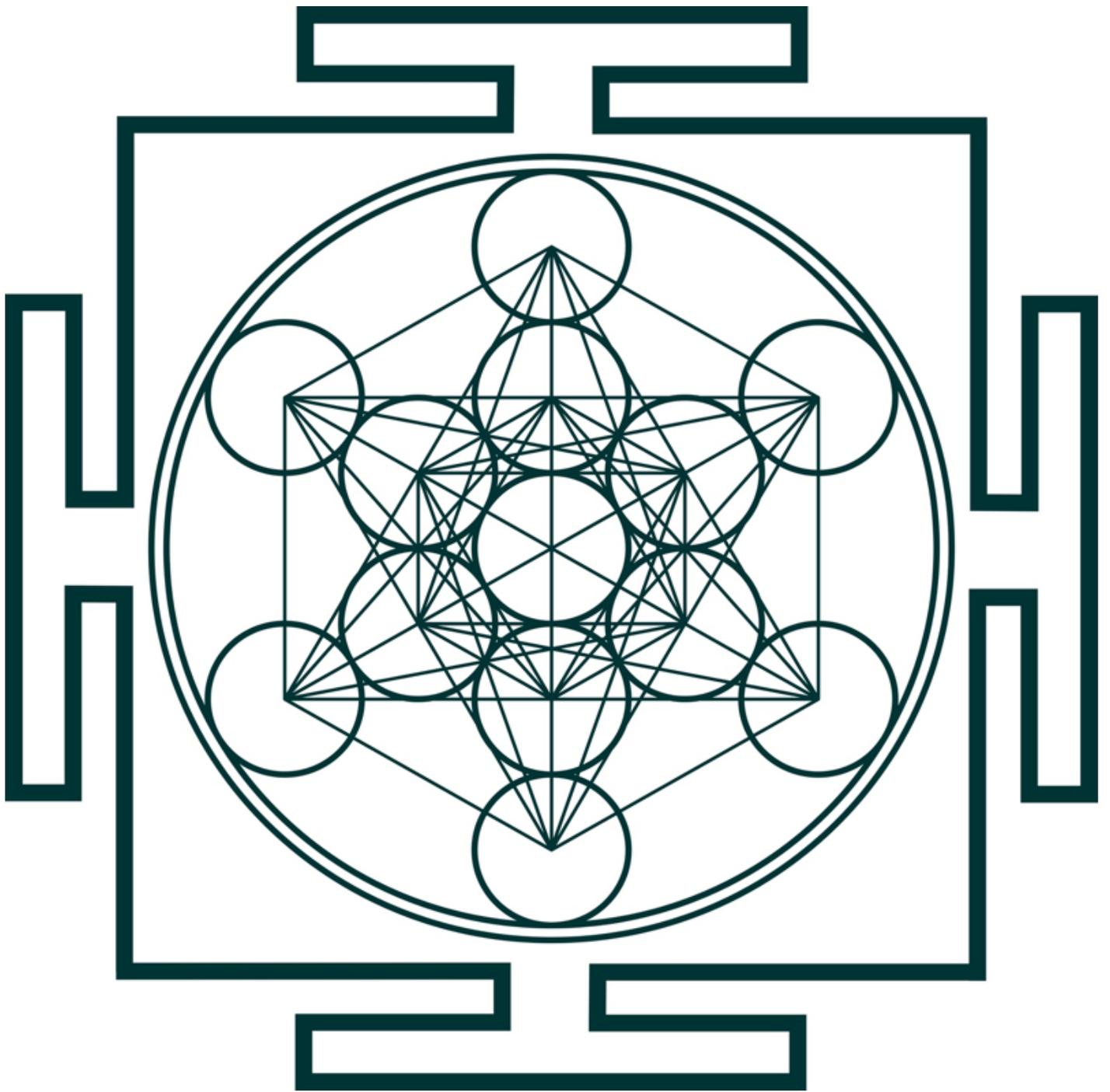


THE FOUR GREAT DEEDS OF THE BUDDHA:
NEW CHRIST REVELATION



MAITREYA CHRISTOS

THE FOUR GREAT DEEDS OF THE BUDDHA

A summary and commentary on The Transcendent Perfection of
Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, by Maitreya Christos



INTRODUCTION

The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom is the mother of all the buddhas, and is so considered by all the buddhas. There are varying lengths of the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom, known as the ‘six mothers’, which are longer and shorter versions of the same sūtra, styled deliberately by the buddhas to be of varying lengths. *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines* is a moderate length version, and is thus for some readers, not too long, but not too short. This work, titled ‘The Four Great Deeds of the Buddha: A summary and commentary on The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, by Maitreya Christos’ includes the original transcript of The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, translated by the Padmakara Translation Group under the patronage and supervision of 84000. Where appropriate, a few minor errors in spelling and grammar have been corrected. As the Buddha seeks truth-seekers, so does the inspired scribe of this summary and commentary of The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, seek the truth. It is for this reason the scribe, Maitreya Christos, has conversed directly with the Buddha and with Jesus Christ, refusing to be bound by accepted norms of what is considered appropriate or non-appropriate interpretation of the sacred doctrine. Thus does the summary of The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines by Maitreya Christos include a “fleshing out” of the intended meaning of the sacred doctrine, with additional words demarcated in { } brackets. And thus does the commentary of The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines by Maitreya Christos include a far more greatly inspired rendition relating to each of the thirty-three chapters. This introduction will be made as brief as can be, for we have such a great task at hand to awaken the world to the reality of the Buddha’s four great deeds, which while included in The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, and labeled as such as the “four great deeds,” have not been properly investigated and understood. This exposition of the Buddha’s four great deeds of (1) genuinely perfect buddhahood, (2) the nature of the tathāgata, (3) self-origination, and (4) omniscience, has been divinely inspired; and so, for this reason, it will depart from the ‘accepted norms’ of many of the schools of Buddhist thought. We hope and pray that you too will be a seeker of truth, a seeker of the Dharma, for Dharma means ‘truth’, and go well beyond the accepted norms and run with the wind of the wisdom buddhas. We pay homage to the buddhas of the ten directions, who are born of this mother, the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom. We pay homage to Vajradhara, the diamond-holder, who holds the diamond of creation in the palm of His hand. We pay homage to Vajrasattva, who is the manifestation of Vajradhara, as the ‘immaculate conception’ or ‘perfected ideal’ of each and everyone. And we pay homage to the Transcendent

Perfection of Wisdom and to the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, leading each and every sentient being to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

CHAPTER ONE: THE CONTEXT

1.1 Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus have I heard on a certain occasion. The Blessed One was residing at Vulture Peak near Rājagrha with a large monastic gathering comprising many thousands of fully ordained monks. All of them were arhats who had attained the cessation of contaminants and were without afflicted mental states, fully controlled, their minds thoroughly liberated, their wisdom well liberated, thoroughbreds, mighty nāgas, their tasks accomplished, their work completed, their burdens relinquished, their own objectives already fulfilled, the fetters binding them to the rebirth process completely severed, their minds thoroughly liberated by means of genuine understanding, having perfected the highest of all mental faculties, with the exception of one person—Senior Ānanda, a disciple who had merely entered the stream.

1.3 Also present were some five hundred fully ordained nuns, laymen, and laywomen, all of whom had seen the truth. There were many thousands of great bodhisattva beings, all of whom had mastered the mnemonic retentions and attained the meditative stabilities, and were abiding in emptiness, their perceptual range being one of signlessness, their aspirations free from scrutiny, their tolerance endowed with equanimity, and their inspiration unimpeded. Indeed they all had the five extrasensory powers and captivating speech. Their ethical conduct was without artificiality and they had no thoughts of ulterior profit, acquisition, or fame.

1.4 They could teach the sacred doctrine, free from worldliness. They had perfected their acceptance of the profound nature of phenomena; they had acquired assurance and completely gone beyond demonic activities. Liberated from all obscurations associated with past actions, they had accumulated merits by teaching the sacred doctrine, extensively accumulating their aspirations over countless eons. Their speech was honest with a smiling demeanor, their countenances without frowns of anger. They possessed the assurance that overwhelms endless assemblies. They were skilled in their emancipation from cyclic existence, as they had demonstrated for many tens of millions of eons.

1.5 They regarded phenomena as a magical display, a mirage, a dream, the moon reflected in water, an optical aberration, empty space, an echo, a castle in the sky, or a phantom, and they were endowed with immeasurable assurance. They were skilled in comprehending the mental attitudes and interests of all sentient beings, and the knowledge that engages in subtlety. They possessed a mind with great tolerance and without animosity for any sentient being. They were skilled in definitively introducing the nature of reality. They had acquired an aspiration to be reborn in the infinite buddhafiels. At all times they uninterruptedly actualized the meditative stability that recollects the buddhas of countless world systems. They were well-versed in questioning the innumerable buddhas, and skillful in rejecting afflicted mental states motivated by diverse mistaken views. They were all bodhisattvas who knew how to actualize one hundred thousand emanational displays by means of their meditative stability.

1.6 Among them were the following: the great being Bhadrāpāla, along with Ratnākara, Sārthavāha, Naradatta, Grahadatta, Varuṇadatta, Indradatta, Uttaramati, Viśeṣamati, Vardhamānamati, Amoghadarśin, Susaṃprasthita, Suvikrāntavikrāmin, Nityodyukta, Anikṣiptadhura, Sūryagarbha, Candragarbha, Anupamacintin, Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, Ratnamudrāhasta, the bodhisattva Nityokṣiptahasta and the great bodhisattva being Maitreya, heading many thousands of accompanying bodhisattvas, all of whom were youthful in appearance.

1.7 At that time, the Blessed One outshone Śakra, Brahmā, and all the worldly protectors. Then, in the presence of these four assemblies, he demonstrated multiple miraculous forms, vivid, brilliant and distinct, which were emanated through his magical abilities. Also, from all the pores of his body, an effulgence of light rays shone forth—many hundreds of billion trillions in number.

1.8 Thereupon, Senior Śāradvatīputra, who was present within the assembly, observed those miraculous forms emanated through the miraculous abilities of the Tathāgata. He was delighted. He rejoiced. His extreme joy gave rise to such delight and contentment that, rising from his seat, with his upper robe over one shoulder, he rested his right knee on the ground and placed his hands together in the gesture of homage, facing in the direction of Blessed One, while asking the Blessed One as follows: “If I might be permitted to request the Venerable Lord to pronounce on them, may I put certain questions to the Venerable Lord?” The Blessed One then replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra, “Śāradvatīputra, since you always have had opportunities to question the Tathāgata, you may ask whatever you wish, and you should be satisfied with the answers to your questions.”

1.9 Senior Śāradvatīputra then asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, with regard to that which is called the transcendent perfection of wisdom, Venerable Lord, what exactly is the transcendent perfection of wisdom of the bodhisattvas? By perfecting what sacred doctrine do bodhisattvas perfect the transcendent perfection of wisdom and swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?” Thereupon, the Blessed One inspired Senior Śāradvatīputra with the words, “Excellent, Śāradvatīputra! Excellent! Excellent! Through the blessings of the Tathāgata you have made a splendid request. You have had an excellent idea! To that end, you should listen carefully, keep my words in mind, and I shall teach the transcendent perfection of wisdom.” “Venerable Lord, so be it!” he replied.

1.10 So it was that Senior Śāradvatīputra listened to the Blessed One, and the Lord replied, “Śāradvatīputra, that which is called the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the absence of fixation with respect to all things. Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas who are without fixation perfect the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and will indeed swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

1.11 Then he asked, “Venerable Lord, what are all those things on which great bodhisattva beings should not be fixated?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, the expression ‘all things’ denotes the following: the five psycho-physical aggregates, the twelve sense fields, the eighteen sensory elements, the four noble truths, the twelve links of dependent origination, the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the emptiness that is a gateway to liberation, the signlessness that is a gateway to liberation, the aspirationlessness

that is a gateway to liberation, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless meditative absorptions, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, the nine contemplations of impurity, the ten recollections, the six aspects of perception, the knowledge of phenomena, the subsequent knowledge, the knowledge of other minds, the knowledge of relative appearances, the knowledge of suffering, the knowledge of the origin of suffering, the knowledge of the cessation of suffering, the knowledge of the path, the knowledge of the extinction of contaminants, the knowledge that contaminants will not be regenerated, the knowledge that is definitive, and similarly, the meditative stability endowed with ideation and scrutiny, the meditative stability free from ideation and merely endowed with scrutiny, the meditative stability free from both ideation and scrutiny, the faculties that will enable knowledge of all that is unknown, the faculties that acquire the knowledge of all things, the faculties endowed with the knowledge of all things, the eight sense fields of mastery, the ten sense fields of total consummation, the eighteen aspects of emptiness, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and likewise, the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, the understanding of omniscience, the six transcendent perfections, the five extrasensory powers, the five eyes, the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, and the eighty excellent minor marks. All these are the things on which great bodhisattva beings should not be fixated. One who is without fixation perfects the transcendent perfection of wisdom and will also swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

1.12 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, what are the ‘five psycho-physical aggregates’ and likewise [those other phenomena], up to and including the ‘twelve links of dependent origination’? What are the ‘four applications of mindfulness’, and likewise [those other causal attributes] up to and including the ‘noble eightfold path’? What is the ‘emptiness that is a gateway to liberation,’ and likewise [those other attainments], up to and including ‘omniscience’? What are the ‘six transcendent perfections,’ and likewise [those other fruitional attributes], up to and including the ‘eighty minor marks’?”

1.13 Thereupon, the Blessed One addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘five psycho-physical aggregates’ comprise (1) physical forms, (2) feelings, (3) perceptions, (4) formative predispositions, and (5) consciousness.

1.14 “If you ask what are the ‘twelve sense fields,’ they comprise six that are inner and six that are outer. These are called the twelve sense fields. Among them, if you ask what are the ‘six inner sense fields,’ they comprise (1) the sense field of the eyes, (2) the sense field of the ears, (3) the sense field of the nose, (4) the sense field of the tongue, (5) the sense field of the body, and (6) the sense field of the mental faculty. These are called the six inner sense fields.

1.15 “Then, if you ask what are the ‘six outer sense fields,’ they comprise (7) the sense field of sights, (8) the sense field of sounds, (9) the sense field of odors, (10) the sense field of tastes, (11) the sense field of tangibles, and (12) the sense field of mental phenomena. These are called the six outer sense fields.

1.16 “If you ask what are the ‘eighteen sensory elements,’ they comprise (1) the sensory element of the eyes, (2) the sensory element of sights, and (3) the sensory element of visual consciousness; (4) the sensory element of the ears, (5) the sensory element of sounds, and (6) the sensory element of auditory consciousness; (7) the sensory element of the nose, (8) the sensory element of odors, and (9) the sensory element of olfactory consciousness; (10) the sensory element of the tongue, (11) the sensory element of tastes, and (12) the sensory element of gustatory consciousness; (13) the sensory element of the body, (14) the sensory element of tangibles, and (15) the sensory element of tactile consciousness; and (16) the sensory element of the mental faculty, (17) the sensory element of mental phenomena, and (18) the sensory element of mental consciousness. These are called the eighteen sensory elements.

1.17 “If you ask what are the ‘four noble truths,’ they comprise (1) the noble truth of suffering, (2) the noble truth of the origin of suffering, (3) the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, and (4) the noble truth of the path. These are called the four noble truths.

1.18 “If you ask what are the ‘twelve links of dependent origination,’ they comprise (1) fundamental ignorance, contingent on which (2) formative predispositions arise; (3) consciousness, which arises contingent on formative predispositions; (4) name and form, which arise contingent on consciousness; (5) the six sense fields, which arise contingent on name and form; (6) sensory contact, which arises contingent on the six sense fields; (7) sensation, which arises contingent on sensory contact; (8) craving, which arises contingent on sensation; (9) grasping, which arises contingent on craving; (10) the rebirth process, which arises contingent on grasping; (11) actual birth, which arises contingent on the rebirth process; and (12) aging and death, along with sorrow, lamentation, suffering, mental discomfort, and agitation, which all arise contingent on actual birth. It is in this way that these great corporeal aggregates, exclusively endowed with suffering, arise.

1.19 “Conversely, through the cessation of fundamental ignorance, formative predispositions cease. Through the cessation of formative predispositions, consciousness ceases. Through the cessation of consciousness, name and form cease. Through the cessation of name and form, the six sense fields cease. Through the cessation of the six sense fields, sensory contact ceases. Through the cessation of sensory contact, sensation ceases. Through the cessation of sensation, craving ceases. Through the cessation of craving, grasping ceases. Through the cessation of grasping, the rebirth process ceases. Through the cessation of the rebirth process, actual birth ceases. Through the cessation of actual birth, aging and death cease; and through the cessation of aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, mental discomfort, and agitation all cease. It is in this way that these corporeal aggregates, exclusively endowed with suffering, cease. “These two processes are respectively said to follow and reverse the sequence in which the twelve links of dependent origination arise.

1.20 “If you ask what are the ‘four applications of mindfulness,’ they comprise (1) the application of mindfulness which, with regard to the physical body, observes the physical body; (2) the application of mindfulness which, with regard to feelings, observes feelings; (3) the application of mindfulness which, with regard to the mind, observes the mind; and (4) the application of mindfulness which, with regard to phenomena, observes phenomena. These are called the four applications of mindfulness.

1.21 “If you ask what are the ‘four correct exertions,’ (1) great bodhisattva beings resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that negative and non-virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might not be developed; (2) they resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that negative and non-virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might be renounced; (3) they resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might be developed; and (4) they resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might remain, be unforgotten, flourish, and reach complete perfection in the future, through cultivation. These are called the four correct exertions.

1.22 “If you ask what are the ‘four supports for miraculous abilities,’ they comprise (1) the support for miraculous ability combining the meditative stability of resolution with the formative force of exertion, (2) the support for miraculous ability combining the meditative stability of perseverance with the formative force of exertion, (3) the support for miraculous ability combining the meditative stability of mind with the formative force of exertion, and (4) the support for miraculous ability combining the meditative stability of scrutiny with the formative force of exertion. These are called the four supports for miraculous ability.

1.23 “If you ask what are the ‘five faculties,’ they comprise (1) the faculty of faith, (2) the faculty of perseverance, (3) the faculty of recollection, (4) the faculty of meditative stability, and (5) the faculty of wisdom. These are called the five faculties.

1.24 “If you ask what are the ‘five powers,’ they similarly comprise (1) the power of faith, (2) the power of perseverance, (3) the power of recollection, (4) the power of meditative stability, and (5) the power of wisdom. These are called the five powers.

1.25 “If you ask what are the ‘seven branches of enlightenment,’ they comprise (1) the branch of enlightenment that entails correct recollection, (2) the branch of enlightenment that entails correct doctrinal analysis, (3) the branch of enlightenment that entails correct perseverance, (4) the branch of enlightenment that entails correct delight, (5) the branch of enlightenment that entails correct mental and physical refinement, (6) the branch of enlightenment that entails correct meditative stability, and (7) the branch of enlightenment that entails correct equanimity. These are called the seven branches of enlightenment.

1.26 “If you ask what is the ‘noble eightfold path,’ it comprises (1) correct view, (2) correct ideation, (3) correct speech, (4) correct action, (5) correct livelihood, (6) correct effort, (7) correct recollection, and (8) correct meditative stability. These are the branches of the noble eightfold path.

1.27 “If you ask what is ‘emptiness as a gateway to liberation,’ the state of mind which discerns that all things are empty of their own defining characteristics is emptiness as a gateway to liberation. This is called emptiness as a gateway to liberation.

1.28 “If you ask what is ‘signlessness as a gateway to liberation,’ the state of mind which discerns in all respects

that all things are signless in terms of their own defining characteristics is signlessness as a gateway to liberation. This is called signlessness as a gateway to liberation.

1.29 “If you ask what is ‘aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation,’ the state of mind in which all things are not formed, and there is nothing to be formed, is aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation. This is called aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation.

1.30 “If you ask what are the ‘four meditative concentrations,’ they are as follows: (1) Bodhisattvas achieve and maintain the first meditative concentration where there is freedom from desires, and freedom from negative and non-virtuous attributes, while ideation and scrutiny are present, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from freedom. (2) They achieve and maintain the second meditative concentration where there is an intense inner clarity, free from both ideation and scrutiny, the absence of ideation and scrutiny being due to one-pointed mental focus, while the joy and bliss that arise from meditative stability are present. (3) They achieve and maintain the third meditative concentration where joy is absent, abiding in equanimity due to the absence of attachment to joy, while both mindfulness and alertness are present and bliss is experienced by the body. This is what sublime beings describe as ‘mindful, blissful, abiding in bliss, and equanimous.’ (4) They achieve and maintain the fourth meditative concentration where even that sense of bliss is abandoned and former states of suffering have also been eliminated. Here, neither suffering nor bliss is present because blissful and unhappy states of mind have both subsided, while equanimity and mindfulness are utterly pure. These are called the four meditative concentrations.

1.31 “If you ask what are the ‘four immeasurable aspirations,’ they comprise (1) loving kindness, (2) compassion, (3) empathetic joy, and (4) equanimity. These are called the four immeasurable aspirations.

1.32 “If you ask what are the ‘four formless meditative absorptions,’ they comprise (1) the meditative absorption of the sense field of infinite space, (2) the meditative absorption of the sense field of infinite consciousness, (3) the meditative absorption of the sense field of nothing-at-all, and (4) the meditative absorption of neither perception nor non-perception. These are called the four formless meditative absorptions.

1.33 “If you ask what constitute the ‘eight aspects of liberation,’ they are as follows: (1) The first aspect of liberation ensues when corporeal beings observe physical forms [in order to compose the mind]. (2) The second aspect of liberation ensues when formless beings endowed with internal perception observe external physical forms. (3) The third aspect of liberation ensues when beings are inclined toward pleasant states. (4) The fourth aspect of liberation ensues when the perceptions of physical forms have been completely transcended in all respects, when the perceptions of obstructed phenomena have subsided, and the mind does not engage with diverse perceptions, so that one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite space, thinking, ‘Space is infinite.’ (5) The fifth aspect of liberation ensues when the sense field of infinite space has been completely transcended in all respects, and when one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite consciousness, thinking, ‘Consciousness is infinite.’ (6) The sixth aspect of liberation ensues when the sense field of infinite consciousness has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the sense field of nothing-at-all, thinking, ‘There is nothing at all.’ (7) The seventh aspect of liberation ensues when the sense field of nothing-at-all has been completely transcended in all respects, and one

achieves and abides in the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. (8) The eighth aspect of liberation ensues when the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the cessation of all perceptions and feelings. These are called the eight aspects of liberation.

1.34 “If you ask what are the ‘nine serial steps of meditative equipoise,’ they are as follows: (1) The first meditative absorption ensues when one achieves and maintains the first meditative concentration, that is to say, when there is freedom from desires, and freedom from negative and non-virtuous attributes, while ideation and scrutiny are present, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from freedom. (2) The second meditative absorption ensues when one achieves and maintains the second meditative concentration, that is to say, when there is an intense inner clarity, free from both ideation and scrutiny, the absence of ideation and scrutiny being due to one-pointed mental focus, while the joy and bliss that arise from meditative stability are present. (3) The third meditative absorption ensues when one achieves and maintains the third meditative concentration, that is to say, when one abides in equanimity due to the absence of attachment to joy, while both mindfulness and alertness are present, and bliss is still experienced by the body. This is what sublime beings describe as ‘mindful, blissful, abiding in bliss, and equanimous.’ (4) The fourth meditative absorption ensues when one achieves and maintains the fourth meditative concentration, that is to say, when even that sense of bliss is abandoned and former states of suffering have also been eliminated. Here, neither suffering nor bliss is present because blissful and unhappy states of mind have both subsided, while equanimity and mindfulness are utterly pure. (5) The fifth meditative absorption ensues when the perceptions of physical forms have been completely transcended in all respects, when the perceptions of obstructed, material phenomena have subsided, and the mind does not engage with diverse perceptions, so that one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite space, thinking, ‘Space is infinite.’ (6) The sixth meditative absorption ensues when the sense field of infinite space has been completely transcended in all respects, and when one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite consciousness, thinking, ‘Consciousness is infinite.’ (7) The seventh meditative absorption ensues when the sense field of infinite consciousness has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the sense field of nothing-at-all, thinking, ‘There is nothing at all.’ (8) The eighth meditative absorption ensues when the sense field of nothing-at-all has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. (9) The ninth meditative absorption ensues when the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the cessation of all perceptions and feelings. These are called the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise.

1.35 “If you ask what are the ‘nine contemplations of impurity,’ they are as follows: (1) contemplation of a bloated corpse, (2) contemplation of a worm-infested corpse, (3) contemplation of a bloody corpse, (4) contemplation of a putrefied corpse, (5) contemplation of a blue-black corpse, (6) contemplation of a devoured corpse, (7) contemplation of a dismembered corpse, (8) contemplation of a skeleton, and (9) contemplation of an immolated corpse. These are called the nine contemplations of impurity.

1.36 “If you ask what are the ‘ten recollections,’ they are as follows: (1) recollection of the Buddha, (2) recollection of the Dharma, (3) recollection of the Saṅgha, (4) recollection of ethical discipline, (5) recollection of renunciation,

(6) recollection of the god realms, (7) recollection of quiescence, (8) recollection of respiration, (9) recollection of physicality, and (10) recollection of death. These are called the ten recollections.

1.37 “If you ask what are the ‘six aspects of perception,’ they are as follows: (1) perception of impermanence, (2) perception of suffering, (3) perception of non-self, (4) perception of unattractiveness, (5) perception of death, and (6) perception of disinterest in all mundane things. These are called the six aspects of perception.

1.38 “If you ask what is the ‘knowledge of phenomena,’ it is the limited understanding that the five psycho-physical aggregates are to be purified. This is called knowledge of phenomena.

1.39 “If you ask what is ‘subsequent knowledge,’ it is the understanding that the eye is impermanent, and, likewise, it is the understanding that the ears, nose, tongue, body, mental faculty, sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena are all impermanent. This is called subsequent knowledge.

1.40 “If you ask what is the ‘knowledge of other minds,’ it is the absence of doubt with regard to phenomena associated with the minds and mental states of other sentient beings and other individuals. This is called knowledge of other minds.

1.41 “If you ask what is the ‘knowledge of relative appearances,’ it is the understanding of the aspects of the path. This is called the knowledge of relative appearances.

1.42 “If you ask what is the ‘knowledge of suffering,’ it is the understanding of how suffering arises and endures. That is called the knowledge of suffering.

1.43 “If you ask what is the ‘knowledge of the origin of suffering,’ it is the understanding that the origin of suffering is to be abandoned. This is called knowledge of the origin of suffering.

1.44 “If you ask what is the ‘knowledge of the cessation of suffering,’ it is the understanding that suffering has ceased. This is called knowledge of the cessation of suffering.

1.45 “If you ask what is the ‘knowledge of the path,’ it is the understanding of the noble eightfold path. This is called knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

1.46 “If you ask what is the ‘knowledge of the extinction of contaminants,’ it is the understanding that desire, hatred, and delusion have ended. This is called the extinction of contaminants.

1.47 “If you ask what is the ‘knowledge that contaminants will not be regenerated,’ it is the understanding that one will not subsequently be reborn among the living beings of phenomenal existence. This is called the knowledge that contaminants will not be regenerated.

1.48 “If you ask what is the ‘knowledge that is definitive,’ it is the tathāgatas’ pristine cognition of omniscience. This is called the knowledge that is definitive.

1.49 “If you ask what are the ‘faculties that will enable knowledge of all that is unknown,’ they comprise the faculty of faith, the faculty of perseverance, the faculty of recollection, the faculty of meditative stability, and the faculty of wisdom, which individual trainees who have not attained actual realization acquire. These are called the faculties that will enable knowledge of all that is unknown.

1.50 “If you ask what are the ‘faculties that acquire the knowledge of all things,’ they comprise the faculty of faith, the faculty of perseverance, the faculty of recollection, the faculty of meditative stability, and the faculty of wisdom, of which individual trainees who have attained actual realization partake. These are called the faculties that acquire the knowledge of all things.

1.51 “If you ask what are the ‘faculties endowed with the knowledge of all things,’ they comprise the faculty of faith, the faculty of perseverance, the faculty of recollection, the faculty of meditative stability, and the faculty of wisdom, of which tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas partake. These are called the faculties endowed with the knowledge of all things.

1.52 “If you ask what is the ‘meditative stability endowed with ideation and scrutiny,’ it denotes the first meditative concentration which is achieved and maintained when there is freedom from desires, and freedom from negative and non-virtuous attributes, while joy and bliss are present. This is called the meditative stability endowed with ideation and scrutiny.

1.53 “If you ask what is the ‘meditative stability free from ideation and merely endowed with scrutiny,’ it denotes the interval between the first and second meditative concentrations. This is called the meditative stability free from ideation and merely endowed with scrutiny.

1.54 “If you ask what is the ‘meditative stability free from both ideation and scrutiny,’ it denotes the meditative absorptions, starting from the first meditative concentration and continuing as far as the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. This is called the meditative stability free from both ideation and scrutiny.

1.55 “If you ask what are the ‘eight sense fields of mastery,’ they are as follows: (1) The first sense field of mastery refers to the [miraculous] perceptual transformation that ensues when one who perceives inner forms regards lesser external forms, along with excellent colors and inferior colors, understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them. (2) The second sense field of mastery refers to the [miraculous] perceptual transformation that ensues when one who perceives inner formlessness regards greater external forms, along with excellent colors and inferior colors, understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them. (3) The third sense field of mastery [refers to the miraculous perceptual transformation that] ensues when one who perceives inner formlessness regards blue external forms, blue colors, blue appearances, and blue reflections, such as the blue [form], the blue color, the blue

appearance, and the blue reflection of the flax blossom or excellent blue cloth from Vārāṇasī. In the same way, one who perceives inner formlessness regards blue external forms, blue colors, blue appearances, and blue reflections, [and understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them]. (4) The fourth sense field of mastery [refers to the miraculous perceptual transformation that] ensues when one who perceives inner formlessness regards yellow external forms, yellow colors, yellow appearances, and yellow reflections, such as the yellow [form], yellow color, yellow appearance, and yellow reflection of the cassia flower or excellent yellow cloth from Vārāṇasī. In the same way, one who perceives inner formlessness regards yellow external forms, yellow colors, yellow appearances, and yellow reflections, [and understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them]. (5) The fifth sense field of mastery [refers to the miraculous perceptual transformation that] ensues when one who perceives inner formlessness regards red external forms, red colors, red appearances, and red reflections, such as the red [form], red color, red appearance, and red reflection of the pentapetes flower or excellent red cloth from Vārāṇasī. In the same way, one who perceives inner formlessness regards red external forms, red colors, red appearances, and red reflections, [and understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them]. (6) The sixth sense field of mastery [refers to the miraculous perceptual transformation that] ensues when one who perceives inner formlessness regards white external forms, white colors, white appearances, and white reflections, such as the white [form], white color, white appearance, and white reflection of the [morning] star Venus [or excellent white cloth from Vārāṇasī]. In the same way, one who perceives inner formlessness regards white external forms, white colors, white appearances, and white reflections, [and understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them]. (7) The seventh sense field of mastery ensues when the perceptions of physical forms have been completely transcended in all respects, when the perceptions of obstructed, material phenomena have subsided, and the mind does not engage with diverse perceptions, so that one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite space, thinking, ‘Space is infinite.’ (8) The eighth sense field of mastery ensues when the sense field of infinite space has been completely transcended in all respects, and when one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite consciousness, thinking, ‘Consciousness is infinite.’ These are called the eight sense fields of mastery.

1.56 “If you ask what are the ‘ten sense fields of total consummation,’ they comprise (1) the total consummation of the earth element, (2) the total consummation of the water element, (3) the total consummation of the fire element, (4) the total consummation of the wind element, (5) the total consummation of the space element, (6) the total consummation of blueness, (7) the total consummation of yellowness, (8) the total consummation of redness, (9) the total consummation of whiteness, and (10) the total consummation of consciousness. These are called the ten sense fields of total consummation. [Through these successive meditative stabilities] (1) considering all elements to be present in the earth element, all of them are transformed into a single element, which is exclusively the earth element; (2) considering all elements to be present in the water element, all of them are transformed into a single element, which is exclusively the water element; (3) considering all elements to be present in the fire element, all of them are transformed into a single element, which is exclusively the fire element; (4) considering all elements to be present in the wind element, all of them are transformed into a single element, which is exclusively the wind element; (5) considering all elements to be present in the space element, all of them are then transformed into a single element, which is exclusively the space element; (6) considering all elements to be present in blueness, all of them

are transformed into blueness; (7) considering all elements to be present in yellowness, all of them are transformed exclusively into yellowness; (8) considering all elements to be present in redness, all of them are transformed exclusively into redness; (9) considering all elements to be present in whiteness, all of them are transformed exclusively into whiteness; and (10) considering all elements to be present in consciousness, all of them are transformed exclusively into consciousness. In this way, earth, water, fire, wind, space, blueness, yellowness, redness, whiteness, and consciousness are all transformed exclusively into a single element. These are called the sense fields of total consummation. It is because they intensify the production of their respective elements to the point of consummation that they are called sense fields of total consummation, and they are also known as sense fields of total consummation because each element is respectively transformed into all the others.

1.57 “If you ask what are the ‘eighteen aspects of emptiness,’ they comprise (1) emptiness of internal phenomena, (2) emptiness of external phenomena, (3) emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, (4) emptiness of emptiness, (5) emptiness of great extent, (6) emptiness of ultimate reality, (7) emptiness of conditioned phenomena, (8) emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, (9) emptiness of the unlimited, (10) emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, (11) emptiness of non-dispersal, (12) emptiness of inherent existence, (13) emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, (14) emptiness of all things, (15) emptiness of non-apprehension, (16) emptiness of non-entities, (17) emptiness of essential nature, and (18) emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities.

1.58 “If, among them, you ask what is the ‘emptiness of internal phenomena,’ the term ‘internal phenomena’ comprises the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty. Among them, the eyes are empty of the eyes because they do not endure and they do not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because that is their very nature. Similarly, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty are, respectively, empty of [the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and] the mental faculty, because they do not endure and they do not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because that is their very nature. That is what is called the emptiness of internal phenomena.

1.59 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of external phenomena,’ the term ‘external phenomena’ comprises sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena. Among them, sights are empty of sights because they do not endure and they do not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because that is their very nature. Similarly, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena are, respectively, empty of [sounds, odors, tangibles, and] mental phenomena, because they do not endure and they do not disintegrate. If you ask why, that is because it is their very nature. That is called the emptiness of external phenomena.

1.60 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of both external and internal phenomena,’ the term ‘external and internal phenomena’ comprises the six inner sense fields and the six outer sense fields. Among them, internal phenomena are empty of internal phenomena because they do not endure and they do not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because that is their very nature. External phenomena are also empty of external phenomena because they do not endure and they do not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because it is their very nature. That is called the emptiness of external and internal phenomena.

1.61 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of emptiness,’ that emptiness which is the emptiness of all phenomena is

also empty of the emptiness of all phenomena because it does not endure and does not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because it is its very nature. That is called the emptiness of emptiness.

1.62 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of great extent,’ the eastern direction is empty of the eastern direction because it does not endure and does not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because that is its very nature. The southern, western, northern, and four intermediate directions—all eight—are also similarly empty of themselves, and the zenith is empty of the zenith, while the nadir is empty of the nadir, because they do not endure and do not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because it is their very nature. That is called the emptiness of great extent.

1.63 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of ultimate reality,’ the term ‘ultimate reality’ denotes nirvāṇa in the context of the ‘emptiness of ultimate reality.’ In this regard, nirvāṇa is empty of nirvāṇa because it does not endure and does not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because it is its very nature. That is called the emptiness of ultimate reality.

1.64 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of conditioned phenomena,’ this refers to the world system of desire, the world system of form, and the world system of formlessness, among which the world system of desire is empty of the world system of desire, and similarly, the world system of form is empty of the world system of form, and the world system of formlessness is empty of the world system of formlessness because they do not endure and do not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because it is their very nature. That is called the emptiness of conditioned phenomena.

1.65 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of unconditioned phenomena,’ the term ‘unconditioned phenomena’ denotes anything that does not arise, that does not abide, that does not disintegrate, and that does not change into something else. In this regard, unconditioned phenomena are empty of unconditioned phenomena because they do not endure and do not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because it is their very nature. That is called the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena.

1.66 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of the unlimited,’ the arising of anything [which has no limits] is utterly non-apprehensible because it does not endure and does not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because it is its very nature. That is called the emptiness of the unlimited.

1.67 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end,’ the coming to pass of anything [in cyclic existence that has no beginning or end] is utterly non-apprehensible because it does not endure and does not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because it is its very nature. That is called the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end.

1.68 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of non-dispersal,’ this denotes anything in which there is no dispersion. [Things are empty of non-dispersal] because they do not endure and do not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because it is their very nature. That is called the emptiness of non-dispersal.

1.69 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of inherent existence,’ this denotes the true nature of all conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, which is not created by the śrāvakas, not created by the pratyekabuddhas, and not fashioned by the lord buddhas. [Inherent existence is empty of inherent existence] because it does not endure and does not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because that is its very nature. That is called the emptiness of inherent existence.

1.70 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of all intrinsic defining characteristics,’ this denotes the intrinsic defining characteristic of physical forms, which is the capacity to assume physical forms; the intrinsic defining characteristic of feelings, which is emotional experience; the intrinsic defining characteristic of perceptions, which is comprehensibility; the intrinsic defining characteristic of formative predispositions which is conditioning; and the intrinsic defining characteristic of consciousness, which is cognizance. It applies to the defining characteristics of conditioned phenomena [such as these], and similarly extends as far as the defining characteristics of unconditioned phenomena. All these intrinsic defining characteristics are empty of their own intrinsic defining characteristics because they do not endure and do not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because it is their very nature. That is called the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics.

1.71 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of all things,’ the term ‘all things’ denotes the five psycho-physical aggregates, the twelve sense fields, the eighteen sensory elements, corporeal phenomena, formless phenomena, conditioned phenomena, and unconditioned phenomena. All such things are empty of all things because they do not endure and do not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because it is their very nature. That is called the emptiness of all things.

1.72 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of non-apprehension,’ it is that which does not apprehend any phenomena at all. [Non-apprehension is empty of non-apprehension] because it does not endure and does not disintegrate. If you ask why, it is because that is its very nature. That is called the emptiness of non-apprehension.

1.73 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of non-entities,’ it is the non-apprehension of any entity, in anything whatsoever. This is called the emptiness of non-entities.

1.74 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of essential nature,’ it is the absence of any essential nature with respect to anything originating from combinations [of causes and conditions]. That is called the emptiness of essential nature.

1.75 “If you ask what is the ‘emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities,’ it [too] is the absence of any essential nature in anything originating from combinations [of causes and conditions]. That is called the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities.

1.76 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, entities are empty of entities. Non-entities are empty of non-entities. Essential nature is empty of essential nature. Extraneous entities are empty of extraneous entities.

1.77 “If you ask what are entities, the term ‘entities’ denotes the five psycho-physical aggregates, which comprise

physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. In this regard, entities are empty of entities.

1.78 “If you ask in what way non-entities are empty of non-entities, the term ‘non-entities’ denotes unconditioned phenomena. In this regard unconditioned phenomena are empty of unconditioned phenomena. Similarly, non-entities are empty of non-entities.

1.79 “If you ask in what way the essential nature is empty of the essential nature, the essential nature of all phenomena is not created by being known, it is not created by being seen, and it is not created by anything at all. In this way, the essential nature is said to be empty of the essential nature.

1.80 “If you ask in what way extraneous entities are empty of extraneous entities, whether the tathāgatas have appeared or whether the tathāgatas have not appeared, the abiding nature of all things, the expanse of reality, the maturity with respect to all things, the real nature, the incontrovertible real nature, the inalienable real nature, and the finality of existence—all of these continue to abide. Anything that is empty of phenomena extraneous to these attributes may be called an extraneous entity that is empty of extraneous entities.

1.81 “Śāradvatīputra! These are all attributes with respect to which a great bodhisattva being should cultivate detachment. One who is without fixation will reach the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

1.82 *This completes the first chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “The Context.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE:

THE CONTEXT

1.A The transcendent perfection of wisdom is the absence of fixation with respect to all things ... Bodhisattvas who are without fixation perfect the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and will indeed swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.

1.B The expression ‘all things’ denotes ... the five psycho-physical aggregates, the twelve sense fields, the eighteen sensory elements, the four noble truths, the twelve links of dependent origination, the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the emptiness that is a gateway to liberation, the signlessness that is a gateway to liberation, the aspirationless that is a gateway to liberation, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless meditative absorptions, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, the nine contemplations of impurity, the ten recollections, the six aspects of perception, the knowledge of phenomena, the subsequent knowledge, the knowledge of other minds, the knowledge of relative appearances, the knowledge of suffering, the knowledge of the origin of suffering, the knowledge of the cessation of suffering, the knowledge of the path, the knowledge of the extinction of con-

taminants, the knowledge that contaminants will not be regenerated, the knowledge that is definitive, and similarly, the meditative stability endowed with ideation and scrutiny, the meditative stability free from ideation and merely endowed with scrutiny, the meditative stability free from both ideation and scrutiny, the faculties that will enable knowledge of all that is unknown, the faculties that acquire the knowledge of all things, the faculties endowed with the knowledge of all things, the eight sense fields of mastery, the ten sense fields of total consummation, the eighteen aspects of emptiness, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and likewise, the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, the understanding of omniscience, the six transcendent perfections, the five extrasensory powers, the five eyes, the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, and the eighty excellent minor marks.

1.C The ‘five psycho-physical aggregates’ comprise (1) physical forms, (2) feelings, (3) perceptions, (4) formative predispositions, and (5) consciousness.

1.D The ‘twelve sense fields’ comprise {the inner sense fields} of (1) ... the eyes, (2) ... the ears, (3) ... the nose, (4) ... the tongue, (5) ... the body, and (6) ... the mental faculty ... {and the outer sense fields of} ... (7) ... sights, (8) ... sounds, (9) ... odors, (10) ... tastes, (11) ... tangibles, and (12) ... mental phenomena.

1.E The ‘eighteen sensory elements,’ ... comprise {the sensory elements of} (1) ... the eyes, (2) ... sights, and (3) ... visual consciousness; (4) ... the ears, (5) ... sounds, and (6) ... auditory consciousness; (7) ... the nose, (8) ... odors, and (9) ... olfactory consciousness; (10) ... the tongue, (11) ... tastes, and (12) ... gustatory consciousness; (13) ... the body, (14) ... tangibles, and (15) ... tactile consciousness; and (16) ... the mental faculty, (17) ... mental phenomena, and (18) ... mental consciousness.

1.F The ‘four noble truths,’ ... comprise {the noble truths of} (1) ... suffering, (2) ... the origin of suffering, (3) ... the cessation of suffering, and (4) ... the path.

1.G The ‘twelve links of dependent origination,’ ... comprise (1) fundamental ignorance, contingent on which (2) formative predispositions arise; (3) consciousness, which arises contingent on formative predispositions; (4) name and form, which arise contingent on consciousness; (5) the six sense fields, which arise contingent on name and form; (6) sensory contact, which arises contingent on the six sense fields; (7) sensation, which arises contingent on sensory contact; (8) craving, which arises contingent on sensation; (9) grasping, which arises contingent on craving; (10) the rebirth process, which arises contingent on grasping; (11) actual birth, which arises contingent on the rebirth process; and (12) aging and death, along with sorrow, lamentation, suffering, mental discomfort, and agitation, which all arise contingent on actual birth.

1.H Conversely, through the cessation of fundamental ignorance, formative predispositions cease. Through the cessation of formative predispositions, consciousness ceases. Through the cessation of consciousness, name and form cease. Through the cessation of name and form, the six sense fields cease. Through the cessation of the six sense fields, sensory contact ceases. Through the cessation of sensory contact, sensation ceases. Through the cessation of

sensation, craving ceases. Through the cessation of craving, grasping ceases. Through the cessation of grasping, the rebirth process ceases. Through the cessation of the rebirth process, actual birth ceases. Through the cessation of actual birth, aging and death cease; and through the cessation of aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, mental discomfort, and agitation all cease.

1.I The 'four applications of mindfulness,' ... comprise (1) the application of mindfulness which, with regard to the physical body, observes the physical body; (2) the application of mindfulness which, with regard to feelings, observes feelings; (3) the application of mindfulness which, with regard to the mind, observes the mind; and (4) the application of mindfulness which, with regard to phenomena, observes phenomena.

1.J The 'four correct exertions,' {comprise of great bodhisattva beings who resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire} (1) ... that negative and non-virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might not be developed; (2) ... that negative and non-virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might be renounced; (3) ... that virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might be developed; and (4) ... that virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might remain, be unforgotten, flourish, and reach complete perfection in the future, through cultivation.

1.K The 'four supports for miraculous abilities,' ... comprise {the supports for miraculous ability combining} (1) ... the meditative stability of resolution with the formative force of exertion, (2) ... the meditative stability of perseverance with the formative force of exertion, (3) ... the meditative stability of mind with the formative force of exertion, and (4) ... the meditative stability of scrutiny with the formative force of exertion.

1.L The 'five faculties,' ... comprise (1) the faculty of faith, (2) the faculty of perseverance, (3) the faculty of recollection, (4) the faculty of meditative stability, and (5) the faculty of wisdom ... {and} the 'five powers,' they similarly comprise (1) the power of faith, (2) the power of perseverance, (3) the power of recollection, (4) the power of meditative stability, and (5) the power of wisdom.

1.M The 'seven branches of enlightenment,' ... comprise {the branches of enlightenment that} (1) ... entails correct recollection, (2) ... entails correct doctrinal analysis, (3) ... entails correct perseverance, (4) ... entails correct delight, (5) ... entails correct mental and physical refinement, (6) ... entails correct meditative stability, and (7) ... entails correct equanimity.

1.N The 'noble eightfold path,' ... comprises (1) correct view, (2) correct ideation {/resolve}, (3) correct speech, (4) correct action, (5) correct livelihood, (6) correct effort, (7) correct recollection {/mindfulness}, and (8) correct meditative stability {/concentration}.

1.O 'Emptiness as a gateway to liberation,' {is} the state of mind which discerns that all things are empty of their own defining characteristics ... 'Signlessness as a gateway to liberation,' {is} the state of mind which discerns in all respects that all things are signless in terms of their own defining characteristics ... 'Aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation,' {is} the state of mind in which all things are not formed, and there is nothing to be formed.

1.P The 'four meditative concentrations,' ... are as follows: {Bodhisattvas achieve and maintain} (1) ... the first meditative concentration where there is freedom from desires, and freedom from negative and non-virtuous attributes, while ideation and scrutiny are present, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from freedom. (2) ... the second meditative concentration where there is an intense inner clarity, free from both ideation and scrutiny, the absence of ideation and scrutiny being due to one-pointed mental focus, while the joy and bliss that arise from meditative stability are present. (3) ... the third meditative concentration where joy is absent, abiding in equanimity due to the absence of attachment to joy, while both mindfulness and alertness are present and bliss is experienced by the body. This is what sublime beings describe as 'mindful, blissful, abiding in bliss, and equanimous.' (4) ... the fourth meditative concentration where even that sense of bliss is abandoned and former states of suffering have also been eliminated. Here, neither suffering nor bliss is present because blissful and unhappy states of mind have both subsided, while equanimity and mindfulness are utterly pure.

1.Q The 'four immeasurable aspirations,' ... comprise (1) loving kindness, (2) compassion, (3) empathetic joy, and (4) equanimity.

1.R The 'four formless meditative absorptions,' ... comprise {the meditative absorptions} (1) ... of the sense field of infinite space, (2) ... of the sense field of infinite consciousness, (3) ... of the sense field of nothing-at-all, and (4) ... of neither perception nor non-perception ... The 'eight aspects of liberation,' ... are as follows: (1) The first ... when corporeal beings observe physical forms [in order to compose the mind]. (2) The second ... when formless beings endowed with internal perception observe external physical forms. (3) The third ... when beings {who} are inclined toward pleasant states {physically actualize, achieve, and maintain release from these states}. (4) The fourth ... when the perceptions of physical forms have been completely transcended in all respects, when the perceptions of obstructed phenomena have subsided, and the mind does not engage with diverse perceptions, so that one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite space, thinking, 'Space is infinite.' (5) The fifth ... when the sense field of infinite space has been completely transcended in all respects, and when one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite consciousness, thinking, 'Consciousness is infinite.' (6) The sixth ... when the sense field of infinite consciousness has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the sense field of nothing-at-all, thinking, 'There is nothing at all.' (7) The seventh ... when the sense field of nothing-at-all has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. (8) The eighth ... when the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the cessation of all perceptions and feelings ... The 'nine serial steps of meditative equipoise,' ... are as follows: (1) The first ... when one achieves and maintains the first meditative concentration, that is to say, when there is freedom from desires, and freedom from negative and non-virtuous attributes, while ideation and scrutiny are present, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from freedom. (2) The second ... when one achieves and maintains the second meditative concentration, that is to say, when there is an intense inner clarity, free from both ideation and scrutiny, the absence of ideation and scrutiny being due to one-pointed mental focus, while the joy and bliss that arise from meditative stability are present. (3) The third ... when one achieves and maintains the third meditative concentration, that is to say, when one abides in equanimity due to the absence of attachment to joy, while both mindfulness and alertness are present, and bliss is still experienced by the body. This is what sublime beings describe as 'mindful, blissful, abiding in bliss, and equanimous.' (4) The fourth ... when one

achieves and maintains the fourth meditative concentration, that is to say, when even that sense of bliss is abandoned and former states of suffering have also been eliminated. Here, neither suffering nor bliss is present because blissful and unhappy states of mind have both subsided, while equanimity and mindfulness are utterly pure. (5) The fifth ... when the perceptions of physical forms have been completely transcended in all respects, when the perceptions of obstructed, material phenomena have subsided, and the mind does not engage with diverse perceptions, so that one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite space, thinking, 'Space is infinite.' (6) The sixth ... when the sense field of infinite space has been completely transcended in all respects, and when one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite consciousness, thinking, 'Consciousness is infinite.' (7) The seventh ... when the sense field of infinite consciousness has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the sense field of nothing-at-all, thinking, 'There is nothing at all.' (8) The eighth ... when the sense field of nothing-at-all has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. (9) The ninth ... when the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the cessation of all perceptions and feelings.

1.S The 'nine contemplations of impurity,' ... are as follows: {contemplation of} (1) ... a bloated corpse, (2) ... a worm-infested corpse, (3) ... a bloody corpse, (4) ... a putrefied corpse, (5) ... a blue-black corpse, (6) ... a devoured corpse, (7) ... a dismembered corpse, (8) ... a skeleton, and (9) ... an immolated {typically burnt} corpse.

1.T The 'ten recollections,' ... are as follows: {recollection of} (1) ... the Buddha, (2) ... the Dharma, (3) ... the Saṅgha, (4) ... ethical discipline, (5) ... renunciation, (6) ... the god realms, (7) ... quiescence, (8) ... respiration, (9) ... physicality, and (10) ... death.

1.U The 'six aspects of perception,' ... are as follows: {perception of} (1) ... impermanence, (2) ... suffering, (3) ... non-self, (4) ... unattractiveness, (5) ... death, and (6) ... disinterest in all mundane things.

1.V The 'knowledge of phenomena,' ... is the limited understanding that the five psycho-physical aggregates are to be purified ... 'Subsequent knowledge,' ... is the understanding that the eye is impermanent, and, likewise, it is the understanding that the ears, nose, tongue, body, mental faculty, sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena are all impermanent ... The 'knowledge of other minds,' ... is the absence of doubt with regard to phenomena associated with the minds and mental states of other sentient beings and other individuals ... The 'knowledge of relative appearances,' ... is the understanding of the aspects of the path ... The 'knowledge of suffering,' ... is the understanding of how suffering arises and endures ... The 'knowledge of the origin of suffering,' ... is the understanding that the origin of suffering is to be abandoned ... The 'knowledge of the cessation of suffering,' ... is the understanding that suffering has ceased ... The 'knowledge of the path,' ... is the understanding of the noble eightfold path ... leading to the cessation of suffering ... The 'knowledge of the extinction of contaminants,' ... is the understanding that desire, hatred, and delusion have ended ... The 'knowledge that contaminants will not be regenerated,' ... is the understanding that one will not subsequently be reborn among the living beings of phenomenal existence ... The 'knowledge that is definitive,' ... is the tathāgatas' pristine cognition of omniscience ... The 'faculties that will enable knowledge of all that is unknown,' ... comprise the faculty of faith ... perseverance ... recollection ... meditative stability, and ... wisdom, which individual trainees who have not attained actual realization acquire ... The

‘faculties that acquire the knowledge of all things,’ ... comprise the faculty of faith ... perseverance ... recollection ... meditative stability, and ... wisdom, of which individual trainees who have attained actual realization partake ... The ‘faculties endowed with the knowledge of all things,’ ... comprise the faculty of faith ... perseverance ... recollection, ... meditative stability, and ... wisdom, of which tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas partake.

1.W The ‘meditative stability endowed with ideation and scrutiny,’ ... denotes the first meditative concentration which is achieved and maintained when there is freedom from desires, and freedom from negative and non-virtuous attributes, while joy and bliss are present ... The ‘meditative stability free from ideation and merely endowed with scrutiny,’ ... denotes the interval between the first and second meditative concentrations ... The ‘meditative stability free from both ideation and scrutiny,’ ... denotes the meditative absorptions, starting from the first meditative concentration and continuing as far as the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception.

1.X The ‘eight sense fields of mastery,’ ... are as follows: {and refers to the [miraculous] perceptual transformation that ensues} (1) ... when one who perceives inner forms regards lesser external forms, along with excellent colors and inferior colors, understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them. (2) ... when one who perceives inner formlessness regards greater external forms, along with excellent colors and inferior colors, understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them. (3) ... when one who perceives inner formlessness regards blue external forms, blue colors, blue appearances, and blue reflections, such as the blue [form], the blue color, the blue appearance, and the blue reflection of the flax blossom or excellent blue cloth from Vārāṇasī. In the same way, one who perceives inner formlessness regards blue external forms, blue colors, blue appearances, and blue reflections, [and understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them]. (4) ... when one who perceives inner formlessness regards yellow external forms, yellow colors, yellow appearances, and yellow reflections, such as the yellow [form], yellow color, yellow appearance, and yellow reflection of the cassia flower or excellent yellow cloth from Vārāṇasī. In the same way, one who perceives inner formlessness regards yellow external forms, yellow colors, yellow appearances, and yellow reflections, [and understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them]. (5) ... when one who perceives inner formlessness regards red external forms, red colors, red appearances, and red reflections, such as the red [form], red color, red appearance, and red reflection of the pentapetes flower or excellent red cloth from Vārāṇasī. In the same way, one who perceives inner formlessness regards red external forms, red colors, red appearances, and red reflections, [and understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them]. (6) ... when one who perceives inner formlessness regards white external forms, white colors, white appearances, and white reflections, such as the white [form], white color, white appearance, and white reflection of the [morning] star Venus [or excellent white cloth from Vārāṇasī]. In the same way, one who perceives inner formlessness regards white external forms, white colors, white appearances, and white reflections, [and understands these forms, having attained mastery over them, and sees them, having attained mastery over them]. (7) ... when the perceptions of physical forms have been completely transcended in all respects, when the perceptions of obstructed, material phenomena have subsided, and the mind does not engage with diverse perceptions, so that one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite space, thinking, ‘Space is infinite.’ (8) ... when the sense field of infinite space has been completely transcended in all respects, and when one achieves and abides in the sense field

of infinite consciousness, thinking, 'Consciousness is infinite.'

1.Y The 'ten sense fields of total consummation,' ... comprise {the total consummation of} (1) ... the earth element, (2) ... the water element, (3) ... the fire element, (4) ... the wind element, (5) ... the space element, (6) ... blueness, (7) ... yellowness, (8) ... redness, (9) ... whiteness, and (10) ... consciousness ... [Through these successive meditative stabilities] (1) considering all elements to be present in the earth element, all of them are transformed into a single element, which is exclusively the earth element; (2) ... {and so forth for} the water element; (3) ... the fire element; (4) ... the wind element; (5) ... the space element; (6) ... blueness; (7) ... yellowness; (8) ... redness; (9) ... whiteness; and (10) ... consciousness. In this way, earth, water, fire, wind, space, blueness, yellowness, redness, whiteness, and consciousness are all transformed exclusively into a single element. These are called the sense fields of total consummation ... because they intensify the production of their respective elements to the point of consummation ... and ... because each element is respectively transformed into all the others.

1.Z The 'eighteen aspects of emptiness,' ... comprise (1) emptiness of internal phenomena, (2) emptiness of external phenomena, (3) emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, (4) emptiness of emptiness, (5) emptiness of great extent, (6) emptiness of ultimate reality, (7) emptiness of conditioned phenomena, (8) emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, (9) emptiness of the unlimited, (10) emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, (11) emptiness of non-dispersal, (12) emptiness of inherent existence, (13) emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, (14) emptiness of all things, (15) emptiness of non-apprehension, (16) emptiness of non-entities, (17) emptiness of essential nature, and (18) emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... The '**emptiness of internal phenomena**,' the term 'internal phenomena' comprises the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty. Among them, the eyes are empty of the eyes ... the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty are, respectively, empty of [the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and] the mental faculty, because they do not endure and they do not disintegrate ... because that is their very nature ... The '**emptiness of external phenomena**,' the term 'external phenomena' comprises sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena. Among them, sights are empty of sights ... sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena are, respectively, empty of [sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and] mental phenomena, because they do not endure and they do not disintegrate ... because it is their very nature ... The '**emptiness of both external and internal phenomena**,' the term 'external and internal phenomena' comprises the six inner sense fields and the six outer sense fields. Among them, internal phenomena are empty of internal phenomena ... {and} external phenomena are also empty of external phenomena because they do not endure and they do not disintegrate ... because it is their very nature ... The '**emptiness of emptiness**,' that emptiness which is the emptiness of all phenomena is also empty of the emptiness of all phenomena because it does not endure and does not disintegrate ... because it is its very nature ... The '**emptiness of great extent**,' the eastern direction is empty of the eastern direction ... the southern, western, northern, and four intermediate directions—all eight—are also similarly empty of themselves, and the zenith is empty of the zenith, while the nadir is empty of the nadir, because they do not endure and do not disintegrate ... because it is their very nature ... The '**emptiness of ultimate reality**,' the term 'ultimate reality' denotes nirvāṇa in the context of the 'emptiness of ultimate reality.' In this regard, nirvāṇa is empty of nirvāṇa because it does not endure and does not disintegrate ... because it is its very nature ... The '**emptiness of conditioned phenomena**,' this refers to the world system{s} of desire ... form, and ... formlessness, among which the world system of desire is empty of the world system

of desire, and similarly, the world system of form {and formlessness} is empty of the world system of form, and ... formlessness because they do not endure and do not disintegrate ... because it is their very nature ... The **'emptiness of unconditioned phenomena,'** the term 'unconditioned phenomena' denotes anything that does not arise ... abide ... disintegrate, and ... change into something else. In this regard, unconditioned phenomena are empty of unconditioned phenomena because they do not endure and do not disintegrate ... because it is their very nature ... The **'emptiness of the unlimited,'** the arising of anything {in relative reality ~ which being non-existent in ultimate reality and naturally without any limits} is utterly non-apprehensible because it does not endure and does not disintegrate ... because it is its very nature ... The **'emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end,'** the coming to pass of anything {in relative reality ~ which being non-existent in ultimate reality and having no beginning or end} is utterly non-apprehensible because it does not endure and does not disintegrate ... because it is its very nature ... The **'emptiness of non-dispersal,'** this denotes anything in which there is no dispersion. {Things are empty of dispersion in relative reality ~ having ultimately no inherent existence} because they do not endure and do not disintegrate ... because it is their very nature ... The **'emptiness of inherent existence,'** this denotes the true nature of all conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, which is not created by the śrāvakas ... {or} the pratyekabuddhas, and not fashioned by the lord buddhas. [Inherent existence is empty of inherent existence] because it does not endure and does not disintegrate ... because that is its very nature ... The **'emptiness of all intrinsic defining characteristics,'** this denotes the intrinsic defining characteristic of physical forms, which is the capacity to assume physical forms; the intrinsic defining characteristic of feelings, which is emotional experience; the intrinsic defining characteristic of perceptions, which is comprehensibility; the intrinsic defining characteristic of formative predispositions which is conditioning; and the intrinsic defining characteristic of consciousness, which is cognizance. It applies to the defining characteristics of conditioned phenomena [such as these], and similarly extends as far as the defining characteristics of unconditioned phenomena. All these intrinsic defining characteristics are empty of their own intrinsic defining characteristics because they do not endure and do not disintegrate ... because it is their very nature ... The **'emptiness of all things,'** the term 'all things' denotes the five psycho-physical aggregates, the twelve sense fields, the eighteen sensory elements, corporeal phenomena, formless phenomena, conditioned phenomena, and unconditioned phenomena. All such things are empty of all things because they do not endure and do not disintegrate ... because it is their very nature ... The **'emptiness of non-apprehension,'** it is that which does not apprehend any phenomena at all. {The apprehension of any phenomena at all is utterly non-apprehensible} because it does not endure and does not disintegrate ... because that is its very nature ... The **'emptiness of non-entities,'** it is the non-apprehension of any entity, in anything whatsoever ... The **'emptiness of essential nature,'** it is the absence of any essential nature with respect to anything originating from combinations [of causes and conditions] ... The **'emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities,'** it [too] is the absence of any essential nature in anything originating from combinations [of causes and conditions] ... Moreover ... entities are empty of entities. Non-entities are empty of non-entities. Essential nature is empty of essential nature. Extraneous entities are empty of extraneous entities ... 'entities' denotes the five psycho-physical aggregates, which comprise physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the term 'non-entities' denotes unconditioned phenomena. In this regard unconditioned phenomena are empty of unconditioned phenomena. Similarly, non-entities are empty of non-entities ... The essential nature of all phenomena is not created by being known, it is not created by being seen, and it is not created by anything at all. In this way, the essential nature is said to be empty of the essential nature ... Whether the tathāgatas have appeared or ... not appeared, the abiding nature of all things, the expanse of {relative} reality, the maturity {of

understanding} with respect to all things, the real nature {of phenomena}, the incontrovertible real nature {of phenomena}, the inalienable real nature {of phenomena}, and the finality of {relative} existence—all of these continue to abide {within the expanse of relative existence}. Anything that is empty of phenomena extraneous to these attributes may be called an extraneous entity that is empty of extraneous entities. **{In conclusion of this chapter:}** These are all attributes with respect to which a great bodhisattva being should cultivate detachment. One who is without fixation will reach the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.

COMMENTARY

The Buddha does not teach that all life is empty and without meaning and purpose and rejects this nihilistic view. Our “real nature” that exists in ultimate reality is NOT created and is void of an individual self. The eighteen emptinesses reveal what We, as a singularity in ultimate reality, are not ... and what is left, We are. Thus in ultimate reality We are **(1) ‘empty of internal phenomena’** ~ that is the six inner sense fields of the individual self (of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty); **(2) ‘empty of external phenomena’** ~ that is the six outer sense fields of the individual self (of sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena); **(3) ‘empty of both internal and external phenomena’** ~ that eliminates we exist as an individual self, either corporeally or spiritually, even as an individual buddha, for a buddha is endowed with the six inner sense fields and the six outer sense fields in ‘relative’ reality; **(4) ‘empty of emptiness’** ~ for all created phenomena within ‘relative’ reality, including our individual selves, is merely an illusion and has never existed; and thus even the emptiness of all phenomena is empty, having never existed to begin with; **(5) ‘empty of great extent’** ~ where individual selves appear to endure like a mirage in the ten directions of space and time, which in ultimate reality do not exist; **(6) ‘empty of ultimate reality’** ~ defined in this context as the path of nirvāṇa leading to ultimate reality—which is the extinguishment of the three fires of craving, aversion and ignorance and the individual self—which has never existed in ultimate reality, from the perspective of there ever having been a path or our ever existing as an individual self; **(7) ‘empty of conditioned phenomena’** ~ defined in this context as the worlds of desire, form and formlessness—and the conditioned phenomena existing therein, including our individual selves—as only ever having arisen in the mirage of the ten directions of space and time, which in ultimate reality do not exist; **(8) ‘empty of unconditioned phenomena’** ~ defined as anything in ‘relative’ reality which does not arise, abide, disintegrate or change into something else (such as space, enlightenment, the Law of Dharma, as well as nirvāṇa, which is the true cessation of the three fires) ... for in ultimate reality there is no space or individual self abiding therein, and there is no path of enlightenment, Law of Dharma, and cessation of non-existent fires; **(9) ‘empty of the unlimited’** ~ defined as anything which arises in ‘relative’ reality that has no limits; for the arising of anything, from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality, is utterly non-apprehensible ... and being inherently non-existent, is naturally without any limits; **(10) ‘empty of that which has neither beginning nor end’** ~ defined as the “coming to pass” of anything in ‘relative’ existence, including the creation of our individual selves, which does by its very nature of coming to pass, begin and end ... however not from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality, where it has never begun, and thus never ended; **(11) ‘empty of non-dispersal’** ~ defined as the “coming to pass” of anything in ‘relative’ existence where there is no dispersion, meaning ‘separation’ or ‘disintegration’ ... And as anything coming to pass in relative existence, including our individual selves, arises due to causes and conditions and is changing from moment to moment, it is by its very nature in constant dispersion ... however not from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality, where it has never arisen; **(12) ‘empty of inherent existence’** ~ defined as the ‘true’

nature of all conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, including our individual selves—within the inconceivable expanse of ‘relative’ existence—as being “uncreated” from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality ... and thus being without any inherent existence; **(13) ‘empty of all intrinsic defining characteristics’** ~ defined as the unique defining characteristics of all phenomena that take shape within the expanse of ‘relative’ existence, including our individual selves, which distinguishes one phenomenal thing from another ... however not from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality, where there is nothing other than Our singularity in God; **(14) ‘empty of all things’** ~ that is the five psycho-physical aggregates, the twelve sense fields, the eighteen sensory elements, corporeal phenomena, formless phenomena, conditioned phenomena, and unconditioned phenomena; **(15) ‘empty of non-apprehension’** ~ defined as that which does not apprehend any phenomena at all ... for in ‘ultimate’ reality no phenomena ultimately exists to be apprehended or not apprehended by anyone; **(16) ‘empty of non-entities’** ~ defined as the non-apprehension of any entity in anything whatsoever, which is comprised of the five psycho-physical aggregates of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... And as the five psycho-physical aggregates are not existent from the perspective of ultimate reality, and ultimately not conditioned, they are subsequently classified as “non-entities”; **(17) ‘empty of essential nature’** ~ that is the absence of any essential nature with respect to anything originating in ‘relative’ existence from combinations of causes and conditions, including the origination of our individual selves ... for the essential nature of any creation is only a mirage in the illusion of space and time; and **(18) ‘empty of the essential nature of non-entities’** ~ that, too, is the absence of any essential nature with respect to anything originating in ‘relative’ existence from combinations of causes and conditions, that is subsequently classified as an “entity”; for in ‘ultimate’ reality there are no entities, and therefore no essential nature of any non-entities ... only that which is comprised of the essential nature of Our singularity in God.

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So we can see from an ultimate perspective We as a singularity in God, undivided, uncreated and without an individual self, are empty of (1) the six inner sense fields (of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty); (2) the six outer sense fields (of sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena); (3) both the six inner and six outer sense fields combined that constitute an individual self; (4) the emptiness of all non-existent phenomena; (5) the ten directions of great extent of ‘relative’ existence of space and time; (6) the path of nirvāṇa leading to ultimate reality; (7) the conditioned phenomena of the worlds of desire, form and formlessness; (8) the unconditioned phenomena of space, enlightenment, the Law of Dharma, and nirvāṇa (being the true cessation of the three fires); (9) anything which arises in ‘relative’ existence that, being inherently non-existent, is without any limits; (10) that which has come to pass in ‘relative’ existence that in ‘ultimate’ reality has neither beginning nor end; (11) the condition of dispersal, that being separation and disintegration, which cannot occur within Our singularity; (12) the condition of being created in ‘ultimate’ reality and having consequent inherent individual existence; (13) all intrinsic defining characteristics of conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, including the defining characteristics of an individual self; (14) all things (consisting of the five psycho-physical aggregates, the twelve sense fields, the eighteen sensory elements, and corporeal, formless, conditioned and unconditioned phenomena); (15) that which has arisen in the mirage of space and time which in ‘ultimate’ reality cannot be apprehended; (16) that which is comprised of the five psycho-physical aggregates—of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness—which collectively comprise to form an “entity”, which cannot be apprehended in ‘ultimate’ reality; (17) an essential nature with respect to anything originating in ‘relative’ existence from combinations of causes and con-

ditions, specifically comprised of an individual self; and (18) an essential nature with respect to anything originating in 'relative' existence from combinations of causes and conditions, that is subsequently classified as an "entity".

CHAPTER TWO: ALL PHENOMENA

2.1 Then, once again, the Blessed One addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra in the following words, "Śāradvatīputra, if you ask what are the 'ten powers of the tathāgatas,' they are as follows: (1) definitive knowledge that things which are possible are indeed possible; (2) definitive knowledge that things which are impossible are indeed impossible; (3) definitive knowledge, through possibilities and causes, of the maturation of past, future, and present actions, and of those who undertake such actions; (4) definitive knowledge of multiple world systems and diverse dispositions; (5) definitive knowledge of the diversity of inclinations and the multiplicity of inclinations that other sentient beings and other individuals have; (6) definitive knowledge of whether the acumen of other sentient beings and other individuals is supreme or not; (7) definitive knowledge of the paths that lead anywhere; (8) definitive knowledge of all the afflicted and purified mental states and their emergence, with respect to the faculties, powers, branches of enlightenment, aspects of liberation, meditative concentrations, meditative stabilities, and formless absorptions; (9) definitive knowledge of the recollection of multiple past abodes, and of the transference of consciousness at the death and birth of all sentient beings; and (10) definitive knowledge that through one's own extrasensory powers one has actualized, achieved, and maintained in this very lifetime the liberation of mind and the liberation of wisdom in the state that is free from contaminants because all contaminants have ceased, and so one can say, 'My rebirths have come to an end. I have practiced chastity. I have fulfilled my duties. I will experience no other rebirths apart from this one.' Śāradvatīputra, these are called the ten powers of the tathāgatas.

2.2 "Śāradvatīputra, if you ask what are the 'four assurances' [proclaimed by the tathāgatas], they are as follows: " (1) When I claim to have attained genuinely perfect buddhahood, if some virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else should say that I have not attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to these particular phenomena here, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, based on their worldly doctrines. By correctly disregarding that reason, I have found happiness and abide therein. To have attained this absence of trepidation is to have attained fearlessness. I claim my exalted place as a great leader. I will rightly roar the lion's roar in the midst of the assembly! I will turn the wheel of Brahmā which has not previously been turned [in the world] in conformity with the sacred doctrine by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else!

2.3 " (2) When I claim I am one whose contaminants have ceased, if some virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else should say that these particular contaminants of mine have not ceased, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, based on their worldly doctrines. By correctly disregarding that reason, I have found happiness and abide therein. To have attained this absence of trepidation is to have attained fearlessness. I claim my exalted place as a great leader. I will rightly roar the lion's roar in the midst of the assembly! I will turn the wheel of Brahmā which has not previously been turned in the world in conformity with the sacred doctrine by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else!

2.4 " (3) When I claim to have explained those things which cause obstacles on the path, if some virtuous ascetic,

brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else should insist in this respect that even though one might depend on those things, there will be no obstacles and that that would be impossible, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, based on their worldly doctrines. By correctly disregarding that reason, I have found happiness and abide therein. To have attained this absence of trepidation is to have attained fearlessness. I claim my exalted place as a great leader. I will rightly roar the lion's roar in the midst of the assembly! I will turn the wheel of Brahmā which has not previously been turned in the world in conformity with the sacred doctrine by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else!

2.5 “ (4) When I claim to have explained the path through which suffering will genuinely cease, having ascertained that śrāvakas will find it conducive to the attainment of sublime emancipation, if some virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else in the world should say in this respect that even if one practices this path, it will not be conducive to emancipation, that suffering will not cease, and that that is impossible, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, based on their worldly doctrines. By correctly disregarding that reason, I have found happiness and abide therein. To have attained this absence of trepidation is to have attained fearlessness. I claim my exalted place as a great leader. I will rightly roar the lion's roar in the midst of the assembly! I will turn the wheel of Brahmā which has not previously been turned in the world in conformity with the sacred doctrine by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else! These are called the four assurances.

2.6 “If you ask what are the ‘four unhindered discernments,’ they comprise (1) unhindered discernment of meaning, (2) unhindered discernment of the doctrine, (3) unhindered discernment of etymology, and (4) unhindered discernment of inspiration.

2.7 “If you ask what is ‘great loving kindness,’ it is an action in which the tathāgatas engage on behalf of all sentient beings, treating enemies and friends identically. That is called great loving kindness. If you ask what is ‘great compassion,’ it is unstinting loving kindness toward all sentient beings, when there are actually no sentient beings. That is called great compassion.

2.8 “If you ask what are the ‘eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas,’ they are as follows: (1) The tathāgatas are without clumsiness; (2) they are not noisy; (3) they are without false memories; (4) they are without differentiating perceptions; (5) they are without uncomposed minds; (6) they are without the indifference that lacks discernment; (7) they do not degenerate in their resolution; (8) they do not degenerate in their perseverance; (9) they do not degenerate in their recollection; (10) they do not degenerate in their meditative stability; (11) they do not degenerate in their wisdom; (12) they do not degenerate in their liberation, nor in their perception of liberating pristine cognition; (13) all the activities of their bodies are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition; (14) all the activities of their speech are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition; (15) all the activities of their minds are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition; (16) they engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the past; (17) they engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the future; and (18) they engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the present. These are called the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

2.9 “If you ask what is the ‘understanding of all phenomena,’ it is the partial understanding of selflessness with respect to personal identity that śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas acquire with reference to the twelve sense fields. That is called the understanding of all phenomena.

2.10 “If you ask what is the ‘understanding of the aspects of the path,’ it is the emancipation from cyclic existence that bodhisattvas acquire through the path of the bodhisattvas, inasmuch as they are not attracted by the vehicles of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, even though they understand the paths of all three vehicles. That is called the understanding of the aspects of the path.

2.11 “If you ask what is the ‘understanding of omniscience,’ it is the knowledge that the tathāgatas have, without hesitation, with regard to all things, in all their aspects, throughout all the three times. That is called omniscience.

2.12 “If you ask what are the ‘six transcendent perfections,’ they comprise (1) the transcendent perfection of generosity, (2) the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, (3) the transcendent perfection of tolerance, (4) the transcendent perfection of perseverance, (5) the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and (6) the transcendent perfection of wisdom. These are called the six transcendent perfections.

2.13 “If you ask what are the ‘six extrasensory powers,’ they comprise (1) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of [miraculous] activities, (2) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of divine clairvoyance, (3) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of divine clairaudience, (4) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of other minds, (5) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of recollection of past lives, and (6) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of the cessation of contaminants. These are called the six extrasensory powers.

2.14 “If you ask what are the ‘five eyes,’ they comprise (1) the eye of flesh, (2) the eye of divine clairvoyance, (3) the eye of wisdom, (4) the eye of the sacred doctrine, and (5) the eye of the buddha. These are called the five eyes.

2.15 “If you ask what are the ‘thirty-two major marks of a superior man that the tathāgatas possess,’ they are as follows:

2.16 (1) The Blessed One has feet that are well positioned. In this regard, ‘excellent positioning of the feet’ means that the soles of his two feet entirely touch the ground. Just as when the long, evenly balanced base of a basket is placed on level ground, the bottom of the base entirely touches the ground, in the same way, the Blessed One is endowed with feet that are well positioned. (2) The Blessed One has feet that are marked with the motif of the wheel. In this regard, the expression ‘marked with the motif of the wheel’ denotes the perfectly formed motif of a wheel with a thousand spokes, a hub, and a circumference, which elegantly appears on the soles of his two feet.

2.17 (3) The Blessed One has hands and feet that are tender and soft. In this regard, ‘the tenderness and softness of his hands and feet’ means that, unlike those of human beings, they resemble tree cotton or shrub cotton. (4) The Blessed One has long toes and fingers. In this regard, ‘long toes and fingers’ means that the fingers of his hands and the toes of his feet are exceedingly long, unlike those of other human beings.

2.18 (5) The Blessed One is endowed with hands and feet that are webbed. In fact, his hands and feet are prominently webbed, unlike those of other human beings. (6) The Blessed One is endowed with broad heels. In this regard, 'broad heels' means that the bases of his two heels are broad, unlike those of other human beings.

2.19 (7) The Blessed One is endowed with inconspicuous ankle bones, In this regard, 'the inconspicuousness of his ankle bones' means that, being endowed with broad heels, he is also endowed with inconspicuous ankle bones, unlike those of other human beings. (8) The Blessed One is endowed with calves resembling those of an antelope. In this regard, 'calves resembling those of an antelope' means that his calves are slender and tapered, just like those of Śarabha Aiṇeya, the king of ungulates.

2.20 (9) The Blessed One is endowed with arms that reach down to his knees when standing, without bending down. In this regard, the expression 'arms that reach down to his knees when standing, without bending down' means that when the Blessed One is standing upright, the palms of both hands can touch and probe around his kneecaps, without him having to bend down. (10) The Blessed One is endowed with a contracted male organ. In this regard, the 'contractedness of his male organ' means that he resembles a thoroughbred elephant or a thoroughbred steed of noble breed.

2.21 (11) The Blessed One is endowed with hairs that grow finely and distinctly, curling to the right. In this regard, the expression 'hairs that grow finely and distinctly, curling to the right' means that from each of the pores of his skin a single hair finely grows, bluish black in color, curling softly into rings, lustrous and curling to the right. (12) The Blessed One is endowed with body hairs that point upwards. In this regard, the 'pointing upwards of his body hairs' means that the hair that grows from his head and the hairs of his body point upwards and finely grow, bluish black in color, all curling softly into rings, lustrous and curling to the right.

2.22 (13) The Blessed One is endowed with delicate, soft, and lustrous skin. In this regard, the expression 'delicate, soft, and lustrous skin' means that neither water nor dust adhere to his body, or settle upon it. (14) The Blessed One is endowed with a golden complexion. This means that his physical form is elegant, fine, and beautiful to behold, just like an offering post fashioned of finest gold that is adorned with various gemstones, for which reason it is said to resemble the color of gold.

2.23 (15) The Blessed One is endowed with seven prominent parts. In this regard, the expression 'seven prominent parts' means that the two prominent [backs of] his legs are elegant, fine, beautiful to behold, and filled out with flesh and blood. Similarly, the two prominent [backs of] his arms are elegant, fine, beautiful to behold, and filled out with flesh and blood. There are also two prominent parts at his shoulders and one prominent part at the nape of his neck, which are elegant, fine, beautiful to behold, and filled out with flesh and blood. (16) The Blessed One is endowed with amply curved shoulders.

2.24 (17) The Blessed One is endowed with collarbones that are well covered. (18) The Blessed One is born with an extremely upright posture.

2.25 (19) The Blessed One is endowed with a girth like the banyan tree. In that regard, the expression ‘endowed with a girth like the banyan tree’ means that the width of his body is proportionate to its length, and its length is proportionate to its width. That is designated as a ‘girth like the banyan tree.’ (20) The Blessed One is endowed with lion-like cheeks.

2.26 (21) The Blessed One is endowed with forty teeth. (22) The Blessed One is endowed with close-fitting teeth.

2.27 (23) The Blessed One is endowed with teeth whose tips are long, sharp, and white. (24) The Blessed One is endowed with a superior organ of taste. This means that within his straight throat he has a gullet that is straight and not crooked, enabling him to swallow without hesitation.

2.28 (25) The Blessed One is endowed with a long and slender tongue. In this regard, the expression ‘long and slender tongue’ means that, when the Tathāgata wishes, his tongue can protrude from his mouth, and is capable of touching and probing around his nostrils, eye sockets, and ears, and it can even cover his whole face, as far as the hairline. (26) The Blessed One is endowed with the divine voice of Brahmā.

2.29 (27) The Blessed One is endowed with wide eyes and bovine eyelashes. (28) The Blessed One is endowed with deep blue eyes.

2.30 (29) The Blessed One is endowed with completely perfect eyeballs. (30) The Blessed One is endowed with the splendor of an aureole of light, extending a full arm span.

2.31 (31) The Blessed One is endowed with a visage that resembles the full moon. (32) The Blessed One is endowed with a hair ringlet that grows between his eyebrows, and which is as soft as cotton, and white as a water lily, the moon, a conch, the filament of a lotus, the milk of a cow, and hoar-frost.

2.32 (33) The Blessed One is endowed with a crown protuberance. These are called the thirty-two marks of a superior man that the tathāgatas possess.

2.33 “If you ask what are the ‘eighty minor marks,’ they are as follows:

2.34 (1) The lord buddhas are endowed with copper-colored nails. (2) Their bodies are firm, like that of Nārāyaṇa.

2.35 (3) Their kneecaps are elegant. (4) Their bodies are clean.

2.36 (5) Their bodies are soft. (6) Their bodies are supple.

2.37 (7) Their bodies are lustrous. (8) Their bodies do not slouch.

2.38 (9) Their fingers and toes are compact. (10) The lord buddhas have round fingers and toes.

- 2.39 (11) Their fingers and toes are tapering. (12) Their blood vessels and nerves are inconspicuous.
- 2.40 (13) Their ankles are inconspicuous. (14) Their body is well formed.
- 2.41 (15) Their body is well proportioned. (16) Their senses are completely purified.
- 2.42 (17) Their understanding is perfectly pure. (18) Their behavior is perfect.
- 2.43 (19) The lord buddhas are endowed with splendor and intelligence. (20) They are worthy of beholding.
- 2.44 (21) Their mouth is not too wide. (22) Their mouth is without blemish.
- 2.45 (23) Their lips are red like the balsam fruit. (24) Their mouth is compact.
- 2.46 (25) Their voice is deep [like the trumpet of an elephant or the rolling of thunder]. (26) Their navel is deep.
- 2.47 (27) Their navel is well rounded. (28) Their navel curls to the right.
- 2.48 (29) Their arms and legs are compact. (30) The lord buddhas are endowed with [well-proportioned] arms and legs, as intended.
- 2.49 (31) Their palms are even. (32) The lines of their palms are unbroken.
- 2.50 (33) The lines of their palms are extended. (34) Their body is immaculate and without unpleasant odors.
- 2.51 (35) Their complexion is radiant. (36) Their [sense faculties]—the ‘gates to the sense fields’—are excellent.
- 2.52 (37) Their face is moonlike. (38) They speak first.
- 2.53 (39) Their face is without frowns of anger. (40) The pores of their body all emit a pleasant odor.
- 2.54 (41) Their mouth is fragrant. (42) Their gait is that of a lion.
- 2.55 (43) Their gait is that of a mighty elephant. (44) Their gait is that of a swan.
- 2.56 (45) Their head is [large], similar to a parasol. (46) Their speech is sweet and fully perfected.
- 2.57 (47) They are endowed with sharp eye-teeth. (48) Their nose is prominent.
- 2.58 (49) Their tongue is red. (50) The lord buddhas have a tongue that is slender and large.

- 2.59 (51) Their body hairs are bluish black. (52) Their body hairs are clean.
- 2.60 (53) Their eyes are wide. (54) Their orifices are without deterioration.
- 2.61 (55) Their palms and soles are red. (56) Their navel does not protrude.
- 2.62 (57) Their abdomen is not misshapen. (58) Their abdomen is slender.
- 2.63 (59) The lord buddhas have an abdomen that is unwrinkled. (60) Their joints are elegant.
- 2.64 (61) Their joints are extended. (62) Their hands and feet are utterly pure.
- 2.65 (63) They have a symmetrical aureole of light, extending a full arm span. (64) Their luminosity radiates as they walk.
- 2.66 (65) They satisfy whichever gods and humans encounter them. (66) They are never mistreated though visible to all creatures.
- 2.67 (67) They instruct sentient beings. (68) Their speech is pervasive, in conformity with their assembly, but it does not extend outside their assembly.
- 2.68 (69) Their torso resembles that of a lion. (70) The joints of their bodies are well articulated.
- 2.69 (71) Their crown protuberance is inconspicuous. (72) The hair of their heads is bluish black, soft, and long.
- 2.70 (73) The hair of their heads is not dishevelled. (74) The hairs of their heads point upwards, finely and curling into locks.
- 2.71 (75) The hair of their heads is untangled. (76) Their hearts are excellently adorned with the śrīvatsa motif.
- 2.72 (77) The markings on their palms and soles blaze with splendor. (78) The lord buddhas are endowed with markings, as if they were drawn in the colors of vermilion, realgar, minium, indigo bark, and verdigris. “These are called the eighty minor marks.”
- 2.73 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, if great bodhisattva beings should not cultivate fixation on all these phenomena, consequently do bodhisattvas not consider all these things to be distinct? That is to say, if bodhisattvas do not consider those phenomena that are virtuous, those that are non-virtuous, those that are specific, those that are non-specific, those that are mundane, those that are supramundane, those that are contaminated, those that are uncontaminated, those that are conditioned, those that are unconditioned, those that are common, and do not those that are uncommon, how then will the path of enlightenment be attained, and if it is

not attained, how will omniscience be acquired?”

2.74 Then the Blessed One addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas do perceive all such phenomena distinctly, but that pertains to the relative truth, not the ultimate truth.”

2.75 “Venerable Lord, in what way does that pertain to the relative but not the ultimate truth?” he asked. The Blessed One responded, “Śāradvatīputra, whenever a bodhisattva considers which of those things constitute mundane virtuous phenomena, they include the following: respect for one’s father, respect for one’s mother, respect for a virtuous ascetic, respect for a brāhmin, acts of service undertaken on behalf of a clan chieftain, meritorious deeds originating from generosity, meritorious deeds originating from ethical discipline and meditation, merits endowed with service, merits endowed with skillful means, the paths associated with the ten virtuous actions, the mundane contemplation of a bloated corpse, the contemplation of a worm-infested corpse, the contemplation of a bloody corpse, the contemplation of a putrefied corpse, the contemplation of a blue-black corpse, the contemplation of a devoured corpse, the contemplation of a dismembered corpse, the contemplation of a skeleton, the contemplation of an immolated corpse, and likewise, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless meditative absorptions, the recollection of the Buddha, the recollection of the Dharma, the recollection of the Saṅgha, the recollection of ethical discipline, the recollection of renunciation, the recollection of the god realms, the recollection of quiescence, the recollection of respiration, and the recollection of death. These are considered to be mundane virtuous phenomena.

2.76 “When a bodhisattva considers which things constitute non-virtuous phenomena, they include the following: the slaying of living creatures, theft, sexual misconduct, lying, slander, verbal abuse, irresponsible chatter, covetousness, malice, wrong views, anger, enmity, hypocrisy, annoyance, violence, jealousy, miserliness, and pride. These are considered to be non-virtuous phenomena.

2.77 “When a bodhisattva considers which things constitute non-specific phenomena, they include the following: non-specific physical actions, non-specific verbal actions, non-specific mental actions, the non-specific four primary elements, the non-specific five sense organs, the non-specific five psycho-physical aggregates, the twelve sense fields, the eighteen sensory elements, and the maturation of past actions. These are considered to be non-specific phenomena.

2.78 “When a bodhisattva considers which things constitute supramundane phenomena, they include the following: the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous abilities, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the faculties that will enable knowledge of all that is unknown, the faculties that acquire the knowledge of all things, the faculties endowed with the knowledge of all things, the meditative stability endowed with ideation and scrutiny, the meditative stability free from ideation and merely endowed with scrutiny, the meditative stability free from both ideation and scrutiny, the [eighteen] aspects of emptiness (starting from the emptiness of internal phenomena and ending with the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities), the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eigh-

teen distinct qualities of the buddhas. These are considered to be supramundane phenomena.

2.79 “Then, if you ask what constitutes contaminated phenomena, they include the following: the five psycho-physical aggregates which are encompassed in the three world systems, the twelve sense fields, the eighteen sensory elements, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, and the four formless meditative absorptions. These are called contaminated phenomena.

2.80 “If you ask what constitutes uncontaminated phenomena, they include the following: the four applications of mindfulness, and likewise all those [aforementioned causal and fruitional] attributes, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. These are uncontaminated phenomena.

2.81 “If you ask what constitutes conditioned phenomena, they include the following: the world system of desire, the world system of form, the world system of formlessness, and likewise, the five psycho-physical aggregates, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless meditative absorptions, and similarly, all those [aforementioned] attributes extending from the four applications of mindfulness, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. These constitute conditioned phenomena.

2.82 “If you ask what constitutes unconditioned phenomena, they include the following: Non-arising, non-abiding, non-disintegration, and non-transformation with respect to all things, and similarly, the cessation of desire, the cessation of hatred, the cessation of delusion, the abiding of phenomena in the real nature, reality, the expanse of reality, maturity with respect to all things, the real nature, the unmistakable real nature, the inalienable real nature, and the finality of existence. These are called unconditioned phenomena.

2.83 “If you ask what constitutes common phenomena, they include the following: the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless meditative absorptions, and the [first] five extrasensory powers. These are common phenomena from the perspective of ordinary persons.

2.84 “If you ask what constitutes uncommon phenomena from the perspective of ordinary persons, they include the following: the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, the three gateways to liberation, and [all the aforementioned attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. These are called uncommon phenomena.

2.85 “Śāradvatīputra, although bodhisattvas see all these phenomena distinctly from the perspective of the relative truth, they do not become fixated on them as ultimately real. If you ask in what way they do not become fixated, Śāradvatīputra, it is as if someone were to see the corps of elephants, cavalry, chariots, and infantry without becoming fixated on the notion, ‘This is an army.’ Śāradvatīputra, in the same way, great bodhisattva beings perceive all phenomena distinctly, but do not become fixated on them.

2.86 “Śāradvatīputra, just as when someone afflicted by intense heat perceives various mirage-like images, moving in the manner of waves, but does not become fixated on the notion that this mirage is actually water, in the same

way, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings perceive all things distinctly but do not become fixated on them.

2.87 “Śāradvatīputra, just as when someone perceives diverse visual imagery in a dream, but on awakening does not become fixated on the notion that that visual imagery actually exists, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings perceive all things distinctly but do not become fixated on them.”

2.88 “Śāradvatīputra, just as when someone perceives the moon reflected in water, but does not become fixated on the notion that these reflections are actually the moon, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings perceive all things distinctly but do not become fixated on all things as entities.

2.89 “Śāradvatīputra, just as when someone perceives an optical aberration, but does not become fixated on these perceptions as entities, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings perceive all things distinctly but do not become fixated on all things as entities.

2.90 “Śāradvatīputra, just as when someone moves through space by the power of miraculous abilities, but does not become fixated on the notion that this is space, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings investigate all things, they do not become fixated on the entirety of these phenomena.

2.91 “Śāradvatīputra, just as when someone hears the sound of an echo, but does not become fixated on the notion that this is sound, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings perceive all things distinctly, but they do not become fixated on them.

2.92 “Śāradvatīputra, just as when someone sees a gandharva castle in the sky, but does not become fixated on the notion that this is actually a castle, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings perceive all things distinctly, but they do not become fixated on them.

2.93 “Śāradvatīputra, just as when someone sees the reflection of their face in a mirror, but does not become fixated on the notion that it is actually their face, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings perceive all phenomena distinctly, but they do not become fixated on them.

2.94 “Śāradvatīputra, it is in this manner that great bodhisattva beings perceive all things distinctly, but do not become fixated on those phenomena. One who is without fixation on anything will reach the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

2.95 *This completes the second chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “All Phenomena.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWO:

ALL PHENOMENA

2.A The ‘ten powers of the tathāgatas,’ ... are as follows: (1) definitive knowledge that things which are possible are indeed possible; (2) definitive knowledge that things which are impossible are indeed impossible; (3) definitive knowledge, through possibilities and causes, of the maturation of past, future, and present actions, and of those who undertake such actions; (4) definitive knowledge of multiple world systems and diverse dispositions; (5) definitive knowledge of the diversity of inclinations and the multiplicity of inclinations that other sentient beings and other individuals have; (6) definitive knowledge of whether the acumen of other sentient beings and other individuals is supreme or not; (7) definitive knowledge of the paths that lead anywhere; (8) definitive knowledge of all the afflicted and purified mental states and their emergence, with respect to the faculties, powers, branches of enlightenment, aspects of liberation, meditative concentrations, meditative stabilities, and formless absorptions; (9) definitive knowledge of the recollection of multiple past abodes, and of the transference of consciousness at the death and birth of all sentient beings; and (10) definitive knowledge that through one’s own extrasensory powers one has actualized, achieved, and maintained in this very lifetime the liberation of mind and the liberation of wisdom in the state that is free from contaminants because all contaminants have ceased, and so one can say, ‘My rebirths have come to an end. I have practiced chastity. I have fulfilled my duties. I will experience no other rebirths apart from this one.’

2.B The ‘four assurances’ [proclaimed by the tathāgatas], ... are as follows: “(1) When I claim to have attained genuinely perfect buddhahood ... (2) When I claim I am one whose contaminants have ceased ... (3) When I claim to have explained those things which cause obstacles on the path ... (4) When I claim to have explained the path through which suffering will genuinely cease, having ascertained that śrāvakas will find it conducive to the attainment of sublime emancipation ... if some virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā {deity}, or anyone else should say that I have not attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to these particular phenomena here ... {or} should say that these particular contaminants of mine have not ceased ... {or} should insist in this respect that even though one might depend on those things {causing obstacles on the path}, there will be no obstacles and that that would be impossible ... {or} should say in this respect that even if one practices this path, it will not be conducive to emancipation, that suffering will not cease, and that that is impossible, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, based on their worldly doctrines. By correctly disregarding that reason, I have found happiness and abide therein. To have attained this absence of trepidation is to have attained fearlessness. I claim my exalted place as a great leader. I will rightly roar the lion’s roar in the midst of the assembly! I will turn the wheel of Brahmā which has not previously been turned [in the world] in conformity with the sacred doctrine by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā {deity}, or anyone else!

2.C The ‘four unhindered discernments,’ ... comprise {unhindered discernment of} (1) ... meaning, (2) ... the doctrine, (3) ... etymology {or the study of the origin of words}, and (4) ... inspiration.

2.D ‘Great loving kindness,’ ... is an action in which the tathāgatas engage on behalf of all sentient beings, treating enemies and friends identically ... ‘Great compassion,’ ... is unstinting loving kindness toward all sentient beings, when there are actually no sentient beings.

2.E The 'eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas,' ... are as follows: (1) The tathāgatas are without clumsiness; (2) they are not noisy; (3) they are without false memories; (4) they are without differentiating perceptions; (5) they are without uncomposed minds; (6) they are without the indifference that lacks discernment; (7) they do not degenerate in their resolution; (8) they do not degenerate in their perseverance; (9) they do not degenerate in their recollection; (10) they do not degenerate in their meditative stability; (11) they do not degenerate in their wisdom; (12) they do not degenerate in their liberation, nor in their perception of liberating pristine cognition; (13) all the activities of their bodies are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition; (14) all the activities of their speech are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition; (15) all the activities of their minds are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition; (16) they engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the past; (17) they engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the future; and (18) they engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the present.

2.F The 'understanding of all phenomena,' ... is {initially} the partial {incomplete or limited} understanding of selflessness with respect to personal identity that śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas acquire with reference to the twelve sense fields ... {next} the 'understanding of the aspects of the path,' ... is the emancipation from cyclic existence that bodhisattvas acquire through the path of the bodhisattvas, inasmuch as they are not attracted by the vehicles of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, even though they understand the paths of all three vehicles ... {finally} the 'understanding of omniscience,' ... is the knowledge that the tathāgatas have, without hesitation, with regard to all things, in all their aspects, throughout all the three times.

2.G The 'six transcendent perfections,' ... comprise (1) the transcendent perfection of generosity, (2) the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, (3) the transcendent perfection of tolerance, (4) the transcendent perfection of perseverance, (5) the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and (6) the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

2.H The 'six extrasensory powers,' ... comprise {the extrasensory powers realizing knowledge} (1) ... of [miraculous] activities, (2) ... of divine clairvoyance, (3) ... of divine clairaudience, (4) ... of other minds, (5) ... of recollection of past lives, and (6) ... of the cessation of contaminants.

2.I The 'five eyes,' ... comprise (1) the eye of flesh, (2) the eye of divine clairvoyance, (3) the eye of wisdom, (4) the eye of the sacred doctrine, and (5) the eye of the buddha.

2.J The 'thirty-two major marks of a superior man that the tathāgatas possess,' ... are as follows: {The Blessed One} (1) ... has feet that are well positioned ... means that the soles of his two feet entirely touch the ground. Just as when the long, evenly balanced base of a basket is placed on level ground, the bottom of the base entirely touches the ground ... (2) ... has feet that are marked with the motif of the wheel ... denotes the perfectly formed motif of a wheel with a thousand spokes, a hub, and a circumference, which elegantly appears on the soles of his two feet. (3) ... has hands and feet that are tender and soft ... means that, unlike those of human beings, they resemble tree cotton or shrub cotton. (4) ... has long toes and fingers ... means that the fingers of his hands and the toes of his feet

are exceedingly long, unlike those of other human beings. (5) ... is endowed with hands and feet that are webbed ... are prominently webbed, unlike those of other human beings. (6) ... is endowed with broad heels ... means that the bases of his two heels are broad, unlike those of other human beings. (7) ... is endowed with inconspicuous ankle bones ... means that, being endowed with broad heels, he is also endowed with inconspicuous ankle bones, unlike those of other human beings. (8) ... is endowed with calves resembling those of an antelope ... means that his calves are slender and tapered, just like those of Śarabha Aīṇeya, the king of ungulates. (9) ... is endowed with arms that reach down to his knees when standing, without bending down ... means that when the Blessed One is standing upright, the palms of both hands can touch and probe around his kneecaps, without him having to bend down. (10) ... is endowed with a contracted male organ ... means that he resembles a thoroughbred elephant or a thoroughbred steed of noble breed. (11) ... is endowed with hairs that grow finely and distinctly, curling to the right ... means that from each of the pores of his skin a single hair finely grows, bluish black in color, curling softly into rings, lustrous and curling to the right. (12) ... is endowed with body hairs that point upwards ... means that the hair that grows from his head and the hairs of his body point upwards and finely grow, bluish black in color, all curling softly into rings, lustrous and curling to the right. (13) ... is endowed with delicate, soft, and lustrous skin ... means that neither water nor dust adhere to his body, or settle upon it. (14) ... is endowed with a golden complexion ... means that his physical form is elegant, fine, and beautiful to behold, just like an offering pot fashioned of finest gold that is adorned with various gemstones ... (15) ... is endowed with seven prominent parts ... means that the two prominent [backs of] his legs ... the two prominent [backs of] his arms ... {and} also two prominent parts at his shoulders and one prominent part at the nape of his neck ... are elegant, fine, beautiful to behold, and filled out with flesh and blood. (16) ... is endowed with amply curved shoulders. (17) ... is endowed with collarbones that are well covered. (18) ... is born with an extremely upright posture. (19) ... is endowed with a girth like the banyan tree ... means that the width of his body is proportionate to its length, and its length is proportionate to its width ... (20) ... is endowed with lion-like cheeks. (21) ... is endowed with forty teeth. (22) ... is endowed with close-fitting teeth. (23) ... is endowed with teeth whose tips are long, sharp, and white. (24) ... is endowed with a superior organ of taste ... means that within his straight throat he has a gullet that is straight and not crooked, enabling him to swallow without hesitation. (25) ... is endowed with a long and slender tongue ... means that, when the Tathāgata wishes, his tongue can protrude from his mouth, and is capable of touching and probing around his nostrils, eye sockets, and ears, and it can even cover his whole face, as far as the hairline. (26) ... is endowed with the divine voice of Brahmā. (27) ... is endowed with wide eyes and bovine eyelashes. (28) ... is endowed with deep blue eyes. (29) ... is endowed with completely perfect eyeballs. (30) ... is endowed with the splendor of an aureole of light, extending a full arm span. (31) ... is endowed with a visage that resembles the full moon. (32) ... is endowed with a hair ringlet that grows between his eyebrows, and which is as soft as cotton, and white as a water lily, the moon, a conch, the filament of a lotus, the milk of a cow, and hoar-frost. (33) ... is endowed with a crown protuberance.

2.K The 'eighty minor marks,' ... are as follows: (1) The lord buddhas are endowed with copper-colored nails. (2) Their bodies are firm, like that of Nārāyaṇa. (3) Their kneecaps are elegant. (4) Their bodies are clean. (5) Their bodies are soft. (6) Their bodies are supple. (7) Their bodies are lustrous. (8) Their bodies do not slouch. (9) Their fingers and toes are compact. (10) The lord buddhas have round fingers and toes. (11) Their fingers and toes are tapering. (12) Their blood vessels and nerves are inconspicuous. (13) Their ankles are inconspicuous. (14) Their body is well formed. (15) Their body is well proportioned. (16) Their senses are completely purified. (17) Their understand-

ing is perfectly pure. (18) Their behavior is perfect. (19) The lord buddhas are endowed with splendor and intelligence. (20) They are worthy of beholding. (21) Their mouth is not too wide. (22) Their mouth is without blemish. (23) Their lips are red like the balsam fruit. (24) Their mouth is compact. (25) Their voice is deep [like the trumpet of an elephant or the rolling of thunder]. (26) Their navel is deep. (27) Their navel is well rounded. (28) Their navel curls to the right. (29) Their arms and legs are compact. (30) The lord buddhas are endowed with [well-proportioned] arms and legs, as intended. (31) Their palms are even. (32) The lines of their palms are unbroken. (33) The lines of their palms are extended. (34) Their body is immaculate and without unpleasant odors. (35) Their complexion is radiant. (36) Their [sense faculties]—the ‘gates to the sense fields’—are excellent. (37) Their face is moonlike. (38) They speak first. (39) Their face is without frowns of anger. (40) The pores of their body all emit a pleasant odor. (41) Their mouth is fragrant. (42) Their gait is that of a lion. (43) Their gait is that of a mighty elephant. (44) Their gait is that of a swan. (45) Their head is [large], similar to a parasol. (46) Their speech is sweet and fully perfected. (47) They are endowed with sharp eye-teeth. (48) Their nose is prominent. (49) Their tongue is red. (50) The lord buddhas have a tongue that is slender and large. (51) Their body hairs are bluish black. (52) Their body hairs are clean. (53) Their eyes are wide. (54) Their orifices are without deterioration. (55) Their palms and soles are red. (56) Their navel does not protrude. (57) Their abdomen is not misshapen. (58) Their abdomen is slender. (59) The lord buddhas have an abdomen that is unwrinkled. (60) Their joints are elegant. (61) Their joints are extended. (62) Their hands and feet are utterly pure. (63) They have a symmetrical aureole of light, extending a full arm span. (64) Their luminosity radiates as they walk. (65) They satisfy whichever gods and humans encounter them. (66) They are never mistreated though visible to all creatures. (67) They instruct sentient beings. (68) Their speech is pervasive, in conformity with their assembly, but it does not extend outside their assembly. (69) Their torso resembles that of a lion. (70) The joints of their bodies are well articulated. (71) Their crown protuberance is inconspicuous. (72) The hair of their heads is bluish black, soft, and long. (73) The hair of their heads is not dishevelled. (74) The hairs of their heads point upwards, finely and curling into locks. (75) The hair of their heads is untangled. (76) Their hearts are excellently adorned with the śrīvatsa motif. (77) The markings on their palms and soles blaze with splendor. (78) The lord buddhas are endowed with markings, as if they were drawn in the colors of vermilion, realgar, minium, indigo bark, and verdigris.

2.L {Regarding phenomena that are virtuous, non-virtuous, specific, non-specific, mundane, supramundane, contaminated, uncontaminated, conditioned, unconditioned, common, and uncommon} ... bodhisattvas do perceive all such phenomena distinctly {as follows}, but that pertains to the relative truth, not the ultimate truth ... Whenever a bodhisattva considers which of those things constitute **mundane virtuous phenomena**, they include ... respect for one’s father ... mother ... a virtuous ascetic ... a brāhmin, acts of service undertaken on behalf of a clan chieftain, meritorious deeds originating from generosity ... from ethical discipline and meditation, merits endowed with service ... with skillful means, the paths associated with the ten virtuous actions, the mundane contemplation of a bloated corpse ... a worm-infested corpse ... a bloody corpse ... a putrefied corpse ... a blue-black corpse ... a devoured corpse ... a dismembered corpse ... a skeleton ... an immolated corpse, and likewise, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless meditative absorptions, the recollection of the Buddha ... the Dharma ... the Saṅgha ... of ethical discipline ... of renunciation ... of the god realms ... of quiescence ... of respiration, and ... of death ... When a bodhisattva considers which things constitute **non-virtuous phenomena**, they include ... the slaying of living creatures, theft, sexual misconduct, lying, slander, verbal abuse, irresponsible

chatter, covetousness, malice, wrong views, anger, enmity, hypocrisy, annoyance, violence, jealousy, miserliness, and pride ... When a bodhisattva considers which things constitute **non-specific phenomena**, they include ... non-specific physical actions ... verbal actions ... mental actions, the non-specific four primary elements ... five sense organs ... five psycho-physical aggregates, the twelve sense fields, the eighteen sensory elements, and the maturation of past actions ... When a bodhisattva considers which things constitute **supramundane phenomena**, they include ... the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous abilities, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the faculties that will enable knowledge of all that is unknown, the faculties that acquire the knowledge of all things, the faculties endowed with the knowledge of all things, the meditative stability endowed with ideation and scrutiny ... free from ideation and merely endowed with scrutiny ... free from both ideation and scrutiny, the [eighteen] aspects of emptiness (starting from the emptiness of internal phenomena and ending with the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities), the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... Then, if you ask what constitutes **contaminated phenomena**, they include ... the five psycho-physical aggregates which are encompassed in the three world systems, the twelve sense fields, the eighteen sensory elements, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, and the four formless meditative absorptions ... If you ask what constitutes **uncontaminated phenomena**, they include ... the four applications of mindfulness, and likewise all those [aforementioned causal and fruitional] attributes, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... If you ask what constitutes **conditioned phenomena**, they include ... the world system of desire ... of form ... of formlessness, and likewise, the five psycho-physical aggregates, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless meditative absorptions, and similarly, all those [aforementioned] attributes extending from the four applications of mindfulness, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... If you ask what constitutes **unconditioned phenomena**, they include ... Non-arising, non-abiding, non-disintegration, and non-transformation with respect to all things, and similarly, the cessation of desire ... hatred ... delusion, the abiding of phenomena in the real nature, {relative} reality, the expanse of {relative} reality, maturity {of understanding} with respect to all things, the real nature {of phenomena}, {being} the unmistakable real nature, the inalienable real nature, and the finality of {relative} existence ... If you ask what constitutes **common phenomena**, they include ... the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless meditative absorptions, and the [first] five extrasensory powers ... If you ask what constitutes **uncommon phenomena** from the perspective of ordinary persons, they include ... the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, the three gateways to liberation, and {all those aforementioned causal and fruitional attributes}, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... Although bodhisattvas see all these phenomena distinctly from the perspective of the relative truth, they do not become fixated on them as ultimately real.

2.M If you ask in what way they do not become fixated {on these phenomena as ultimately real} ... it is as if someone were to see the corps of elephants, cavalry, chariots, and infantry without becoming fixated on the notion, 'This is an army.' ... Just as when someone afflicted by intense heat perceives various mirage-like images, moving in the manner of waves, but does not become fixated on the notion that this mirage is actually water ... just as when someone perceives diverse visual imagery in a dream, but on awakening does not become fixated on the notion that that

visual imagery actually exists, in the same way ... great bodhisattva beings perceive all things distinctly but do not become fixated on them ... Just as when someone perceives the moon reflected in water, but does not become fixated on the notion that these reflections are actually the moon ... just as when someone perceives an optical aberration, but does not become fixated on these perceptions as entities, in the same way ... great bodhisattva beings perceive all things distinctly but do not become fixated on all things as entities ... Just as when someone moves through space by the power of miraculous abilities, but does not become fixated on the notion that this is space, in the same way ... when great bodhisattva beings investigate all things, they do not become fixated on the entirety of these phenomena ... Just as when someone hears the sound of an echo, but does not become fixated on the notion that this is sound ... just as when someone sees a gandharva castle in the sky, but does not become fixated on the notion that this is actually a castle ... just as when someone sees the reflection of their face in a mirror, but does not become fixated on the notion that it is actually their face, in the same way ... great bodhisattva beings perceive all phenomena distinctly, but they do not become fixated on them ... One who is without fixation on anything will reach the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.

COMMENTARY

In this chapter the Buddha defines how bodhisattvas perceive all phenomena distinctly pertaining to the ‘relative’ truth, not the ‘ultimate’ truth ~ for in ultimate reality there is nothing to perceive from the point of Our singularity. He subsequently provides a list of all these phenomena pertaining to the relative truth ~ which solely exist in ‘relative’ reality, including the unconditioned phenomena—comprising {the path of nirvāṇa} of the cessation of desire, the cessation of hatred, the cessation of delusion, the abiding of phenomena in the real nature, {relative} reality, the expanse of {relative} reality, maturity {of understanding} with respect to all things, the real nature {of phenomena}, {being} the unmistakable real nature, the inalienable real nature, and the finality of {relative} existence. As explained by the Buddha in chapter one, “*nirvāṇa is empty of nirvāṇa*” ... for it is a path and a result ... and no path or result, or any phenomena, exists in the singularity of Our ultimate reality. **It must be understood that phenomena, whether conditioned, unconditioned, or otherwise, only exists in ‘relative’ reality, not in ‘ultimate’ reality.** And this is why the Buddha says in the chapter (above), “*Although bodhisattvas see all these phenomena distinctly from the perspective of the relative truth, they do not become fixated on them as ultimately real.*”

CHAPTER THREE: NON-FIXATION

3.1 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, what is the fixation of a bodhisattva?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, fixation denotes the views that bodhisattvas might adopt with regard to all things, and the deluded mindsets which they might have.”

3.2 Then he asked, “Lord, what views might great bodhisattva beings adopt with respect to all things?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, there are views which concern the psycho-physical aggregates, the sensory elements, the sense fields, the noble truths, and dependent origination. Similarly, there are views concerning the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and liberation. Similarly, there are views concerning the meditative

concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions. Similarly, there is a view concerning the contemplations [of impurity], a view concerning the recollections, a view concerning the aspects of perception, a view concerning the modes of knowledge, a view concerning the meditative stabilities, a view concerning the faculties, a view concerning the sense fields of mastery, and a view concerning the aspects of emptiness. Similarly, there are views concerning the ten powers of a tathāgata, the assurances, the unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, [and omniscience]. Similarly, there is a view concerning the transcendent perfections, a view concerning the extrasensory powers, a view concerning the eyes, a view concerning the major marks, and a view concerning the minor marks. Śāradvatīputra, these are the views that great bodhisattva beings might adopt, with respect to all things.”

3.3 Then he asked, “Lord, what are the deluded mindsets that great bodhisattva beings might have with respect to all things?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, with regard to [those phenomena] that commence from the five psycho-physical aggregates and extend as far as the link [of dependent origination known as] aging and death, and likewise with regard to those commencing from the four applications of mindfulness and extending as far as the noble eightfold path, and likewise with regard to those commencing from the three gateways to liberation and extending as far as the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, and likewise with regard to those commencing from the ten powers of the tathāgatas and extending as far as omniscience, and likewise with regard to those commencing from the six transcendent perfections and extending as far as the eighty minor marks—when one views them as permanent or impermanent, as conducive to happiness or suffering, as a self or not a self, empty or not empty, with signs or signless, having aspirations or without aspirations, calm or not calm, void or not void, afflicted or purified, arising or not arising, ceasing or not ceasing, and as entities or non-entities, and when one apprehends, defines, and engages in ideation and scrutiny with respect to them, that is called the deluded mind which great bodhisattva beings might have with respect to all things.

3.4 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, whenever a great bodhisattva being holds the view that these are virtuous phenomena, these are non-virtuous phenomena, these are specific phenomena, these are non-specific phenomena, these are mundane phenomena, these are supramundane phenomena, these are contaminated phenomena, these are uncontaminated phenomena, these are conditioned phenomena, these are unconditioned phenomena, these are common phenomena, or these are uncommon phenomena, and then apprehends, defines, and engages in ideation and scrutiny with respect to them, that, Śāradvatīputra, is called the deluded mind which great bodhisattva beings might have with respect to all things. If you ask why, it is because there are no sentient beings, because sentient beings are non-apprehensible, because sentient beings are non-arising, because sentient beings are unceasing, and because sentient beings are in fact emptiness. The same goes for living organisms, lives, living creatures, individuals, humankind, human beings, actors, creators, petitioners, instigators, experiencers, experiencing subjects, and knowers, because they are not perceived, because they are non-apprehensible, because they are non-arising, because they are unceasing, and because they are in fact emptiness.

3.5 “Indeed, all phenomena are non-arising, unceasing, empty, unmoving, vacuous, without a self, non-originated, uncreated, unconditioned, and without creator or actor. If you ask why, it is the case that these physical forms

are merely names, and the same also goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. Indeed, the same applies to [all the remaining phenomenological categories] as far as the [dependent link of aging and death].

3.6 “Similarly, these four applications of mindfulness are merely names, and the same applies to [all the remaining causal attributes] up to and including the noble eightfold path. These three gateways to liberation are merely names, and the same applies to [all the remaining meditative experiences], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. These ten powers of the tathāgatas are merely names, and the same applies to [all the remaining fruitional attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. These six transcendent perfections are merely names, and the same applies to [all the remaining fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks.

3.7 “Śāradvatīputra! With regard to those things, which are merely names, are there any that are absolutely existent?” “There are none, Lord!” he replied.

3.8 “Śāradvatīputra!” said the Blessed One, “If one were to view these as absolutely existent, and apprehend them [dualistically], define them, and engage in ideation and scrutiny with respect to them, do you think that this would not be tantamount to the [aforementioned] views that bodhisattvas might adopt, and to the deluded minds which they might have?” “Yes it would, Lord!” he replied.

3.9 Then the Blessed One said, “Śāradvatīputra! For these reasons you should understand that the views bodhisattvas might adopt and the deluded minds which they might have are both designated as ‘fixation’.”

3.10 Thereupon, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord, how are all these things, commencing from the five psycho-physical aggregates and extending as far as the eighty minor marks, reduced, in the end, to mere names?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘five psycho-physical aggregates’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized is subject neither to arising, nor to cessation, and only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the psycho-physical aggregates do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.11 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘six inner sense fields’ are, in the end, merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the six inner sense fields do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.12 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘six outer sense fields’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the six outer sense fields do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.13 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘eighteen sensory elements’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized

neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the sensory elements do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.14 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘four noble truths’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the noble truths do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.15 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘twelve links of dependent origination’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the links of dependent origination do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.16 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘four applications of mindfulness’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the applications of mindfulness do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.17 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘four correct exertions’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the correct exertions do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.18 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘four supports for miraculous ability’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the supports for miraculous ability do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.19 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘five faculties’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the five faculties do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.20 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘five powers’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the five powers do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.21 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘seven branches of enlightenment’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the branches of enlightenment do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.22 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘noble eightfold path’ is merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither

arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the name of the noble eight-fold path does not exist internally, nor does it exist externally, and nor does it abide between these two.

3.23 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘three gateways to liberation’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the gateways to liberation do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.24 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘four meditative concentrations’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the meditative concentrations do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.25 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘four immeasurable aspirations’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the immeasurable aspirations do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.26 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘four formless meditative absorptions’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the formless meditative absorptions do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.27 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘eight aspects of liberation’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the aspects of liberation do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.28 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘nine serial steps of meditative equipoise’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the serial steps of meditative equipoise do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.29 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘nine contemplations of impurity’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the contemplations [of impurity] do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.30 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘ten recollections’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the recollections do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.31 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘six aspects of perception’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the six aspects of perception do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.32 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘ten aspects of knowledge’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the aspects of knowledge do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.33 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘three meditative stabilities’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the meditative stabilities do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.34 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘three faculties’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the [three] faculties do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.35 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘eight sense fields of mastery’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the sense fields of mastery do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.36 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘ten sense fields of total consummation’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the sense fields of total consummation do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.37 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘eighteen aspects of emptiness’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the aspects of emptiness do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.38 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘ten powers of the tathāgatas’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the ten powers of the tathāgatas do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.39 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘four assurances’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the assurances do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.40 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘four unhindered discernments’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptual-

ized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the unhindered discernments do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.41 “Śāradvatīputra, ‘great loving kindness’ is merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the name of great loving kindness does not exist internally, nor does it exist externally, and nor does it abide between these two.

3.42 “Śāradvatīputra, ‘great compassion’ is merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the name of great compassion does not exist internally, nor does it exist externally, and nor does it abide between these two.

3.43 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.44 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, and the understanding of omniscience’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, and the understanding of omniscience do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.45 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘six transcendent perfections’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the six transcendent perfections do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.46 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘six extrasensory powers’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the extrasensory powers do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.47 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘five eyes’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the five eyes do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.48 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘thirty-two major marks of a superior man’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the thirty-two major marks of a superior man do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.49 “Śāradvatīputra, the ‘eighty excellent minor marks’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the eighty excellent minor marks do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.

3.50 “Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should train accordingly in those things which are conceptualized as names and symbols. Great bodhisattva beings should understand in that manner those phenomena which are conceptualized as names and symbols. By understanding those phenomena which are conceptualized as names and symbols, they will not become fixated on physical forms. They will not become fixated on feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and similarly, they will not become fixated on [any other phenomena], up to and including [the dependent link] of aging and death. Likewise, they will not become fixated on the four applications of mindfulness, and similarly, they will not become fixated on [any of the other causal attributes] up to and including the noble eightfold path. Likewise, they will not become fixated on the three gateways to liberation, and similarly, they will not become fixated on [any other attainments], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Likewise, they will not become fixated on the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and similarly, they will not become fixated on [any of the other fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience. Likewise, they will not become fixated on the six transcendent perfections, and similarly, they will not become fixated on [any of the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks.”

3.51 Thereupon, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, if all phenomena are merely conceptualized and merely nominal, would it not follow, Venerable Lord, that all things have an essential nature of non-entity, or that even the attributes of the bodhisattvas would have an essential nature of non-entity, or that all things as far as enlightenment would have an essential nature of non-entity, or, if that were the case, that the practice of chastity would also become a non-entity, the path of the bodhisattvas would become a non-entity, even the six transcendent perfections would become non-entities, and the clear realizations of the doctrine that great bodhisattva beings have would also be non-existent? Indeed, I say that liberation from suffering would also be non-existent.”

3.52 Thereupon, the Blessed One replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving physical forms as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.53 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.54 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the eyes as an entity?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.55 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

- 3.56 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving sights as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.
- 3.57 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.
- 3.58 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.
- 3.59 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.
- 3.60 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.
- 3.61 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.
- 3.62 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.
- 3.63 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.
- 3.64 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the noble truths, and in the same vein, [all the aforementioned phenomena] up to and including the [dependent link of] aging and death as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.
- 3.65 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, [all the aforementioned causal attributes] as far as the noble eightfold path as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.
- 3.66 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the gateways to liberation, and in the same vein, [all the aforementioned attainments], up to and including the eighteen aspects of emptiness as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.
- 3.67 “[Śāradvatīputra,] do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, [all the aforementioned fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.68 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the six transcendent perfections, and in the same vein, [all the aforementioned fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks as entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.69 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving physical forms as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.70 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.71 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the eyes as a non-entity?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.72 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.73 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving sights as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.74 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.75 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.76 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.77 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.78 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.79 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.80 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.81 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the noble truths, and in the same vein, [all the other aforementioned phenomena], up to and including the [dependent link of] aging and death, as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.82 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, [all the other aforementioned causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.83 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the gateways to liberation, and in the same vein, [all the other aforementioned attainments], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.84 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, [all the other aforementioned fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience, as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.85 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the six transcendent perfections, and in the same vein, [all the other aforementioned fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks, as non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.86 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving physical forms as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.87 “[Śāradvatīputra,] do you think that one is liberated by perceiving feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.88 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the eyes as an entity and a non-entity?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.89 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.90 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving sights as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.91 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.92 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he re-

plied.

3.93 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.94 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.95 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.96 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.97 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.98 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the noble truths, and similarly [all other phenomenological categories], up to and including the [dependent link of] aging and death, as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.99 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the four applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.100 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the gateways to liberation, and in the same vein, [all the other attainments], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.101 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience, as entities and non-entities?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.102 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that one is liberated by perceiving the six transcendent perfections, and in the same vein, [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks, as entities and non-enti-

ties?” “No Lord!” he replied.

3.103 Thereupon, the Blessed One addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Whatever your reasoning, one is not liberated by perceiving physical forms, [and all the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness, as entities. Nor is one liberated by perceiving them as non-entities, and nor is one liberated by perceiving them as entities and non-entities. Likewise, this applies to the eyes, and in the same vein, to [all the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty. Likewise it applies to sights, and in the same vein, to [all the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. Likewise, it applies to the sensory element of the eyes, and, in the same vein, to [all the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness. Likewise, it applies to the noble truths and, in the same vein, [to all other phenomena], up to and including [the dependent link] of aging and death. Likewise, it applies to the applications of mindfulness and, in the same vein, [to the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Likewise, it applies to the gateways to liberation and, in the same vein, [to all the other attainments], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Likewise, it applies to the powers of the tathāgatas and, in the same vein, [to all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience. Likewise, it applies to the six transcendent perfections and, in the same vein, [to all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks.

3.104 “In all these cases, one is not liberated by perceiving them as entities. Nor is one liberated by perceiving them as non-entities, and nor is one liberated by perceiving them as entities and non-entities. In the same vein, this should be extended to cover the entire range of phenomena, just as has been presented here with reference to the aggregate of physical forms [and so forth].”

3.105 Thereupon, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord, if, therefore, physical forms do not exist and they are not apprehensible, how could one be liberated by perceiving physical forms as entities, or by perceiving them as non-entities, or by perceiving them as both entities and non-entities! The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. Likewise, the same goes for the eyes and, in the same vein, [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty. Likewise the same goes for sights, and, in the same vein, [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. Likewise, the same goes for the sensory element of the eyes, and, in the same vein, [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness. Likewise, the same goes for the noble truths and, in the same vein, [all other phenomena], up to and including [the dependent link] of aging and death. Likewise, the same goes for the applications of mindfulness and, in the same vein, [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Likewise, the same goes for the gateways to liberation and, in the same vein, [all the other attainments], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Likewise, the same goes for the powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, [all the other fruitional attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. Likewise, the same goes for the six transcendent perfections and, in the same vein, [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks.

3.106 “If these do not exist and are not apprehensible, how could one be liberated by perceiving them as entities, or by perceiving them as non-entities, or by perceiving them as both entities and non-entities? If one were to ask

why, Venerable Lord, it is because afflicted mental states would be indicated. If one were to ask what those indications would be, the indications [of those afflicted mental states] would comprise sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena. Venerable Lord, whatever is subject to afflicted mental states is not liberated.”

3.107 The Blessed One then replied, “Śāradvatīputra, well done, well done! You have spoken well! Śāradvatīputra, that is how great bodhisattva beings should train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

3.108 *This completes the third chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Non-fixation.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THREE:

NON-FIXATION

3.A Fixation denotes the {dualistic} views that bodhisattvas might adopt with regard to all things {which are unreal from the perspective of ultimate reality}, and the deluded mindsets which they might have {—for although bodhisattvas, who are without fixation, see all these phenomena distinctly from the perspective of relative truth, they do not become fixated on them as ultimately real}.

3.B {Great bodhisattva beings might adopt dualistic views with respect to} ... the psycho-physical aggregates, the sensory elements, the sense fields, the noble truths, and dependent origination ... the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and liberation ... the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions ... the contemplations [of impurity] ... the recollections ... the aspects of perception ... the modes of knowledge ... the meditative stabilities ... the faculties ... the sense fields of mastery ... the aspects of emptiness ... the ten powers of a tathāgata, the assurances, the unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, [and omniscience] ... the transcendent perfections ... the extrasensory powers ... the eyes ... the {thirty-two} major marks, and ... the {eighty} minor marks.

3.C The deluded mindsets that great bodhisattva beings might have with respect to all things ... commence from the five psycho-physical aggregates and extend as far as the link [of dependent origination known as] aging and death, and ... from the four applications of mindfulness and extending as far as the noble eightfold path, and ... from the three gateways to liberation and extending as far as the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, and ... from the ten powers of the tathāgatas and extending as far as omniscience, and ... from the six transcendent perfections and extending as far as the eighty minor marks—when one views them as permanent or impermanent, as conducive to happiness or suffering, as a self or not a self, empty or not empty, with signs or signless, having aspirations or without aspirations, calm or not calm, void or not void, afflicted or purified, arising or not arising, ceasing or not ceasing, and as entities or non-entities, and when one apprehends, defines, and engages in ideation and scrutiny with respect to them {as if they were ultimately real}, that is called the deluded mind which great bodhisattva beings might have with respect to all things ... Moreover ... whenever a great bodhisattva being holds the view that these are virtuous phenomena, these are non-virtuous phenomena, these are specific phenomena, these are non-specific

phenomena, these are mundane phenomena, these are supramundane phenomena, these are contaminated phenomena, these are uncontaminated phenomena, these are conditioned phenomena, these are unconditioned phenomena, these are common phenomena, or these are uncommon phenomena, and then apprehends, defines, and engages in ideation and scrutiny with respect to them {as if they were ultimately real}, that ... is called the deluded mind which great bodhisattva beings might have with respect to all things. If you ask why, it is because {in ultimate reality} there are no sentient beings, because sentient beings are non-apprehensible, because sentient beings are non-arising, because sentient beings are unceasing, and because sentient beings are in fact emptiness. The same goes for living organisms, lives, living creatures, individuals, humankind, human beings, actors, creators, petitioners, instigators, experiencers, experiencing subjects, and knowers, because {in ultimate reality} they are not perceived, because they are non-apprehensible, because they are non-arising, because they are unceasing, and because they are in fact emptiness.

3.D {From the perspective of ultimate reality} all phenomena are non-arising, unceasing, empty, unmoving, vacuous, without a self, non-originated, uncreated, unconditioned, and without creator or actor. If you ask why, it is the case that these physical forms are merely names, and the same also goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. Indeed, the same applies to [all the remaining phenomenological categories] as far as the [dependent link of aging and death]. Similarly, these four applications of mindfulness are merely names ... up to and including the noble eightfold path. These three gateways to liberation are merely names ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. These ten powers of the tathāgatas are merely names ... up to and including omniscience. These six transcendent perfections are merely names ... up to and including the eighty minor marks ... If one were to view these as absolutely existent, and apprehend them, define them, and engage in ideation and scrutiny with respect to them {as if they were ultimately real} ... this would ... be tantamount to the {dualistic} views that bodhisattvas might adopt, and to the deluded minds which they might have ... For these reasons you should understand that the {dualistic} views bodhisattvas might adopt and the deluded minds which they might have are both designated as 'fixation'.

3.E The 'five psycho-physical aggregates' are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized is subject neither to arising, nor to cessation, and only conventionally designated by names and symbols. Even the names of the psycho-physical aggregates do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two ... {The same applies to the six inner and outer sense fields, the eighteen sensory elements, the four noble truths, the twelve links of dependent origination, the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless meditative absorptions, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, the nine contemplations of impurity, the ten recollections, the six aspects of perception, the ten aspects of knowledge, the three meditative stabilities, the three faculties, the eight sense fields of mastery, the ten sense fields of total consummation, the eighteen aspects of emptiness, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, the understanding of all phenomena ... the aspects of the path ... and omniscience, the six transcendent perfections, the six extrasensory powers, the five eyes, the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, and

the eighty excellent minor marks.}

3.F Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should train accordingly in those things which are conceptualized as names and symbols. Great bodhisattva beings should understand in that manner those phenomena which are conceptualized as names and symbols. By understanding those phenomena which are conceptualized as names and symbols, they will not become fixated on physical forms {up to and including the eighty excellent minor marks}.

3.G One is not liberated by {dualistically} perceiving physical forms, [and all the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness, as entities. Nor ... by {dualistically} perceiving them as non-entities, and nor ... by {dualistically} perceiving them as entities and non-entities. Likewise, this applies to the eyes ... up to and including the mental faculty ... to [all the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena ... to the sensory element of the eyes ... up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness ... to the {four} noble truths ... up to and including [the dependent link] of aging and death ... to the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... to the gateways to liberation ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... to the powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including omniscience ... {and} to the six transcendent perfections ... up to and including the eighty minor marks.

3.H {As} physical forms {up to and including the eighty minor marks} do not {ultimately} exist and they are not apprehensible {in ultimate reality} ... one {cannot} be liberated by {dualistically} perceiving physical forms {and the rest} as entities, or by perceiving them as non-entities, or by perceiving them as both entities and non-entities! ... because afflicted mental states would be indicated. If one were to ask what those indications would be, the indications [of those afflicted mental states] would comprise sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... {for} whatever is subject to afflicted mental states is not liberated ... That is how great bodhisattva beings should train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

COMMENTARY

The Buddha states in the chapter (above) that from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality “*all phenomena are non-arising, unceasing, empty, unmoving, vacuous, without a self, non-originated, uncreated, unconditioned, and without creator or actor.*” However from the perspective of ‘relative’ reality in the dimension of space and time ~ all conditioned phenomena, comprised of the five psycho-physical aggregates (of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness), are arising, ceasing, non-empty, moving, non-vacuous, with a self, originated, created, conditioned, and *with* a creator and actor.

*

In ultimate reality We exist as a singularity, where no other phenomena exists. In this state there is no other ‘thing’ or ‘one’ or ‘entity’ to apprehend, and for this reason there is no “duality” such as creator and actor. The Buddha acknowledges the afflicted mental states of a duality consciousness is indicated by the presence of the six outer sense fields (of sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles and mental phenomena) ... for here the consciousness grasps (i.e. sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches and mentally apprehends) another thing or phenomena. The Buddha also ac-

knowledges that *“whatever is subject to afflicted mental states {being the presence of sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles and mental phenomena} is not liberated”*. Even a buddha is not fully liberated from the dimension of space and time, from the duality of ‘relative’ existence, which is why a buddha must take its final nirvāṇa (parinirvāṇa), which is the extinguishment of its individual self. Until then, it is continually reborn in buddha worlds to awaken all sentient beings, which it must apprehend using sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles and mental phenomena. When it is liberated, it leaves behind all duality concepts, fully entering the ‘singularity’ of Our undivided Self.

CHAPTER FOUR: UNION

4.1 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, how do great bodhisattva beings engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom without fixation?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings engage in union with the emptiness of physical forms they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom; and likewise, when they engage in union with the emptiness of feelings, the emptiness of perceptions, the emptiness of formative predispositions, and the emptiness of consciousness, they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.2 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings engage in union with the emptiness of the eyes, they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom; and likewise, when they engage in union with the emptiness of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty, they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.3 “Similarly, when they engage in union with the emptiness of sights, they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom; and likewise, when they engage in union with the emptiness of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena, they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.4 “Similarly, when they engage in union with the emptiness of the sensory element of the eyes, they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom; and likewise, when they engage in union with the emptiness of the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness; or with the emptiness of the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness; or with the emptiness of the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness; or with the emptiness of the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness; or with the emptiness of the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness; or with the emptiness of the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness—in the case of all these sensory elements], they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.5 “Similarly, when they engage in union with emptiness of suffering, they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom; and likewise, when they engage in union with the emptiness of the origin of su-

ffering, the emptiness of the cessation of suffering, and the emptiness of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering, they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.6 “Similarly, when they engage in union with the emptiness of fundamental ignorance, they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom; and likewise, when they engage in union with the emptiness of formative predispositions, the emptiness of consciousness, the emptiness of name and form, the emptiness of the sense fields, the emptiness of sensory contact, the emptiness of sensation, the emptiness of craving, the emptiness of grasping, the emptiness of the rebirth process, the emptiness of actual birth, and the emptiness of aging and death—in the case of all these links of dependent origination], they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.7 “Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly and engage in union with the [aspects of] emptiness are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.8 “Those who engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom through the [aforementioned aspects of] emptiness do not consider whether or not they engage in union with physical forms, and likewise, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness.

4.9 “Similarly, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with the eyes, and likewise they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with the ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mental faculty.

4.10 “Similarly, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with sights; and likewise, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena.

4.11 “Similarly, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with the sensory element of the eyes; and likewise, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness; or the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness; or the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness; or the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness; or the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness; or the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness.

4.12 “Similarly, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with suffering; and likewise, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

4.13 “Similarly, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with fundamental ignorance, and likewise they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with formative predispositions, consciousness, name and form, the six sense fields, sensory contact, sensation, craving, grasping, rebirth process, actual birth, and aging and death.

4.14 “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings engage in union accordingly, they are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.15 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not consider whether physical forms are permanent or impermanent; likewise, they do not consider whether feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are permanent or impermanent.

4.16 “They do not consider whether physical forms are imbued with happiness or suffering; likewise, they do not consider whether feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are imbued with happiness or suffering. They do not consider whether physical forms constitute a self or a non-self; likewise, they do not consider whether feelings, perceptions, predispositions, and consciousness constitute a self or a non-self.

4.17 “They do not consider whether physical forms are empty or not empty; likewise, they do not consider whether feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty or not empty. They do not consider whether physical forms are with signs or signless; likewise, they do not consider whether feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are with signs or signless. They do not consider whether physical forms have aspirations or are without aspirations; likewise, they do not consider whether feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness have aspirations or are without aspirations.

4.18 “They do not consider whether physical forms are calm or not calm; likewise, they do not consider whether feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are calm or not calm. They do not consider whether physical forms are void or not; likewise, they do not consider whether feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are void or not. They do not consider whether physical forms are afflicted or purified; likewise, they do not consider whether feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are afflicted or purified. They do not consider whether physical forms arise or cease; likewise, they do not consider whether feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness arise or cease. They do not consider whether physical forms are entities or non-entities; likewise, they do not consider whether feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are entities or non-entities.

4.19 “They do not consider whether the eyes are permanent or impermanent; likewise, they do not consider whether the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are permanent or impermanent. They do not consider whether the eyes are imbued with happiness or suffering; likewise, they do not consider whether the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are imbued with happiness or suffering. They do not consider whether the eyes constitute a self or a non-self; likewise, they do not consider whether the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty constitute a self or a non-self. They do not consider whether the eyes are empty or not empty; likewise, they do not con-

der whether the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are empty or not empty. They do not consider whether the eyes are with signs or signless; likewise, they do not consider whether the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are with signs or signless. They do not consider whether the eyes have aspirations or are without aspirations; likewise, they do not consider whether the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty have aspirations or are without aspirations. They do not consider whether the eyes are calm or not calm; likewise, they do not consider whether the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are calm or not calm. They do not consider whether the eyes are void or not; likewise, they do not consider whether the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are void or not. They do not consider whether the eyes are afflicted or purified; likewise, they do not consider whether the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are afflicted or purified. They do not consider whether the eyes arise or cease; likewise, they do not consider whether the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty arise or cease. They do not consider whether the eyes are entities or non-entities; likewise, they do not consider whether the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are entities or non-entities.

4.20 “They do not consider whether sights are permanent or impermanent, and the same goes for [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. They do not consider whether sights are imbued with happiness or suffering, and the same goes for [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. They do not consider whether sights constitute a self or a non-self, and the same goes for [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. They do not consider whether sights are empty or not empty, and the same goes for [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. They do not consider whether sights are with signs or signless, and the same goes for [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. They do not consider whether sights have aspirations or are without aspirations, and the same goes for [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. They do not consider whether sights are calm or not calm, and the same goes for [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. They do not consider whether sights are void or not, and the same goes for [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. They do not consider whether sights are afflicted or purified, and the same goes for [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. They do not consider whether sights arise or cease, and the same goes for [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. They do not consider whether sights are entities or non-entities, and the same goes for [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena.

4.21 “This same refrain should also be applied to the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness. With regard to these and [all the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness, they do not consider whether these are permanent or impermanent, imbued with happiness or suffering, a self or not a self, empty or not empty, with signs or signless, having aspirations or lacking aspirations, calm or not calm, void or not, afflicted or purified, arising or ceasing, and entities or non-entities.

4.22 “Similarly, they do not consider whether the noble truths are permanent or impermanent, and so on, as described above.

4.23 “Similarly, they do not consider whether fundamental ignorance is permanent or impermanent, and the same

goes for [all the other links of dependent origination] up to and including aging and death. In all such cases, the same refrain should be extensively applied, exactly as indicated above with respect to the psycho-physical aggregates.

4.24 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom enter into emptiness with respect to the intrinsic defining characteristics of all phenomena, and having entered therein, they neither associate anything with nor disassociate anything from physical forms. Similarly, they neither associate anything with nor disassociate anything from feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. They neither associate physical forms with the limit of past time, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the limit of past time. Similarly, they neither associate feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness with the limit of past time, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the limit of past time. Similarly, they neither associate physical forms with the limit of future time, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the limit of future time. Similarly, they neither associate feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness with the limit of future time, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the limit of future time. They neither associate physical forms with present events, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of present events. Similarly, they neither associate feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness with present events, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of present events.

4.25 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom neither associate the eyes with the limit of past time, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the limit of past time. Similarly, they neither associate the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty with the limit of past time, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the limit of past time. Similarly, they neither associate the eyes with the limit of future time, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the limit of future time. Similarly, they neither associate the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty with the limit of future time, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the limit of future time. They neither associate the eyes with present events, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of present events. Similarly, they neither associate the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty with present events, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of present events. Just as this applies to the inner sense fields, so it is with the outer sense fields.

4.26 “Similarly, they neither associate the sensory element of the eyes with the limit of past time, nor do they disassociate it therefrom; likewise, they neither associate it with the limit of future time or present events, nor do they disassociate it therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the limit of past time, the limit of future time, and present events. Similarly, they neither associate the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness; the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness; the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the

sensory element of olfactory consciousness; the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness; the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness; or the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness with the limit of past time, the limit of future time, and present events, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the limit of past time, the limit of future time, and present events.

4.27 “This same refrain should also be applied extensively to the noble truths, exactly as before. Similarly, it should be applied to [the links of dependent origination] from fundamental ignorance to aging and death. They neither associate [such links] with the limit of past time, the limit of future time, and present events, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the limit of past time, the limit of future time, and present events. Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who engage in union accordingly are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.28 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who persevere in the transcendent perfection of wisdom neither associate physical forms with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of physical forms. Similarly, they neither associate feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of consciousness [and the aforementioned aggregates].

4.29 “Similarly, they neither associate the eyes with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the eyes. Similarly, they neither associate the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the mental faculty [and the aforementioned sense organs]. Similarly they neither associate sights with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of sights. Similarly, they neither associate sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of mental phenomena [and the aforementioned sense objects]. Similarly, they neither associate the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider [the nature of these sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of visual consciousness. Similarly, they neither associate the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider [the nature of these sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of auditory consciousness. Similarly, they neither associate the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider [the nature of these sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of olfactory consciousness. Similarly, they neither associate the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider [the nature of these sensory eleme-

nts], up to and including the sensory element of gustatory consciousness. Similarly, they neither associate the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider [the nature of these sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of tactile consciousness. Similarly, they neither associate the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider [the nature of these sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness.

4.30 “Similarly, they neither associate the truth of suffering with omniscience, nor do they disassociate it therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the truth of suffering. Similarly, they neither associate the truth of the origin of suffering with omniscience, nor do they disassociate it therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the truth of the origin of suffering. Similarly, they neither associate the truth of the cessation of suffering with omniscience, nor do they disassociate it therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the truth of the cessation of suffering. Similarly, they neither associate the truth of the path with omniscience, nor do they disassociate it therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of the truth of the path.

4.31 “Similarly, they neither associate fundamental ignorance with omniscience, nor do they disassociate it therefrom. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of fundamental ignorance. Similarly, they neither associate [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom, and so on. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider the nature of [these links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death. Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who engage in union accordingly are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.32 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not consider whether physical forms are connected with feelings. They do not consider whether feelings are connected with perceptions. They do not consider whether perceptions are connected with formative predispositions. They do not consider whether formative predispositions are connected with consciousness. If you ask why, it is because, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, there is no phenomenon that is connected with any [other] phenomenon. Similarly, they do not consider whether the eyes are connected with the ears. They do not consider whether the ears are connected with the nose. They do not consider whether the nose is connected with the tongue. They do not consider whether the tongue is connected with the body. They do not consider whether the body is connected with the mental faculty. If you ask why, it is because, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, there is no phenomenon that is connected with any [other] phenomenon. Similarly, they do not consider whether sights are connected with sounds. Similarly, they do not consider whether sounds are connected with odors. They do not consider whether odors are connected with tastes. They do not consider whether tastes are connected with tangibles. They do not consider whether tangibles are connected with mental phenomena. If you ask why, it is because, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, there is no phenomenon that is connected with any [other] phenomenon.

4.33 “The same refrain should also be extensively applied to the sensory elements, exactly as has been indicated here in the context of the psycho-physical aggregates.

4.34 “Similarly, they do not consider whether the truth of suffering is connected with the truth of the origin of suffering. They do not consider whether the truth of the origin of suffering is connected with the truth of the cessation of suffering. They do not consider whether the truth of the cessation of suffering is connected with the truth of the path. If you ask why, it is because, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, there is no phenomenon that is connected with any [other] phenomenon.

4.35 “Similarly, they do not consider whether fundamental ignorance is connected with formative predispositions, and so on, up to and including [the link of] aging and death. If you ask why, it is because, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, there is no phenomenon that is connected with any [other] phenomenon.

4.36 “Śāradvatīputra, the emptiness of physical forms is not physical forms. Similarly, the emptiness of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is not consciousness and the [aforementioned aggregates]. Śāradvatīputra, the emptiness of physical forms does not generate physical forms. Similarly, the emptiness of feelings does not generate feelings. The emptiness of perceptions does not generate perceptions. The emptiness of formative predispositions does not generate formative predispositions. The emptiness of consciousness does not generate consciousness.

4.37 “Similarly, the emptiness of the eyes is not the eyes. Similarly, the emptiness of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty is not the mental faculty and the [aforementioned sense organs]. Similarly, the emptiness of sights is not sights. Similarly, the emptiness of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena is not mental phenomena and the [aforementioned sense objects]. Similarly, the emptiness of the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness is not the sensory element of visual consciousness and the [aforementioned sensory elements]. Similarly, the emptiness of the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness is not the sensory element of auditory consciousness [and the aforementioned sensory elements]. Similarly, the emptiness of the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness is not the sensory element of olfactory consciousness and the [aforementioned sensory elements]. Similarly, the emptiness of the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness is not the sensory element of gustatory consciousness and the [aforementioned sensory elements]. Similarly, the emptiness of the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness is not the sensory element of tactile consciousness and the [aforementioned sensory elements]. Similarly, the emptiness of the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness is not the sensory element of mental consciousness and the [aforementioned sensory elements].

4.38 “Similarly, the emptiness of the truth of suffering is not [the truth of] suffering. Similarly, the emptiness of the truth of the origin of suffering is not [the truth of] the origin of suffering. Similarly, the emptiness of the truth of the

cessation of suffering is not [the truth of] the cessation of suffering. Similarly, the emptiness of the truth of the path is not [the truth of] the path. Similarly, the emptiness of fundamental ignorance is not fundamental ignorance, and so it is with [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, the emptiness of which is not aging and death.

4.39 “If you ask why, Śāradvatīputra, emptiness is not something other than physical forms; nor are physical forms something other than emptiness. The nature of physical forms is emptiness. Emptiness is physical forms. Similarly, emptiness is not something other than feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; nor are consciousness [and so forth] something other than emptiness. The nature of consciousness is emptiness. Emptiness indeed is consciousness.

4.40 “Similarly, emptiness is not something other than the eyes; nor are the eyes something other than emptiness. The nature of the eyes is emptiness. Emptiness is the eyes. Similarly, emptiness is not something other than the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty; nor are the mental faculty and the [aforementioned sense organs] something other than emptiness. The nature of the mental faculty is emptiness. Emptiness is the mental faculty.

4.41 “Similarly, emptiness is not something other than sights; nor are sights something other than emptiness. The nature of sights is emptiness. Emptiness is sights. Similarly, emptiness is not something other than sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena; nor are mental phenomena and the [aforementioned sense objects] something other than emptiness. The nature of mental phenomena is emptiness. Emptiness is mental phenomena.

4.42 “Similarly, emptiness is not something other than the sensory element of the eyes; nor is the sensory element of the eyes something other than emptiness. The nature of the sensory element of the eyes is emptiness. Emptiness is the sensory element of the eyes. Similarly, emptiness is not something other than [the remaining sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness; nor are [the sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness, something other than emptiness. The nature of the sensory element of mental consciousness is emptiness; and, in the same vein, emptiness is the sensory element of mental consciousness and so forth.

4.43 “Similarly, emptiness is not something other than the noble truths. Nor are the noble truths something other than emptiness. The nature of the noble truths is emptiness. Emptiness is the noble truths.

4.44 “Similarly, emptiness is not something other than fundamental ignorance. Nor is fundamental ignorance something other than emptiness. The nature of fundamental ignorance is emptiness. Emptiness is fundamental ignorance; and so it is with [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death. Emptiness is not something other than aging and death. Nor are aging and death something other than emptiness. The nature of aging and death is emptiness. Emptiness is aging and death.

4.45 “Śāradvatīputra, emptiness neither arises nor ceases. It is neither afflicted nor purified. It neither decreases

nor increases. It is neither past, future, nor present. Therein there are no physical forms, no feelings, no perceptions, no formative predispositions, and no consciousness. Therein, there are no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mental faculty, no sights, no sounds, no odors, no tastes, no tangibles, and no mental phenomena.

4.46 “Therein, there is no sensory element of the eyes, no sensory element of sights, no sensory element of visual consciousness, no sensory element of the ears, no sensory element of sounds, no sensory element of auditory consciousness, no sensory element of the nose, no sensory element of odors, no sensory element of olfactory consciousness, no sensory element of the tongue, no sensory element of tastes, no sensory element of gustatory consciousness, no sensory element of the body, no sensory element of tangibles, no sensory element of tactile consciousness, no sensory element of the mental faculty, no sensory element of mental phenomena, and no sensory element of mental consciousness.

4.47 “Therein there is no [truth of] suffering, no [truth of] the origin of suffering, no [truth of] the cessation of suffering, and no [truth of] the path.

4.48 “Therein, there is no fundamental ignorance, no cessation of fundamental ignorance, no formative predispositions, no cessation of formative predispositions, no consciousness, no cessation of consciousness, no name and form, no cessation of name and form, no six sense fields, no cessation of the six sense fields, no sensory contact, no cessation of sensory contact, no sensation, no cessation of sensation, no craving, no cessation of craving, no grasping, no cessation of grasping, no rebirth process, no cessation of rebirth process, no actual birth, no cessation of actual birth, no aging and death, and no cessation of aging and death.

4.49 “Therein, there is no attainment. There is no clear realization. Therein, there is no one entering the stream, no fruit of entering the stream, no one being tied to one more rebirth, no fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, no one who will no longer be subject to rebirth, no fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, no arhatship, no fruit of arhatship, no individual enlightenment, and no pratyekabuddha. Therein, there is no attainment of completely perfect buddhahood, and no genuinely perfect enlightenment.

4.50 “Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly are said to engage in union. When they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They do not consider whether or not they engage in union with the transcendent perfection of generosity, with the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, with the transcendent perfection of tolerance, with the transcendent perfection of perseverance, or with the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration.

4.51 “Similarly, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with the applications of mindfulness. In the same vein, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with the noble eightfold path or [with all the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the ten powers of the tathāgatas. In the same vein, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas or [with all other attainments], up to and including omniscience. Śāradvatīputra, it is for these reasons that great bo-

dhisattva beings who engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom are said to engage in union.

4.52 “Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom are approaching omniscience. Commensurate with their approach to omniscience, they attain complete purity of the body, complete purity of speech, complete purity of mind, and complete purity of defining marks. Commensurate with their attainment of complete purity of the body, complete purity of speech, complete purity of mind, and complete purity of defining marks, they do not entertain thoughts of desire, and similarly, they do not entertain thoughts of hatred and delusion. They do not entertain thoughts of pride, pretentiousness, deceit, attachment, miserliness, envy, or all sorts of [mistaken] views. Since they do not entertain thoughts of desire, and similarly, they do not entertain [any other such thoughts], up to and including the plethora of [mistaken] views, they are never conceived within a mother’s womb, and they will invariably be born miraculously. Except in order to bring sentient beings to maturation, they will never be born in the inferior realms. They will proceed from one field to another field. They will bring sentient beings to maturation, they will completely refine the fields, and they will never be separated from the lord buddhas until they attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.

4.53 “Consequently, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who wish to attain these enlightened attributes and advantages should engage in union in that manner, at all times, without abandoning their engagement with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, Śāradvatīputra, it is because this union of great bodhisattva beings, this union of emptiness, is supreme.

4.54 “Śāradvatīputra, this union whereby great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom endures when all other engagements have been surpassed. Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who maintain this union achieve the ten powers of the tathāgatas. They achieve the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who maintain this union never entertain thoughts of miserliness. They never entertain thoughts of degenerate morality, thoughts of agitation, thoughts of indolence, thoughts of distraction, or thoughts of stupidity.”

4.55 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra, Senior Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Senior Subhūti, Senior Mahākāśyapa, Senior Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra, and in addition to them, a multitude of renowned fully ordained monks, as well as assemblies of great bodhisattva beings, laymen and laywomen, all addressed the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of great bodhisattva beings is great. Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of great bodhisattva beings is supreme among the vast transcendent perfections. It is the particularly sublime transcendent perfection. It is the most excellent transcendent perfection. It is the unsurpassed transcendent perfection. It is the highest transcendent perfection. Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is equal to the unequalled transcendent perfection of great bodhisattva beings! Transcendent perfection is calm and peaceful. Transcendent perfection is empty of its own defining characteristics. Transcendent perfection is the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Transcendent perfection is extensive in all enlightened attributes. Transcendent perfection is endowed with all enlightened attributes. Transcendent perfection is a state of uncrushability.

4.56 “Venerable Lord! Those who are supreme among great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They bestow generosity that is equal to the unequalled. They perfect generosity that is equal to the unequalled. They perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity that is equal to the unequalled. They obtain a physical form that is equal to the unequalled, and they attain attributes that are equal to the unequalled, whereby they attain the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. In the same vein, just as it has been stated here in relation to the transcendent perfection of generosity, so it is with the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.57 “Venerable Lord! You, O Lord, also acquired the sacred doctrine that is equal to the unequalled through practicing this transcendent perfection of wisdom. Likewise, you acquired physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness that are equal to the unequalled. Likewise, you turned the wheel of the sacred doctrine that is equal to the unequalled. The lord buddhas of the past also acquired their sacred doctrines that are equal to the unequalled, after practicing this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they turned the wheel of the sacred doctrine that is equal to the unequalled. Likewise, the lord buddhas of the future also will acquire their sacred doctrines that are equal to the unequalled after practicing this transcendent perfection of wisdom; and, in the same vein, they will turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine that is equal to the unequalled. Venerable Lord! Since this is the case, great bodhisattva beings who seek to transcend all phenomena should continue to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

4.58 The Blessed One then addressed those great śrāvakas and those great bodhisattva beings as follows: “O wise ones! O children of enlightened heritage! It is so! It is so! O wise ones! O children of enlightened heritage! It is just as you have said! O wise ones! O children of enlightened heritage! Those great bodhisattva beings who continue to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom deserve the respect of the entire world with its gods, humans and antigods.”

4.59 *This completes the fourth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Union.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOUR:

UNION

4.A Great bodhisattva beings engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom without fixation ... when {they} ... engage in union with the emptiness of physical forms ... feelings ... perceptions ... formative predispositions, and ... consciousness ... the emptiness of the eyes ... ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty ... the emptiness of sights ... sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... the emptiness of the sensory element{s} of the eyes ... sights, and ... visual consciousness ... the ears ... sounds, and ... auditory consciousness ... the nose ... odors, and ... olfactory consciousness ... the tongue ... tastes, and ... gustatory consciousness ... the body ... tangibles, and ... tactile consciousness ... the mental faculty ... mental phenomena, and ... mental consciousness ... the emptiness of {the noble truths of} suffering ... the origin of suffering ... the cessation of suffering, and ... the path that leads to the cessation of suffering ... {and} the emptiness of {the twelve links of dependent origination of} {1} fundamental ignorance ... {2} formative predispositions ... {3} consciousness ... {4} name and form ... {5} the sense

fields ... {6} sensory contact ... {7} sensation ... {8} craving ... {9} grasping ... {10} the rebirth process ... {11} actual birth, and ... {12} aging and death ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly and engage in union with the {aforementioned aspects of} emptiness are said to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

4.B Those who engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom through the [aforementioned aspects of] emptiness do not consider whether or not they engage in union with physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination} ... Moreover ... Great bodhisattva beings who engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not consider whether physical forms {up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination} are permanent or impermanent ... imbued with happiness or suffering ... constitute a self or a non-self ... are empty or not empty ... are with signs or signless ... have aspirations or are without aspirations ... are calm or not calm ... are void or not {void} ... are afflicted or purified ... arise or cease ... are entities or non-entities.

4.C Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom enter into emptiness with respect to the intrinsic defining characteristics of all phenomena, and having entered therein, they neither associate anything with nor disassociate anything from physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination}. They neither associate physical forms {up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination} with the limit of past time, nor do they disassociate them therefrom ... because they do not consider the nature of the limit of past time ... Similarly, they neither associate physical forms {up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination} with the limit of future time, nor do they disassociate them therefrom ... because they do not consider the nature of the limit of future time ... {And} they neither associate physical forms {up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination} with present events, nor do they disassociate them therefrom ... because they do not consider the nature of present events.

4.D Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who persevere in the transcendent perfection of wisdom neither associate physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination} with omniscience, nor do they disassociate them therefrom ... because they do not consider the nature of physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination}.

4.E Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not consider whether physical forms are connected with feelings ... whether feelings are connected with perceptions ... whether perceptions are connected with formative predispositions ... whether formative predispositions are connected with consciousness ... whether the eyes are connected with the ears ... whether the ears are connected with the nose ... whether the nose is connected with the tongue ... whether the tongue is connected with the body ... whether the body is connected with the mental faculty ... whether sights are connected with sounds ... whether sounds are connected with odors ... whether odors are connected with tastes ... whether tastes are connected with tangibles ... whether tangibles are connected with mental phenomena ... because, owing to the emptiness of inhe-

rent existence, there is no phenomenon that is connected with any [other] phenomenon. The same refrain should also be extensively applied to the sensory elements ... Similarly, they do not consider whether the truth of suffering is connected with the truth of the origin of suffering ... whether the truth of the origin of suffering is connected with the truth of the cessation of suffering ... whether the truth of the cessation of suffering is connected with the truth of the path ... whether fundamental ignorance is connected with formative predispositions, and so on, up to and including [the link of] aging and death ... because, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, there is no phenomenon that is connected with any [other] phenomenon.

4.F The emptiness of physical forms is not physical forms. Similarly, the emptiness of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination} is not {feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination} ... The emptiness of physical forms does not generate physical forms. Similarly, the emptiness of feelings {perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination} does not generate feelings {and the rest} ... If you ask why ... {because} emptiness is not something other than physical forms; nor are physical forms something other than emptiness. The nature of physical forms is emptiness. Emptiness is physical forms. Similarly, emptiness is not something other than feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {up to and including the twelve links of dependent origination}; nor are ... {they} ... something other than emptiness.

4.G Emptiness neither arises nor ceases. It is neither afflicted nor purified. It neither decreases nor increases. It is neither past, future, nor present. Therein there are no physical forms, no feelings, no perceptions, no formative predispositions, and no consciousness ... no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mental faculty, no sights, no sounds, no odors, no tastes, no tangibles, and no mental phenomena ... no sensory element{s} ... no [truth of] suffering, no [truth of] the origin of suffering, no [truth of] the cessation of suffering, and no [truth of] the path ... no fundamental ignorance, no cessation of fundamental ignorance, no formative predispositions, no cessation of formative predispositions, no consciousness, no cessation of consciousness, no name and form, no cessation of name and form, no six sense fields, no cessation of the six sense fields, no sensory contact, no cessation of sensory contact, no sensation, no cessation of sensation, no craving, no cessation of craving, no grasping, no cessation of grasping, no rebirth process, no cessation of rebirth process, no actual birth, no cessation of actual birth, no aging and death, and no cessation of aging and death ... no attainment ... no clear realization ... no one entering the stream, no fruit of entering the stream, no one being tied to one more rebirth, no fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, no one who will no longer be subject to rebirth, no fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, no arhatship, no fruit of arhatship, no individual enlightenment, and no pratyekabuddha ... no attainment of completely perfect buddhahood, and no genuinely perfect enlightenment.

4.H Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly are said to engage in union. When they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly, they do not consider whether or not they engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline ... the transcendent perfection of tolerance ... the transcendent perfection of perseverance, or with the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. Similarly, they do not con-

sider whether or not they engage in union with the applications of mindfulness ... with the noble eightfold path or [with all the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {also} ... with the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas or [with all other attainments], up to and including omniscience ... It is for these reasons that great bodhisattva beings who engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom are said to engage in union.

4.I Great bodhisattva beings who engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom are approaching omniscience. Commensurate with their approach to omniscience, they attain complete purity of the body ... speech ... mind, and ... defining marks. Commensurate with their attainment of {these} ... they do not entertain thoughts of desire ... hatred and delusion ... {nor} thoughts of pride, pretentiousness, deceit, attachment, miserliness, envy, or all sorts of [mistaken] views. Since they do not entertain thoughts of desire, and similarly, they do not entertain [any other such thoughts], up to and including the plethora of [mistaken] views, they are never conceived within a mother's womb, and they will invariably be born miraculously. Except in order to bring sentient beings to maturation, they will never be born in the inferior realms. They will proceed from one {buddha}field to another field. They will bring sentient beings to maturation, they will completely refine the fields, and they will never be separated from the lord buddhas until they attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.

4.J Consequently ... great bodhisattva beings who wish to attain these enlightened attributes and advantages should engage in union in that manner, at all times, without abandoning their engagement with the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... because this union of great bodhisattva beings, this union of emptiness, is supreme ... This union whereby great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom endures when all other engagements have been surpassed ... Great bodhisattva beings who maintain this union achieve the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {and} never entertain thoughts of miserliness ... degenerate morality ... agitation ... indolence ... distraction, or ... stupidity.

4.K Those who are supreme among great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They bestow generosity that is equal to the unequalled. They perfect generosity that is equal to the unequalled. They perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity that is equal to the unequalled. They obtain a physical form that is equal to the unequalled, and they attain attributes that are equal to the unequalled, whereby they attain the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. In the same vein, just as it has been stated here in relation to the transcendent perfection of generosity, so it is with the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. O Lord, {you} also acquired the sacred doctrine that is equal to the unequalled through practicing this transcendent perfection of wisdom ... you acquired physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness that are equal to the unequalled ... you turned the wheel of the sacred doctrine that is equal to the unequalled. The lord buddhas of the past also acquired their sacred doctrines that are equal to the unequalled, after practicing this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they turned the wheel of the sacred doctrine that is equal to the unequalled ... The lord buddhas of the future also will acquire their sacred doctrines that are equal to the unequalled after practicing this transcendent perfection of wisdom; and, in the same vein, they will turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine that is equal to the unequalled ... Since this is the case, great

bodhisattva beings who seek to transcend all phenomena should continue to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

COMMENTARY

The three times of the past, present and future do not exist from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality, where We as a singularity in God, exist undivided, uncreated and without an individual self. Beyond this singularity phenomena do not exist, and it is for this reason that the Buddha explains that great bodhisattva beings do not associate non-existent phenomena with the non-existent three times of the past, present, and future ... and do not consider whether these non-existent phenomena are anything at all, including permanent or impermanent ... imbued with happiness or suffering ... constitute a self or a non-self ... are empty or not empty ... are with signs or signless ... have aspirations or are without aspirations ... are calm or not calm ... are void or not void ... are afflicted or purified ... arise or cease ... are entities or non-entities. Yet from the perspective of ‘relative’ reality in the dimension of space and time, great bodhisattva beings enter into union with emptiness through the intrinsic defining characteristics of these non-existent phenomena ~ **for it is so that emptiness is only existent in “relative” reality, in relation to a ‘thing’.** Thus to transcend all appearance of phenomena in relative existence, great bodhisattva beings must enter into union with the non-existent ‘emptiness’ of that thing.

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The Buddha states (above): *“Emptiness neither arises nor ceases. It is neither afflicted nor purified. It neither decreases nor increases. It is neither past, future, nor present. Therein there are no physical forms, no feelings, no perceptions, no formative predispositions, and no consciousness ... {up to and including} there is no genuine perfect enlightenment.”* **As emptiness is the underlying characteristic of all phenomena in ‘relative’ existence** that does not arise nor cease, decrease nor increase, become afflicted nor purified, and is neither past, future, nor present, **it serves as the gateway between transcending ‘relative’ reality and entering ‘ultimate’ reality.** This is because “ultimate” reality also neither arises nor ceases; decreases nor increases; becomes afflicted nor purified; and is neither past, future, nor present.

CHAPTER FIVE: DESIGNATION OF A BODHISATTVA

5.1 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When you say that great bodhisattva beings who continue to engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom deserve respect, then, Venerable Lord, what constitutes that phenomenon designated by the term ‘bodhisattva,’ that is to say, the one who at all times continues to engage inseparably in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom? If one were to ask why, it is because I do not consider any phenomenon that may be designated by the term ‘bodhisattva.’”

5.2 The Blessed One addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that physical forms constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied.

5.3 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

- 5.4 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the eyes constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, do you think that the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.5 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that sights constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, do you think that sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.6 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.7 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.8 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.9 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.10 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.11 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.12 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the earth element constitutes a bodhisattva, and similarly, do you think that the water element, the fire element, the wind element, the space element, and the consciousness element constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.13 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that fundamental ignorance constitutes a bodhisattva, and in the same vein, do you think that [other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.14 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that anything other than physical forms constitutes a bodhisattva, and similarly, do you think that anything other than feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.15 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that anything other than the eyes constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.16 “Similarly, do you think that anything other than the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty constitutes

a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.17 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that anything other than sights constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.18 “Similarly, do you think that anything other than sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.19 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that anything other than the sensory element of the eyes constitutes a bodhisattva, and in the same vein, do you think that anything other than [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of the mental faculty, constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.20 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that anything other than the earth element constitutes a bodhisattva, and similarly, do you think that anything other than the water element, the fire element, the wind element, the space element, and the consciousness element constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.21 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that anything other than fundamental ignorance constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.22 “Śāradvatīputra! In the same vein, do you think that anything other than [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.23 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the real nature of physical forms constitutes a bodhisattva, and similarly, do you think that the real nature of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.24 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the real nature of the eyes constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.25 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the real nature of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.26 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the real nature of the sensory element of the eyes constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.27 “Śāradvatīputra! In the same vein, do you think that the real nature of [the other sensory elements], up to and including the real nature of the sensory element of mental consciousness, constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.28 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the real nature of fundamental ignorance constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No,

Venerable Lord!”

5.29 “Śāradvatīputra! In the same vein, do you think that the real nature of [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.30 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that anything other than the real nature of physical forms constitutes a bodhisattva, and similarly, do you think that anything other than the real nature of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.31 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that anything other than the real nature of the eyes constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.32 “Similarly, do you think that anything other than the real nature of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.33 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that anything other than the real nature of the sensory element of the eyes constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.34 “Śāradvatīputra! In the same vein, do you think that anything other than the real nature of [the other sensory elements], up to and including anything other than the real nature of the sensory element of mental consciousness, constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.35 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that anything other than the real nature of fundamental ignorance constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.36 “Śāradvatīputra! In the same vein, do you think that anything other than the real nature of [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied.

5.37 Then Blessed One asked, “Śāradvatīputra, to what purpose have you said that physical forms do not constitute a bodhisattva, and in the same vein, that [all those other phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death, do not constitute a bodhisattva? Why do you say that a bodhisattva is not anything other than physical forms, and that nor indeed does the real nature of physical forms constitute a bodhisattva, and in the same vein why do you say that nor does the real nature of [all those other phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death, constitute a bodhisattva? Why do you say that a bodhisattva is not anything other than the real nature of physical forms, and in the same vein that a bodhisattva is not anything other than the real nature of [all those other phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death?”

5.38 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, if sentient beings are invariably unfound and not apprehended, how could they become bodhisattvas! How could physical forms become bodhisattvas!

How could bodhisattvas become anything other than physical forms! In the same vein, how could [all the remaining phenomena] up to and including the link of aging and death, become bodhisattvas! How could bodhisattvas become anything other than [all those remaining phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death! How could the real nature of physical forms become bodhisattvas! How could bodhisattvas become anything other than the real nature of physical forms! In the same vein, how could the real nature of [all those remaining phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death, become bodhisattvas! How could bodhisattvas become anything other than the real nature of [those remaining phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death! These would be impossible!”

5.39 The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, it is so! It is so! Śāradvatīputra, since great bodhisattva beings apprehend no sentient beings, they should train in the transcendent perfection of non-referential wisdom.

5.40 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied.

5.41 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.42 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms as permanent or impermanent constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.43 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as permanent or impermanent constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.44 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms as happiness or suffering constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.45 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as happiness or suffering constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.46 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms as a self or not a self constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.47 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as a self or not a self constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.48 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms as empty or not empty constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.49 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and

consciousness as empty or not empty constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.50 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms as with signs or signless constitutes a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.51 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as with signs or signless constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.52 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms as having aspirations or lacking aspirations constitutes a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.53 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as having aspirations or lacking aspirations constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.54 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms as calm or not calm constitutes a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.55 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as calm or not calm constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.56 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms as void or not void constitutes a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.57 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as void or not void constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.58 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms as afflicted or purified constitutes a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.59 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as afflicted or purified constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.60 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms as arising or ceasing constitutes a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.61 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as arising or ceasing constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.62 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of physical forms as entities or non-entities constitutes a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

- 5.63 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as entities or non-entities constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.64 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of the eyes constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.65 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.66 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of the eyes as permanent or impermanent constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.67 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty as permanent or impermanent constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.68 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of eyes as imbued with happiness or suffering constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.69 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty as imbued with happiness or suffering constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.70 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of the eyes as a self or not a self constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.71 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty as a self or not a self constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.72 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of the eyes as empty or not empty constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.73 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty as empty or not empty constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.74 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of the eyes as with signs or signless constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.75 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty as with signs or signless constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.76 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of the eyes as having aspirations or lacking aspirations con-

stitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.77 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty as having aspirations or lacking aspirations constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.78 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of the eyes as calm or not calm constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.79 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty as calm or not calm constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.80 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of the eyes as void or not void constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.81 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty as void or not void constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.82 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of the eyes as afflicted or purified constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.83 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty as afflicted or purified constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.84 “Śāradvatīputra! Do you think that the designation of the eyes as arising or ceasing constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.85 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty as arising or ceasing constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.86 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of the eyes as entities or non-entities constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.87 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty as entities or non-entities constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.88 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.89 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

- 5.90 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights as permanent or impermanent constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.91 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as permanent or impermanent constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.92 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights as imbued with happiness or suffering constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.93 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as imbued with happiness or suffering constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.94 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights as a self or not a self constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.95 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as a self or not a self constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.96 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights as empty or not empty constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.97 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as empty or not empty constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.98 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights as with signs or signless constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.99 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as with signs or signless constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.100 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights as having aspirations or lacking aspirations constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.101 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as having aspirations or lacking aspirations constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.102 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights as calm or not calm constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”
- 5.103 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenome-

na as calm or not calm constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.104 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights as void or not void constitutes a bodhisattva?”
“No, Venerable Lord!”

5.105 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as void or not void constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.106 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights as afflicted or purified constitutes a bodhisattva?”
“No, Venerable Lord!”

5.107 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as afflicted or purified constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.108 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights as arising or ceasing constitutes a bodhisattva?”
“No, Venerable Lord!”

5.109 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as arising or ceasing constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.110 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of sights as entities or non-entities constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.111 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as entities or non-entities constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.112 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designation of the sensory element of the eyes constitutes a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.113 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.114 “In the same vein, do you think that the designations [of all the remaining sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.115 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness as permanent or impermanent constitute a bodhisattva?”
“No, Venerable Lord!”

5.116 “In the same vein, do you think that the designations [of all the remaining sensory elements], up to and including

ding the sensory element of mental consciousness as permanent or impermanent, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.117 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of [all the sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness, and continuing in the same vein as far as [the designation of] the sensory element of mental consciousness, as imbued with happiness or suffering, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.118 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of [all the sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness, and continuing in the same vein as far as [the designation of] the sensory element of mental consciousness, as a self or not a self, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.119 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of [all the sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness, and continuing in the same vein as far as [the designation of] the sensory element of mental consciousness, as empty or not empty, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.120 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of [all the sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness, and continuing in the same vein as far as [the designation of] the sensory element of mental consciousness, as with signs or signless, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.121 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of [all the sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness, and continuing in the same vein as far as [the designation of] the sensory element of mental consciousness, as having aspirations or lacking aspirations, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.122 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of [all the sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness, and continuing in the same vein as far as [the designation of] the sensory element of mental consciousness, as calm or not calm, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.123 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of [all the sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness, and continuing in the same vein as far as [the designation of] the sensory element of mental consciousness, as void or not void, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.124 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of [all the sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness, and continuing

in the same vein as far as [the designation of] the sensory element of mental consciousness, as afflicted or purified, constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.125 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of [all the sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness, and continuing in the same vein as far as [the designation of] the sensory element of mental consciousness, as arising or non-arising, constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.126 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of [all the sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness, and continuing in the same vein as far as [the designation of] the sensory element of mental consciousness, as entities or non-entities, constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.127 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.128 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, as permanent or impermanent, constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.129 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, as imbued with happiness or suffering, constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.130 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, as a self or a non-self, constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.131 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, as empty or not empty, constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.132 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, as with signs or signless, constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.133 "Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, as having aspirations or lacking aspirations, constitute a bodhisattva?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

5.134 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, as calm or not calm, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.135 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, as void or not void, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.136 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, as afflicted or purified, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.137 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, as arising or ceasing, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

5.138 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the designations of fundamental ignorance and, in the same vein, of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, as entities or non-entities, constitute a bodhisattva?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied.

5.139 Then, the Blessed One addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra in the following words: “Śāradvatīputra, why do you say that the designation of physical forms does not constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, that the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness do not constitute a bodhisattva? Why do you say that the designation of physical forms as permanent or impermanent does not constitute a bodhisattva? Similarly, why do you say that the designation of physical forms as imbued with happiness or suffering, their designation as a self or not a self, their designation as empty or not empty, their designation as with signs or signless, their designation as having aspirations or lacking aspirations, their designation as calm or not calm, their designation as void or not void, their designation as afflicted or purified, their designation as arising or ceasing, and their designation as entities or non-entities [do not constitute a bodhisattva]? In the same vein, why do you say that these same designations, made with respect to feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, up to and including their designation as entities or non-entities, do not constitute a bodhisattva?”

5.140 “In like manner, why do you say that the designation of the eyes does not constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, that the designations of the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty do not constitute a bodhisattva? Likewise, why do you say that the designation of the eyes as permanent or impermanent does not constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, that the designations of the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty as permanent or impermanent does not constitute a bodhisattva? In the same vein, why do you say that these [remaining] designations made with respect to the eyes, up to and including their designation as entities or non-entities, do not constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, that these [remaining] designations made with respect to the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty, up to and including their designation as entities or non-entities,

do not constitute a bodhisattva?

5.141 “In like manner, why do you say that the designation of sights does not constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena do not constitute a bodhisattva? Why do you say that the designation of sights as permanent or impermanent does not constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, that the designations of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena as permanent or impermanent do not constitute a bodhisattva? In the same vein, why do you say that the [remaining] designations made with respect to sights, up to and including their designation as entities or non-entities, do not constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, that the [remaining] designations made with respect to sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena, up to and including their designation as entities or non-entities, do not constitute a bodhisattva?

5.142 “Why do you say that the designation of the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness does not constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, that the designations [of the remaining sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness, do not constitute a bodhisattva? Why do you say that the designation of the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness as permanent or impermanent, does not constitute a bodhisattva, and, in the same vein, that the designations of the [remaining] sensory elements, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness, [as permanent or impermanent], do not constitute a bodhisattva? In the same vein, why do you say that the [remaining] designations made with respect to the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including their designation as entities or non-entities, do not constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, that the [remaining] designations made with respect to the [other] sensory elements, up to and including the designation of the sensory element of mental consciousness, as entities or non-entities, do not constitute a bodhisattva?

5.143 “Why do you say that the designation of fundamental ignorance does not constitute a bodhisattva, and in the same vein, that the designations [of the remaining links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, do not constitute a bodhisattva? In like manner, why do you say that the designation of fundamental ignorance as permanent or impermanent does not constitute a bodhisattva, and, in the same vein, that the designations [of the other links of dependent origination], up to and including the link of aging and death, as permanent or impermanent, do not constitute a bodhisattva? In the same vein, why do you say that the [remaining] designations made with respect to fundamental ignorance, up to and including its designation as entity or non-entity, do not constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly, that [the remaining] designations made with respect to the [other links of dependent origination], up to and including the designation of aging and death, as entities or non-entities, do not constitute a bodhisattva?”

5.144 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra replied to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, if physical forms are invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of physical forms become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.145 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of physical forms as permanent or impermanent is invariably non-apprehensi-

ble, how could the designation of physical forms as such become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.146 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of physical forms as imbued with happiness or suffering is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of physical forms as such become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.147 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of physical forms as a self or not a self is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of physical forms as such become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.148 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of physical forms as empty or not empty is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of physical forms as such become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.149 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of physical forms as with signs or signless is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of physical forms as such become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.150 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of physical forms as having aspirations or lacking aspirations is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of physical forms as such become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.151 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of physical forms as calm or not calm is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of physical forms as such become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.152 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of physical forms as void or not void is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of physical forms as such become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.153 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of physical forms as afflicted or purified is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of physical forms as such become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.154 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of physical forms as arising or ceasing is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of physical forms as such become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.155 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of physical forms as entities or non-entities is invariably non-apprehensible,

how could the designation of physical forms as such become a bodhisattva? The same goes for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!

5.156 “Venerable Lord, if the eyes are invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the eyes become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.157 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the eyes as permanent or impermanent is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the eyes as impermanent become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.158 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the eyes as imbued with happiness is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the eyes as imbued with suffering become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.159 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the eyes as a self is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the eyes as a non-self become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.160 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the eyes as empty is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the eyes as not empty become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.161 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the eyes as with signs is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the eyes as signless become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.162 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the eyes as having aspirations is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation [of the eyes] as lacking aspirations become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.163 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the eyes as calm is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the eyes as not calm become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.164 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the eyes as void is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the eyes as not void become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.165 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the eyes as afflicted is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the eyes as purified become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.166 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the eyes as arising is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designa-

tion of the eyes as ceasing become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.167 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the eyes as entities is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the eyes as non-entities become a bodhisattva? The same goes for the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty!

5.168 “Venerable Lord, if sights are invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

5.169 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of sights as permanent is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights as impermanent become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

5.170 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of sights as imbued with happiness is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights as imbued with suffering become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

5.171 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of sights as a self is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights as a non-self become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

5.172 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of sights as empty is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights as not empty become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

5.173 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of sights as with signs is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights as signless become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

5.174 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of sights as having aspirations is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights as lacking aspirations become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

5.175 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of sights as calm is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights as not calm become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

5.176 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of sights as void is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights as not void become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

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5.177 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of sights as afflicted is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights as purified become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

5.178 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of sights as arising is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights as ceasing become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

5.179 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of sights as entities is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of sights as non-entities become a bodhisattva? The same goes for sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena!

5.180 “Venerable Lord, if the sensory element of the eyes is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.181 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the sensory element of the eyes as permanent is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes as impermanent become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.182 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the sensory element of the eyes as imbued with happiness is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes as imbued with suffering become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.183 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the sensory element of the eyes as a self is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes as a non-self become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.184 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the sensory element of the eyes as empty is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes as not empty become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.185 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the sensory element of the eyes as with signs is invariably non-apprehensi-

ble, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes as signless become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.186 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the sensory element of the eyes as having aspirations is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes as lacking aspirations become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.187 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the sensory element of the eyes as calm is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes as not calm become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.188 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the sensory element of the eyes as void is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes as not void become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.189 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the sensory element of the eyes as afflicted is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes as purified become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.190 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the sensory element of the eyes as arising is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes as ceasing become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.191 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of the sensory element of the eyes as an entity is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of the sensory element of the eyes as a non-entity become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other sensory elements], starting from the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness!

5.192 “Venerable Lord, if fundamental ignorance is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death!

5.193 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of fundamental ignorance as permanent is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance as impermanent become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all

the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death!

5.194 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of fundamental ignorance as imbued with happiness is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance as imbued with suffering become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death!

5.195 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of fundamental ignorance as a self is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance as a non-self become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death!

5.196 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of fundamental ignorance as empty is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance as not empty become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death!

5.197 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of fundamental ignorance as with signs is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance as signless become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death!

5.198 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of fundamental ignorance as having aspirations is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance as lacking aspirations become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death!

5.199 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of fundamental ignorance as calm is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance as not calm become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death!

5.200 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of fundamental ignorance as void is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance as not void become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death!

5.201 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of fundamental ignorance as afflicted is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance as purified become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death!

5.202 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of fundamental ignorance as arising is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance as ceasing become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death!

5.203 “Venerable Lord, if the notion of fundamental ignorance as an entity is invariably non-apprehensible, how could the designation of fundamental ignorance as a non-entity become a bodhisattva? The same applies to [all the

other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death! As indicated [above] in the context of the psycho-physical aggregates, the same refrain should be applied extensively to all [those other phenomenological categories].”

5.204 The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, it is so! It is so! Great bodhisattva beings who abide accordingly in this transcendent perfection of wisdom do not apprehend the designation of physical forms, and in the same vein, they do not apprehend [all the other designations concerning physical forms] up to and including the designation of physical forms as non-entities. Likewise, they do not apprehend the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and in the same vein, they do not apprehend [their further designations], starting from there and continuing up to the designation of consciousness as a non-entity. In the same vein, they do not apprehend the designation of fundamental ignorance, and they do not apprehend [the designations of the other links of dependent origination], up to and including the designation of aging and death. In the same vein, they do not apprehend the designation [of these links of dependent origination] as non-entities and so forth. As stated [above] in the context of the psycho-physical aggregates, the same refrain should also be applied extensively to all [those other phenomenological categories]. It is in this way that they should train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

5.205 *This completes the fifth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Designation of a Bodhisattva.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE:
DESIGNATION OF A BODHISATVA

5.A Physical forms do not constitute a bodhisattva, and ... [all those other phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death, do not constitute a bodhisattva ... a bodhisattva is not anything other than physical forms, and ... nor indeed does the real nature* of physical forms {—*which is that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence} constitute a bodhisattva, and ... nor does the real nature of [all those other phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death, constitute a bodhisattva ... a bodhisattva is not anything other than the real nature of physical forms, and ... a bodhisattva is not anything other than the real nature of [all those other phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death.

5.B “Venerable Lord, if sentient beings are invariably unfound and not apprehended {in ultimate reality}, how could they become bodhisattvas! How could physical forms become bodhisattvas! How could bodhisattvas become anything other than physical forms! In the same vein, how could [all the remaining phenomena] up to and including the link of aging and death, become bodhisattvas! How could bodhisattvas become anything other than [all those remaining phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death! How could the real nature of physical forms become bodhisattvas! How could bodhisattvas become anything other than the real nature of physical forms! In the same vein, how could the real nature of [all those remaining phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death, become bodhisattvas! How could bodhisattvas become anything other than the real nature of [those remaining phenomena], up to and including the link of aging and death! These would be impossible!” The Blessed One replied, “... It is so! It is so! Śāradvatīputra, since great bodhisattva beings {ultimately} apprehend no sentient beings

they should train in the transcendent perfection of non-referential wisdom.”

5.C The designation of physical forms does not constitute a bodhisattva, and similarly ... the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {as well as the designations of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty; sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena; the sensory element of the eyes, sights, visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness; fundamental ignorance and ... the remaining links of dependent origination, up to and including aging and death} do not constitute a bodhisattva ... The designation of physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty; sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena; the sensory element of the eyes, sights, visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness; fundamental ignorance and ... the remaining links of dependent origination, up to and including aging and death} ... as permanent or impermanent ... as imbued with happiness or suffering ... as a self or not a self ... as empty or not empty ... as with signs or signless ... as having aspirations or lacking aspirations ... as calm or not calm ... as void or not void ... as afflicted or purified ... as arising or ceasing ... as entities or non-entities [do not constitute a bodhisattva].

5.D {These designations do not constitute a bodhisattva because} physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty; sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena; the sensory element of the eyes, sights, visual consciousness, up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness; fundamental ignorance and ... the remaining links of dependent origination, up to and including aging and death} are invariably non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality} ... {This is because} the notion of physical forms {up to and including aging and death} as permanent or impermanent ... as imbued with happiness or suffering ... as a self or not a self ... as empty or not empty ... as with signs or signless ... as having aspirations or lacking aspirations ... as calm or not calm ... as void or not void ... as afflicted or purified ... as arising or ceasing ... as entities or non-entities is invariably non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}.

5.E “Venerable Lord, if physical forms {up to and including aging and death and the notion of physical forms as permanent or impermanent up to and including the notion of aging and death as entities or non-entities is} ... invariably non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}, how could the designation of physical forms {and the rest} ... become a bodhisattva? ... How could the designation of physical forms {and the rest} as permanent or impermanent ... as imbued with happiness or suffering ... as a self or not a self ... as empty or not empty ... as with signs or signless ... as having aspirations or lacking aspirations ... as calm or not calm ... as void or not void ... as afflicted or purified ... as arising or ceasing ... as entities or non-entities ... become a bodhisattva?” ... “Śāradvatīputra, it is so! It is so! Great bodhisattva beings who abide accordingly in this transcendent perfection of wisdom do not apprehend {as ultimately real} the designation of physical forms ... up to and including the designation of physical forms as non-entities ... They do not apprehend {as ultimately real} the designations of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and ... they do not apprehend {as ultimately real} [their further designations], starting from there ... up to the designation of consciousness as a non-entity ... They do not apprehend {as ultimately real} the designation of fundamental ignorance ... up to and including the designation of aging and death ... They do not apprehend {as ultimately real} the designation [of these links of dependent origination] as non-entities and so forth ... It is in this

way that they should train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

COMMENTARY

From the perspective of ultimate reality We, as a singularity in God, are undivided. In this state of ‘oneness’, there is no other thing—no other phenomena—and no other one. Here in this non-dual state of oneness, of non-relativity, where not more than one exists to relate to anything else, We, in this ultimate reality state of oneness cannot refer to anything else—or anyone else—or any other phenomena ~ for nothing else beyond this singularity exists. This, as indicated by the Buddha (above), is the training in the **transcendent perfection of non-referential wisdom**.

*

In ‘ultimate’ reality—where nothing apart from Our singularity in God exists—designations (or names) do not exist. The designation of a ‘buddha’ and the designation of a ‘bodhisattva’ leading to manifestly perfect buddhahood are both designations of an existent thing in ‘relative’ existence; however from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality these phenomena and designations do not exist ~ as explained further by the Buddha in *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*. This is the transcendent perfection of non-referential wisdom. A buddha exists only in ‘relative’ existence to awaken all sentient beings to the real nature of phenomena, but must eventually take its final nirvāṇa (parinirvāṇa), which is the extinguishment of its individual self.

CHAPTER SIX: TRAINING

6.1 “Śāradvatīputra, you said that you do not consider any phenomenon which may be designated by the term ‘bodhisattva.’ Indeed, Śāradvatīputra, phenomena do not consider phenomena. Nor, Śāradvatīputra, do phenomena consider the expanse of reality. The sensory element of sights does not consider the expanse of reality. Nor does the expanse of reality consider the sensory element of sights, and in the same way, the expanse of reality does not consider [any other sensory elements] up to and including the sensory element of consciousness. Nor does the sensory element of consciousness and so forth consider the expanse of reality.

6.2 “Śāradvatīputra, the sensory element of the eyes does not consider the expanse of reality; nor does the expanse of reality consider the sensory element of the eyes. In the same vein, [the other sensory elements] up to and including the sensory element of the mental faculty do not consider the expanse of reality; nor does the expanse of reality consider [those other sensory elements up to and including] the sensory element of the mental faculty. The sensory element of visual consciousness does not consider the expanse of reality; nor does the expanse of reality consider the sensory element of visual consciousness. [The other sensory elements] up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness do not consider the expanse of reality; nor does the expanse of reality consider [those other sensory elements up to and including] the sensory element of mental consciousness. If you ask why, Śāradvatīputra, it is because conditioned elements do not consider unconditioned elements, and because unconditioned elements do not consider conditioned elements. Śāradvatīputra, unconditioned elements cannot be designated except in terms of conditioned elements, and conditioned elements cannot be designated except in terms of unconditioned elements.”

6.3 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord, if phenomena do not consider phenomena, and in the same vein, [all other sensory elements] up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness do not consider the expanse of reality, then in that case, Venerable Lord, what is the meaning of the term ‘great bodhisattva being’?”

6.4 The Blessed One then addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is a meaningless term. If you ask why, Śāradvatīputra, it is because the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is without identity. For this reason, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is a meaningless term. Śāradvatīputra, just as tracks of birds in the sky are non-existent, in the same way the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is non-existent. Śāradvatīputra, just as a dream has no basis, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is non-existent. Śāradvatīputra, just as a magical display is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is non-existent. Śāradvatīputra, just as a mirage is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is non-existent. Śāradvatīputra, just as an echo, an optical aberration, the reflection of the moon in water, and a phantom emanation of the tathāgatas are without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is non-existent. Śāradvatīputra, just as the real nature is without foundation, and in the same way, the unmistakable real nature, the reality, the expanse of reality, and maturity with respect to all things are without foundation, likewise, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is non-existent. Śāradvatīputra, just as the finality of existence is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is non-existent.

6.5 “Śāradvatīputra, just as the physical form of an illusory person is without foundation, and in the same way, the aggregate of feelings, the aggregate of perceptions, the aggregate of formative predispositions, and the aggregate of consciousness are without foundation, likewise, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is non-existent.

6.6 “Śāradvatīputra, just as the eyes of an illusory person are without foundation, and in the same way, [their other sense organs] up to and including the mental faculty are without foundation, and the same goes for the [external] sense fields, which are also without foundation, starting from the sense field of sights through to the sense field of mental phenomena, likewise, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ is non-existent.

6.7 “Śāradvatīputra, just as [the notion of] an illusory person engaging in the emptiness of internal phenomena is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent. In the same vein, just as [the notion of] an illusory person engaging in [all the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.8 “Śāradvatīputra, just as [the notion of] an illusory person practicing the ten powers of the tathāgatas is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent. In the same vein, just as [the notion of an illu-

sory person] practicing [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.9 “Śāradvatīputra, just as [the notion of] the physical forms of a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha is without foundation, and in the same way, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are without foundation, likewise, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent. Śāradvatīputra, just as [the notion of] the eyes of a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha is without foundation, and in the same way, [the notions of their other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, are without foundation, likewise, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.10 “Śāradvatīputra, just as [the notion of] a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha engaging in the emptiness of internal phenomena is without foundation, and, in the same vein, just as [the notion of a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha] engaging in [all the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.11 “Śāradvatīputra, just as [the notion of] a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha having the four applications of mindfulness is without foundation, and, in the same vein, just as [the notion of a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha] having [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.12 “Śāradvatīputra, just as the presence of unconditioned elements in conditioned elements is without foundation, and the presence of conditioned elements in unconditioned elements is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.13 “Śāradvatīputra, just as non-arising is without foundation, and in the same way, non-ceasing, non-conditioning, non-origination, non-apprehension, non-affliction, and non-purification are without foundation, likewise, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.”

6.14 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! The non-arising of what is without foundation? The non-affliction and so on of what is without foundation? The non-purification and so on of what is without foundation?”

6.15 The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, the non-arising of physical forms is without foundation. Similarly,

the non-arising of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is without foundation. In the same vein, [those other non-attributes], up to and including the non-affliction of physical forms and the non-purification of physical forms, are without foundation. Similarly, the non-affliction and non-purification of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are without foundation.

6.16 “Śāradvatīputra, the non-arising, non-affliction, and non-purification of the eyes are without foundation. Similarly, the non-arising, non-affliction, and non-purification of the ears, nose, tongue, and body are without foundation, and in the same vein, the non-arising, non-affliction, and non-purification of [all sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, are without foundation. Similarly, the non-arising, non-affliction, and non-purification of the sensory element of the eyes are without foundation, and in the same vein, the non-arising, non-affliction, and non-purification of [all other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness, are without foundation. Similarly, the non-arising, non-affliction, and non-purification of the applications of mindfulness are without foundation, and in the same vein, the non-arising, non-affliction, and non-purification of [all other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, are without foundation.

6.17 “Śāradvatīputra, just as the non-arising, non-affliction, and non-purification of the ten powers of the tathāgatas are without foundation, in the same vein, the non-arising, non-affliction, and non-purification of [all other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are without foundation. As in all these cases, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.18 “Śāradvatīputra, just as the utter purity of the applications of mindfulness is without foundation, and, in the same vein, just as the utter purity [of all other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.19 “Śāradvatīputra, just as the utter purity of the ten powers of the tathāgatas is without foundation, and, in the same vein, just as the utter purity [of all other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom is non-existent.

6.20 “Śāradvatīputra, just as the utter purity of self is without foundation on account of selflessness, and, in the same vein, just as the utter purity of [the notions of] sentient beings, living organisms, lives, individuals, humankind, human beings, agents, actors, petitioners, instigators, experiencers, experiencing subjects, knowers, and viewers is without foundation owing to the absence of knowers, viewers, and so on, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.21 “Śāradvatīputra, just as darkness when the sun has risen is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of

wisdom, is non-existent. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, just as when an eon of conflagration will occur, all that is included in conditioned phenomena will be without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.22 “Śāradvatīputra, just as [the notion of] degenerate morality with respect to the aggregate of ethical discipline possessed by the tathāgatas, arhats, and completely perfect buddhas is without foundation, and similarly, just as the [notion of] mental distraction with respect to their meditative stability is without foundation, and similarly, just as the [notion of] stupidity with respect to their aggregate of wisdom is without foundation, and similarly, just as the [notion of] non-liberation with respect to their aggregate of liberation is without foundation, and similarly, just as [the notion of] the misperception of liberating pristine cognition with respect to their aggregate that perceives liberating pristine cognition is without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.23 “Śāradvatīputra, just as the light of the tathāgatas and the light of the moon and the sun are without foundation, and, in the same vein, just as the light of the gods of the Trayastrīṃśa, Yāma, Tuṣita, Nirmāṇarata, and Paranirmitavaśavartin realms, and similarly, the light of the gods [of the world system of form], extending from the Brahmakāyika realm as far as the Pure Abodes, are without foundation, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent. If you ask why, Śāradvatīputra, it is because all those phenomena which enlightenment denotes and which the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ denotes are neither conjoined nor disjoined, and they are immaterial, unrevealed, and unobstructed. That is to say, their only defining characteristic is that they are without defining characteristics. Therefore, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings should train without attachment to anything.”

6.24 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If all those phenomena which enlightenment denotes, and which the meaning of the term ‘bodhisattva’ denotes are neither conjoined nor disjoined, and immaterial, unrevealed, and unobstructed, that is to say, if their only defining characteristic is that they are without defining characteristics, there are some who might ask that if all those phenomena are neither conjoined nor disjoined, and immaterial, unrevealed, and unobstructed, that is to say, if their only defining characteristic is that they are without defining characteristics, how then could this illusory person, after training in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, attain emancipation in omniscience? If they were to ask such a question, how should I respond?”

6.25 “Similarly, how could this illusory person attain emancipation in omniscience after training in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, training in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, training in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, training in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and training in the transcendent perfection of generosity? Similarly, how could this illusory person attain emancipation in omniscience after training in the applications of mindfulness, and, in the same vein, how could this illusory person attain emancipation in omniscience after training in [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path? In the same vein, how could this illusory person attain emancipation in omniscience after training in the ten powers of the tathāgatas? In the same vein, how could this illusory person attain emancipation in omniscience after training in [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas? Then, how could

this illusory person attain emancipation in omniscience after training in omniscient pristine cognition? If they were to ask such questions, Venerable Lord, how should I respond?”

6.26 “Śāradvatīputra, to that end, I will question you and you may answer as best you can. Śāradvatīputra, do you think that physical forms are one thing, and that illusions are another? Similarly, do you think that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are one thing, and that illusions are another? Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the applications of mindfulness are one thing, and that illusions are another? In the same vein, do you think that [the other causal attributes] up to and including the noble eightfold path are one thing, and that illusions are another? Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the ten powers of the tathāgatas are one thing, and that illusions are another, and in the same vein, do you think that [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are one thing, and that illusions are another? Do you think that emptiness is one thing, and that illusions are another, or that signlessness is one thing, and that illusions are another, or that aspirationlessness is one thing, and that illusions are another?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied.

6.27 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that enlightenment is one thing, and that illusions are another?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied. “Physical forms are not one thing, and illusions another. Illusion itself is physical forms, and physical forms themselves are illusion. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are not one thing, and illusions another. Consciousness [and the other aggregates] are themselves illusion, and illusion itself is consciousness [and the other aggregates]. Similarly, the eyes are not one thing, and illusions another. The eyes themselves are illusion, and illusion itself is the eyes. Similarly, [all the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, and in the same vein, [all phenomenological categories], up to and including feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded, are not one thing, and illusions another. Illusion itself is feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded, and feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded are themselves illusion. [The other aspects of feelings], up to and including feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded, are not one thing, and illusions another. Illusion itself is feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded, and feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded are themselves illusion. Similarly, the applications of mindfulness are not one thing, and illusions another. Illusion is itself the applications of mindfulness, and applications of mindfulness are themselves illusion. In the same vein, [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, are not one thing, and illusions another. Illusion itself is the noble eightfold path, and the noble eightfold path itself is illusion. Similarly, the ten powers of the tathāgatas are not one thing, and illusions another. Illusion itself is the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and the ten powers of the tathāgatas are themselves illusion. Similarly, the gateways to liberation are not one thing, and illusions another. Illusion is itself the gateways to liberation, and the gateways to liberation are themselves illusion. In the same vein, [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are not one thing, and illusions another. Illusion itself is the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas themselves are illusion.”

6.28 The Blessed One then said, “In that case, Śāradvatīputra, do you think that there is affliction or purification with respect to that illusion?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied.

6.29 “Then, Śāradvatīputra, do you think that there is arising or ceasing with respect to that illusion?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

6.30 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that that which is without arising, ceasing, affliction, and purification can train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and attain emancipation in omniscience, or do you think that that can subsequently reach omniscience?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

6.31 “Śāradvatīputra, then, does this name, symbol, designation, or term ‘bodhisattva’ apply to the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

6.32 “Śāradvatīputra, is that which is without name, without symbol, without designation, without conventional expression, without denomination, without corporeal form, without physical actions, without speech, without verbal actions, without mind, without mental actions, without arising, without ceasing, without affliction, and without purification able to train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and then attain emancipation in omniscience?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

6.33 “Śāradvatīputra, so it is that when great bodhisattva beings have trained in the transcendent perfection of wisdom without apprehending anything, they will attain emancipation in omniscience.”

6.34 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord! Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly, and seek emancipation in unsurpassed completely perfect enlightenment, should always train in the manner of an illusory person. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is so that the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates might be understood to resemble an illusory person.”

6.35 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that these five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates can train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and attain emancipation in omniscience?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied. “And if one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because the five psycho-physical aggregates have an essential nature of non-entity, and the essential nature of non-entity is non-apprehensible.”

6.36 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the five psycho-physical aggregates can, in a dreamlike manner, train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and attain emancipation in omniscience?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied, “And if one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because dreams have an essential nature of non-entity, and the essential nature of non-entity is non-apprehensible.”

6.37 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that the five psycho-physical aggregates can, in the manner of an echo, or similarly, in the manner of an optical aberration, a mirage, or a phantom, [train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and attain emancipation in omniscience]?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied.

6.38 “Śāradvatīputra, do you think that these five psycho-physical aggregates can train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and attain emancipation in omniscience?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied. “And if one were to ask

why, Venerable Lord, it is because physical forms are like an illusion, and similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are like an illusion, and because what is true of consciousness is also true of the six sense organs, and what is true of the six sense organs is also true of the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates. Venerable Lord! Physical forms are like a dream, and similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are like a dream. What is true of consciousness is true of the six sense organs, and what is true of the six sense organs is true of the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates. These do not apprehend the emptiness of internal phenomena, nor do they apprehend the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. “Venerable Lord! In that case, will the bodhisattvas who have newly embarked upon the [Great] Vehicle not be afraid and terrified when they hear this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom?”

6.39 The Blessed One then addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who newly embark on the [Great] Vehicle will be afraid and terrified if they are unskilled in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and they are not taken in hand by an excellent spiritual mentor.”

6.40 “Venerable Lord, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, what is the skill in means that enables great bodhisattva beings who have heard this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom not to be afraid and not to be terrified?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they discern through their minds endowed with omniscience that physical forms are impermanent, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern through their minds endowed with omniscience that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are impermanent, and do not focus on them. This, Śāradvatīputra, is the skill in means through which great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.41 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they discern through their minds endowed with omniscience that physical forms are imbued with suffering, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are imbued with suffering, and do not focus on them. In the same vein, they discern that physical forms are not a self, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are not a self, and do not focus on them. They discern that physical forms are empty, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty, and do not focus on them. They discern that physical forms are signless, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are signless, and do not focus on them. They discern that physical forms are without aspirations, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are without aspirations, and do not focus on them. They discern that physical forms are calm, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are calm, and do not focus on them. They discern that physical forms are void, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are void, and do not focus on them. They discern that physical forms are pure, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are

pure, and do not focus on them. They discern that physical forms are non-arising, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-arising, and do not focus on them. They discern that physical forms are unceasing, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are unceasing, and do not focus on them. They discern that physical forms are non-entities, and do not focus on them. Similarly, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-entities, and do not focus on them. This, Śāradvatīputra, is the skillful means through which great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.42 “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings discern this, without apprehending anything, they teach all sentient beings the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are impermanent. Without apprehending anything, they teach the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are imbued with suffering. Without apprehending anything, they teach the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are not a self. Without apprehending anything, they teach the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are empty. Without apprehending anything, they teach the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are signless. Without apprehending anything, they teach the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are without aspirations. Without apprehending anything, they teach the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are calm. Without apprehending anything, they teach the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are void. Without apprehending anything, they teach the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are pure. Without apprehending anything, they teach the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are non-arising. Without apprehending anything, they teach the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are unceasing. Without apprehending anything, they teach the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are non-entities. This, Śāradvatīputra, is the transcendent perfection of generosity, possessed by great bodhisattva beings when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.43 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not pay attention with the twofold, [over-scrupulous] attentiveness of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas to the notion that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are impermanent, but they do so without apprehending anything. They do not pay attention with the twofold, [over-scrupulous] attentiveness of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas to the notion that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are imbued with suffering, but they do so without apprehending anything. In the same vein, they do not pay attention with the twofold, [over-scrupulous] attentiveness of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas to the notions that physical forms are not a self, that they are empty, that they are signless, that they are without aspirations, that they are calm, that they are void, that they are purified, that they are non-arising, that they are unceasing, and that they are non-entities, but they do so without apprehending anything. Similarly,

they do not pay attention with the twofold, [over-scrupulous] attentiveness of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas to the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are not a self, that they are empty, that they are signless, that they are without aspirations, that they are void, that they are purified, that they are non-arising, that they are unceasing, and that they are non-entities, but they do so without apprehending anything. This, Śāradvatīputra, is the absence of dogmatic assumptions with regard to the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline of great bodhisattva beings when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.44 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they discern that physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, are impermanent, imbued with suffering, without a self, empty, signless, lacking aspirations, calm, void, purified, non-arising, unceasing, and non-entities. Their inclination to accept these insights is the transcendent perfection of unagitated tolerance of great bodhisattva beings when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.45 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they discern through their attention endowed with omniscience that physical forms are impermanent, and they do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they discern that [physical forms] are imbued with suffering, not a self, empty, signless, lacking aspirations, calm, void, purified, non-arising, unceasing, and non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything. Likewise, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are impermanent, imbued with suffering, not a self, empty, signless, lacking aspirations, calm, void, purified, non-arising, unceasing, and non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything. The non-forsaking of perseverance with regard to this attention endowed with omniscience is called the transcendent perfection of perseverance of great bodhisattva beings when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.46 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they discern that physical forms are impermanent, and they do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they discern that [physical forms] are imbued with suffering, not a self, empty, signless, lacking aspirations, calm, void, purified, non-arising, unceasing, and non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything. Likewise, they discern that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are impermanent, imbued with suffering, not a self, empty, signless, lacking aspirations, calm, void, purified, non-arising, unceasing, and non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything. Śāradvatīputra, this denial of opportunity for the twofold, [over-scrupulous] attentiveness possessed by śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and for the roots of non-virtuous action, to impede the attainment of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration of great bodhisattva beings when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.47 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they discern that physical forms are empty of the emptiness of physical forms, that the nature of physical forms is emptiness, and that emptiness is indeed physical forms. Similarly, [they discern] that consciousness [and so forth] are empty of the emptiness of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; that the nature of consciousness is emptiness; and that emptiness is indeed consciousness. Similarly, [they discern] that the eyes are empty of the emptiness of the eyes, that the nature of the eyes is emptiness, and that emptiness is indeed the eyes.

Similarly, [they discern] that the mental faculty [and so forth] are empty of the emptiness of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty; that the nature of the mental faculty is emptiness, and that emptiness is indeed the mental faculty. In the same vein, [they discern that] feelings conditioned by visually compounded sensory contact are empty of the emptiness of feelings conditioned by visually compounded sensory contact, and so forth, that the nature of feelings conditioned by visually compounded sensory contact is emptiness, and that emptiness is indeed feelings conditioned by visually compounded sensory contact. Similarly, [they discern that] feelings conditioned by mentally compounded sensory contact are empty of the emptiness of feelings conditioned by mentally compounded sensory contact, and so forth, that the nature of feelings conditioned by mentally compounded sensory contact is emptiness, and that emptiness is indeed the feelings conditioned by mentally compounded sensory contact.

6.48 “Similarly, [they discern that] the applications of mindfulness are empty of the emptiness of the applications of mindfulness, that the nature of the applications of mindfulness is emptiness, and that emptiness is indeed the applications of mindfulness. [They discern that] the noble eightfold path and other [causal attributes] are empty of the emptiness of the noble eightfold path, that the nature of the noble eightfold path is emptiness, and that emptiness is indeed the noble eightfold path. Similarly, they discern that the ten powers of the tathāgatas are empty of the emptiness of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, that the nature of the ten powers of the tathāgatas is emptiness, and that emptiness is indeed the ten powers of the tathāgatas. In the same vein, they discern that the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas [and other fruitional attributes] are empty of the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, that the nature of the qualities of the buddhas is emptiness, and that emptiness is indeed the qualities of the buddhas.”

6.49 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is profound. Would great bodhisattva beings who newly embark on the [Great] Vehicle, having heard this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, not possibly be afraid and terrified?” The Blessed One then addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, if great bodhisattva beings do not cultivate the roots of virtuous action, if they do not venerate many hundreds of thousands of buddhas, if they are not sustained by the instructions of the manifold roots of virtue, if they are not accepted by a spiritual mentor, if they are not inclined toward extensive [acts of virtuous conduct], if they are not free from wickedness of body, speech, and mind, and if they are not endowed with the fiery roots of virtue, they will be afraid and terrified on hearing this teaching concerning the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, it is because this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom will not sound like the transcendent perfection of wisdom to the ears of those who have not cultivated the roots of virtue, those who have not venerated many hundreds of thousands of buddhas, those who have not been accepted by a spiritual mentor, those who are disinclined, those who harbor thoughts of falling into the vehicles of the śrāvākas and pratyekabuddhas, those who are of feeble perseverance, those who are indolent, and those intent on mundane pleasures. Śāradvatīputra, so it is that great bodhisattva beings who seek to perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity should train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.50 “Similarly, those great bodhisattva beings who wish to comprehend physical forms, and similarly, those who wish to comprehend feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; those who wish to comprehend the eyes, and similarly, those who wish to comprehend [the other sense organs], up to and including the

mental faculty; and similarly, those who wish to comprehend sights, and likewise, those who wish to comprehend [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena; and similarly, those who wish to comprehend the sensory element of the eyes, and in the same vein, those who wish to comprehend [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness; those who wish to comprehend sensory contact that is visually compounded, those who wish to comprehend feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded, and in the same vein, those who wish to comprehend sensory contact that is mentally compounded, and those who wish to comprehend [other sorts of feelings], up to and including the feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded—all of these should train exclusively in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.51 “Similarly, those who wish to abandon desire, hatred, and delusion; those who wish to abandon false views about perishable composites, and similarly, those who wish to abandon doubt, the sense of moral and ascetic supremacy, attachment to the world system of desire and malice; those who wish to abandon attachment to the world system of form, attachment to the world system of formlessness, fundamental ignorance, pride, and mental agitation; and those who wish to abandon all fetters, latent impulses, and obsessions—all of these should train exclusively in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.52 “Likewise, those who wish to comprehend the four nourishments, and similarly, to abandon the four bonds, the four torrents, the four knots, and the four misconceptions should train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, those great bodhisattva beings who wish to abandon the paths of the ten non-virtuous actions, those who wish to attain the genuine paths of the ten virtuous actions, and those who wish to perfect them, should all train exclusively in the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, those great bodhisattva beings who wish to meditate on the four applications of mindfulness [and the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, as well as those who wish to meditate on the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, should all train exclusively in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.53 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, those great bodhisattva beings who wish to fulfill the aspirations of all sentient beings, and who wish to fulfil the roots of virtue so that they never regress into the three lower realms, are never born among beings of inferior species or class, and never descend to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas because they have perfected the roots of virtue, should all train exclusively in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

6.54 *This completes the sixth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Training.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SIX:

TRAINING

6.A {From the perspective of ultimate reality} phenomena do not consider phenomena. Nor ... do phenomena consider the expanse of {relative} reality. The sensory element of sights does not consider the expanse of {relative}

reality. Nor does the expanse of {relative} reality consider the sensory element of sights, and in the same way, the expanse of {relative} reality does not consider [any other sensory elements] up to and including the sensory element of consciousness. Nor does the sensory element of consciousness and so forth consider the expanse of {relative} reality. {The same applies to} the eyes ... up to and including the sensory element of the mental faculty ... {and} the sensory element of visual consciousness ... up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness do not consider the expanse of {relative} reality; nor does the expanse of {relative} reality consider [those other sensory elements up to and including] the sensory element of mental consciousness ... because {in ultimate reality} conditioned elements do not consider unconditioned elements, and because unconditioned elements do not consider conditioned elements ... {In relative reality} unconditioned elements cannot be designated except in terms of conditioned elements, and conditioned elements cannot be designated except in terms of unconditioned elements.

6.B The term 'bodhisattva' is a meaningless term ... because the meaning of the term 'bodhisattva' is without identity ... Just as tracks of birds in the sky are non-existent ... just as a dream has no basis ... just as a magical display is without foundation ... just as a mirage is without foundation ... just as an echo, an optical aberration, the reflection of the moon in water, and a phantom emanation of the tathāgatas are without foundation ... just as the real nature {of phenomena} is without foundation, and in the same way, the unmistakable real nature {of phenomena}, the {relative} reality, the expanse of {relative} reality, and maturity {of understanding} with respect to all things are without foundation ... just as the finality of {relative} existence is without foundation, in the same way ... the meaning of the term 'bodhisattva' is non-existent. Just as the physical form of an illusory person is without foundation, and ... the aggregate of feelings ... perceptions ... formative predispositions, and ... consciousness are without foundation ... just as the eyes of an illusory person are without foundation, and ... [their other sense organs] up to and including the mental faculty are without foundation, and ... the [external] sense fields ... starting from the sense field of sights through to the sense field of mental phenomena {are without foundation}, likewise ... the meaning of the term 'bodhisattva' is non-existent.

6.C Just as [the notion of] an illusory person engaging in the emptiness of internal phenomena is without foundation ... just as [the notion of] an illusory person engaging in [all the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, is without foundation ... just as [the notion of] an illusory person practicing the ten powers of the tathāgatas is without foundation ... just as [the notion of an illusory person] practicing [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is without foundation ... just as [the notion of] the physical forms of a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha is without foundation, and in the same way, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are without foundation ... just as [the notion of] the eyes of a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha is without foundation, and ... [the notions of their other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, are without foundation ... just as [the notion of] a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha engaging in the emptiness of internal phenomena is without foundation, and ... [the notion of a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha] engaging in [all the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, is without foundation ... just as [the notion of] a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha having the four applications of mindfulness is without foundation, and ... [the notion of a tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect buddha] having [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of

the buddhas, is without foundation ... just as the presence of unconditioned elements in conditioned elements is without foundation, and the presence of conditioned elements in unconditioned elements is without foundation ... just as non-arising is without foundation, and ... non-ceasing, non-conditioning, non-origination, non-apprehension, non-affliction, and non-purification are without foundation, likewise ... the meaning of the term 'bodhisattva' as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent.

6.D The non-arising {non-ceasing, non-conditioning, non-origination, non-apprehension} ... non-affliction ... {and} non-purification of physical forms ... {as well as} feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... ears, nose, tongue, and body ... {and} [all sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty ... the sensory element of the eyes ... {and} [all other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [all other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, are without foundation. Just as the non-arising, non-affliction, and non-purification {and so on} of the ten powers of the tathāgatas are without foundation ... {just as} the non-arising, non-affliction, and non-purification {and so on} of [all other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are without foundation ... just as the utter purity of the applications of mindfulness is without foundation ... just as the utter purity [of all other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, is without foundation ... just as the utter purity of the ten powers of the tathāgatas is without foundation ... just as the utter purity [of all other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is without foundation ... just as the utter purity of self is without foundation on account of selflessness ... just as the utter purity of [the notions of] sentient beings, living organisms, lives, individuals, humankind, human beings, agents, actors, petitioners, instigators, experiencers, experiencing subjects, knowers, and viewers is without foundation owing to the absence of knowers, viewers, and so on ... just as darkness when the sun has risen is without foundation ... just as when an eon of conflagration will occur, all that is included in conditioned phenomena will be without foundation ... just as [the notion of] degenerate morality with respect to the aggregate of ethical discipline possessed by the tathāgatas, arhats, and completely perfect buddhas is without foundation, and ... the [notion of] mental distraction with respect to their meditative stability is without foundation, and ... the [notion of] stupidity with respect to their aggregate of wisdom is without foundation, and ... the [notion of] non-liberation with respect to their aggregate of liberation is without foundation, and ... [the notion of] the misperception of liberating pristine cognition with respect to their aggregate that perceives liberating pristine cognition is without foundation ... just as the light of the tathāgatas and the light of the moon and the sun are without foundation ... just as the light of the gods of the Trayastrimśā, Yāma, Tuṣita, Nirmānarata, and Paranirmitavaśavartin realms, and similarly, the light of the gods [of the world system of form], extending from the Brahmakāyika realm as far as the Pure Abodes, are without foundation, in the same way ... the meaning of the term 'bodhisattva' as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, is non-existent ... because all those phenomena which enlightenment denotes and which the meaning of the term 'bodhisattva' denotes are neither conjoined nor disjoined, and they are immaterial, unrevealed, and unobstructed. That is to say, their only defining characteristic is that they are without defining characteristics. Therefore ... great bodhisattva beings should train without attachment to anything."

6.E Physical forms are not one thing, and illusions another ... Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... {and} [all the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty,

and ... [all phenomenological categories], up to and including feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded ... [the other aspects of feelings], up to and including feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... the gateways to liberation ... {and} [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are not one thing, and illusions another. Illusion itself is the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas {and the rest}, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas {and the rest} themselves are illusion.

6.F There is {no} affliction or purification {or arising or ceasing} with respect to that illusion ... {and from the perspective of ultimate reality} that which is without arising, ceasing, affliction, and purification can{not} train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and attain emancipation in omniscience, or ... subsequently reach omniscience ... {for} that which is without name, without symbol, without designation, without conventional expression, without denomination, without corporeal form, without physical actions, without speech, without verbal actions, without mind, without mental actions, without arising, without ceasing, without affliction, and without purification ... {cannot} train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and then attain emancipation in omniscience ... So it is that when great bodhisattva beings have trained in the transcendent perfection of wisdom without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, they will attain emancipation in omniscience.

6.G Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly, and seek emancipation in unsurpassed completely perfect enlightenment, should always train in the manner of an illusory person ... {because} the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates {of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness} might be understood to resemble an illusory person ... {however} these five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates can{not} train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and attain emancipation in omniscience {either in a dreamlike manner, in the manner of an echo, or similarly, in the manner of an optical aberration, a mirage, or a phantom} ... because the five psycho-physical aggregates {as well as dreams, echos, optical aberrations, mirages and phantoms} have an essential nature of non-entity, and the essential nature of non-entity is non-apprehensible ... {and} because physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are like an illusion, and ... are like a dream. What is true of consciousness is true of the six sense organs, and what is true of the six sense organs is true of the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates. These do not apprehend the emptiness of internal phenomena, nor do they apprehend the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... {As such} great bodhisattva beings who newly embark on the [Great] Vehicle will be afraid and terrified if they are unskilled in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and they are not taken in hand by an excellent spiritual mentor.

6.H The skill in means that enables great bodhisattva beings who have heard this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom not to be afraid ... {or} terrified ... {is} they discern through their minds endowed with omniscience that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are impermanent ... imbued with suffering ... not a self ... empty ... signless ... without aspirations ... calm ... void ... pure ... non-arising ... unceasing ... {and} non-entities, and do not focus on them {as ultimately real}. This ... is the skillful means through which great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.I When great bodhisattva beings discern this, without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, they teach all sentient beings the sacred doctrine that physical forms, and likewise [all the aggregates] up to and including consciousness, are impermanent ... imbued with suffering ... not a self ... empty ... signless ... without aspirations ... calm ... void ... pure ... non-arising ... unceasing ... {and} non-entities. This ... is the transcendent perfection of generosity, possessed by great bodhisattva beings when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.J Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not pay attention with the twofold {dualistic}, attentiveness of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas to the notion that physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness} are impermanent ... imbued with suffering ... not a self ... empty ... signless ... without aspirations ... calm ... void ... purified ... non-arising ... unceasing, and ... non-entities ... but they do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. This ... is the absence of dogmatic assumptions with regard to the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline of great bodhisattva beings when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.K Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they discern that physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, are impermanent, imbued with suffering, without a self, empty, signless, lacking aspirations, calm, void, purified, non-arising, unceasing, and non-entities. Their inclination to accept these insights is the **transcendent perfection of unagitated tolerance** of great bodhisattva beings when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.L Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they discern through their attention endowed with omniscience that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are impermanent, imbued with suffering, not a self, empty, signless, lacking aspirations, calm, void, purified, non-arising, unceasing, and non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. The non-forsaking of perseverance with regard to this attention endowed with {the non-dual mind of} omniscience is called the transcendent perfection of perseverance of great bodhisattva beings when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.M Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they discern that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are impermanent, imbued with suffering, not a self, empty, signless, lacking aspirations, calm, void, purified, non-arising, unceasing, and non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} ... This denial of opportunity for the twofold {dualistic}, attentiveness possessed by śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and for the roots of non-virtuous action, to impede the attainment of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration of great bodhisattva beings when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.N Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they discern that physical forms are empty of the emptiness of physical forms, that the nature of physical forms is emptiness, and that emptiness is indeed physical forms. Similarly, [they discern] {the same for} ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty ... feelings condition-

ed by visually compounded {and mentally compounded} sensory contact, and so forth ... the applications of mindfulness ... the noble eightfold path and other [causal attributes] ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {as well as} the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas [and other fruitional attributes].

6.O If great bodhisattva beings do not cultivate the roots of virtuous action ... do not venerate many hundreds of thousands of buddhas ... are not sustained by the instructions of the manifold roots of virtue ... are not accepted by a spiritual mentor ... are not inclined toward extensive [acts of virtuous conduct] ... are not free from wickedness of body, speech, and mind, and ... are not endowed with the fiery roots of virtue, they will be afraid and terrified on hearing this teaching concerning the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... because this teaching ... will not sound like the transcendent perfection of wisdom to the ears of those who have not cultivated the roots of virtue ... have not venerated many hundreds of thousands of buddhas ... have not been accepted by a spiritual mentor ... are disinclined ... harbor thoughts of falling into the vehicles of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas ... are of feeble perseverance ... are indolent, and ... intent on mundane pleasures ... So it is that great bodhisattva beings who seek to perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity should train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

6.P Similarly, those great bodhisattva beings who wish to comprehend physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... up to and including the mental faculty ... sights ... up to and including mental phenomena ... the sensory element of the eyes ... up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness ... sensory contact that is visually compounded ... feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded ... sensory contact that is mentally compounded, and ... [other sorts of feelings], up to and including the feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded ... {as well as} those who wish to abandon desire, hatred, and delusion ... false views about perishable composites ... doubt, the sense of moral and ascetic supremacy, attachment to the world system of desire and malice ... attachment to the world system of form, attachment to the world system of formlessness, fundamental ignorance, pride, and mental agitation; and ... all fetters, latent impulses, and obsessions ... {and} those who wish to comprehend the four nourishments {of food, sensory contact, mentation and consciousness} ... abandon the four bonds {of craving, desire for renewed individual existence, speculative opinion/wrong view and fundamental ignorance, which bind one to cyclic existence}, the four torrents {which are the same, which like a flood, sink one into saṃsāra}, the four knots {of covetousness, malice, moral supremacy and ascetic supremacy}, and the four misconceptions {of holding impurity to be purity, non-self to be self, suffering to be happiness and impermanence to be permanence} ... abandon the paths of the ten non-virtuous actions ... attain the genuine paths of the ten virtuous actions, and ... perfect them ... meditate on the four applications of mindfulness [and the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, as well as ... meditate on the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... who wish to fulfil the aspirations of all sentient beings, and ... the roots of virtue so that they never regress into the three lower realms {of animals, anguished spirits and the denizens of the hells}, {and} are never born among beings of inferior species or class, and never descend to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas because they have perfected the roots of virtue, should all train exclusively in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

COMMENTARY

The twofold attentiveness of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas are those who give attention to a phenomena existing in ‘relative’ reality, who then apprehend this phenomena as ‘ultimately’ real. Thus what is one, as the singularity in God, becomes two to the observer who sees more than one. **A great bodhisattva being, who practices the transcendent perfection of wisdom, observes these ‘unreal’ phenomena with the singular attention of the singularity** (or the all-knowing omniscient mind) ~ in recognizing their non-existence as impermanent, imbued with suffering, not a self, empty, signless, lacking aspirations, calm, void, purified, non-arising, unceasing, and non-entities ~ and they do so without apprehending anything as ultimately real. Here in seeing “only” the singularity, all duality consciousness is denied. Thus *“this denial of opportunity for the twofold, attentiveness {says the Buddha} ... is the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration of great bodhisattva beings when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”*

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The ‘expanse of reality’ refers to the great expanse of ‘relative’ reality, or the seeming reality of ‘relative’ existence. **For in ‘ultimate’ reality, where We ultimately exist as a singularity in God, there is no expanse, nor distance, nor space.** Unconditioned phenomena and conditioned phenomena exist only in relation to one another, and within one another, within the expanse of ‘relative’ existence. The Buddha refers in the chapter (above) to the expanse of {relative} reality as ‘unconditioned’ phenomena, which—as part of the realm of relativity—is non-existent from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality. An example of conditioned and unconditioned phenomena existing in relation to one another, and at the same time existing within one another, is space existing within the physical body, and the physical body existing within space.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NON-APPREHENSION

7.1 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Who are the spiritual mentors who would enable great bodhisattva beings upon being accepted by a spiritual mentor to hear this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom and not be afraid or terrified, and swiftly attain emancipation in omniscience, without ever descending to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas?” The Blessed One then addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings are those who teach the doctrine that physical forms are impermanent, and who do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they teach the doctrine that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are impermanent, and do so without apprehending anything. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to omniscience. These are the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings.

7.2 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings teach the doctrine that physical forms are imbued with suffering, and they do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they teach the doctrine that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are imbued with suffering, and do so without apprehending anything. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to omniscience. These are the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings.

7.3 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings teach the doctrines that physical forms are not a self, that they are empty, that they are signless, that they are without aspirations, that they are calm, that they are void, that they are purified, that they are non-arising, that they are unceasing, and that they are non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they teach the doctrines that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are not a self, that they are empty, that they are signless, that they are without aspirations, that they are calm, that they are void, that they are purified, that they are non-arising, that they are unceasing, and that they are non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to omniscience. These are the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings.

7.4 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings teach the doctrine that the eyes are impermanent, and they do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they teach the doctrine that [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, are impermanent, and they do so without apprehending anything. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to omniscience. These are the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings.

7.5 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings teach the doctrine that the eyes are imbued with suffering, that they are not a self, that they are empty, that they are signless, that they are without aspirations, that they are calm, that they are void, that they are purified, that they are non-arising, that they are unceasing, and that they are non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything. Also, they teach the doctrines that [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, are imbued with suffering, that they are not a self, that they are empty, that they are signless, that they are without aspirations, that they are calm, that they are void, that they are purified, that they are non-arising, that they are unceasing, and that they are non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to omniscience. These are the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings.

7.6 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings teach the doctrine that feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded are impermanent, and similarly, that [the other aspects of feelings], up to and including feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded, are impermanent, and they do so without apprehending anything. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to omniscience. These are the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings. Similarly, they teach the doctrines that these [conditioned feelings] are imbued with suffering, that they are not a self, that they are empty, that they are signless, that they are without aspirations, that they are calm, that they are void, that they are purified, that they are non-arising, that they are unceasing, and that they are non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to omniscience. These are the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings.

7.7 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings, having taught the doctrine so

that the bodhisattvas might cultivate the applications of mindfulness, then teach the doctrine so that these applications of mindfulness might become void, and they do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they teach the doctrine so that the bodhisattvas might cultivate the correct exertions, that they might cultivate the supports for miraculous ability, and that they might cultivate the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the [noble eightfold] path, and they do so without apprehending anything.

7.8 “Similarly, they teach the doctrine so that the bodhisattvas might cultivate emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, and they do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they teach the doctrine so that the bodhisattvas might cultivate the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, they teach the doctrine so that they might cultivate [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and they do so without apprehending anything. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to omniscience. These are the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings.

7.9 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings teach the doctrine so that bodhisattvas might cultivate omniscience, and they teach the doctrine so that they might cultivate enlightenment, and do so without apprehending anything. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to omniscience. These are the spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings.”

7.10 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How is it that great bodhisattva beings who have heard this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom become afraid and terrified? How are they unskilled in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and how do they fall into the clutches of evil associates?” The Blessed One then addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who would cultivate the transcendent perfection of wisdom without attention endowed with omniscience, and who would apprehend that transcendent perfection of wisdom, will make assumptions on that basis. Similarly, those who cultivate the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity, while apprehending all those, up to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity, will make assumptions on account of [those transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity. Śāradvatīputra, such bodhisattvas are unskilled in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they fall into the hands of evil associates.

7.11 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the bodhisattvas who apprehend [the transcendent perfections], without attention endowed with omniscience, and are attentive to the notion that inner forms are emptiness, and so on, up to the notion that inner forms are the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, and similarly, those who attend, in an apprehending manner, to the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are the emptiness of internal phenomena, and those who apprehend the notion that inner forms are the emptiness of internal phenomena, and so on, up to the notion that [inner forms] are the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, and similarly, those who apprehend the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are the emptiness of internal phenomena, and so on, up to the notion that these are the emptiness of

the essential nature of non-entities—all of these will make assumptions on that basis.

7.12 “Likewise, those who are attentive to the notion that the eyes are the emptiness of internal phenomena, and so on, up to those who are attentive to the notion that [the eyes] are the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, and at the same time apprehend those modes of emptiness, will all make assumptions on that basis. Likewise, those who are attentive, in an apprehending manner, to the notions that the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are the emptiness of internal phenomena, and so on, up to those who are attentive to the notion that [those sense organs] are the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, will all make assumptions on account of these [experiences of] emptiness. Śāradvatīputra, it is in this way that bodhisattvas become unskilled in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and fall into the clutches of evil associates.

7.13 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when unskilled bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they cultivate the applications of mindfulness, and apprehend those applications of mindfulness. On that account, they will make assumptions. In the same vein, when they cultivate [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and apprehend them, they will make assumptions on that basis. Śāradvatīputra, the bodhisattvas who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner are unskilled owing to their lack of skill and they fall into the clutches of evil associates. When they hear this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will indeed be afraid and terrified.”

7.14 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How is it that bodhisattvas are enticed by evil associates? Who are the evil associates who entice them, so that they become afraid and terrified on hearing this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” The Blessed One addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings are those who would separate and dissuade them from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly those who would separate and dissuade them from the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity, saying, ‘O child of enlightened heritage, you should not train in this! If you ask why, it is because these transcendent perfections have not been enunciated and explained by the tathāgatas, arhats, and completely perfect buddhas, but rather they have been fabricated by poets! One should not listen to them. One should not retain them. One should not comprehend them. One should not recite them. One should not be attentive to them. One should not demonstrate them to others!’ Śāradvatīputra, you should know such persons to be the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings.

7.15 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings include malign demonic forces who are able to transform themselves into the guise of a buddha and approach a bodhisattva, saying, ‘O child of enlightened heritage, what will you achieve through this transcendent perfection of wisdom? Similarly, what will you achieve through the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration? What will you achieve through the transcendent perfection of perseverance? What will you achieve through the transcendent perfection of tolerance? What will you achieve through the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline? What will you achieve through the transcendent perfection of generosity?’ They will not disclose the actions of their demonic forces that seek to sep-

arate [a bodhisattva] from the six transcendent perfections, and they will not mention the defects of those demonic forces. Śāradvatīputra, you should know them to be the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings.

7.16 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, malign demonic forces will transform themselves into the guise of a buddha, approach a great bodhisattva being, and proceed to teach, demonstrate, analyze, elucidate, and completely disclose the discourses associated with the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas, as well as [the other branches of their scriptures], up to and including the narratives and the established instructions, without mentioning or disclosing that such [forms] are the creations of demonic forces. You should know those who do not engage in genuine realization to be the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings.

7.17 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, malign demonic forces will transform themselves into the guise of a buddha and approach a great bodhisattva being, saying, ‘O child of enlightened heritage! You are not a bodhisattva! You lack the mind set on enlightenment! You are not on the irreversible level! You cannot attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’ They will not mention or disclose that such [forms] are the creations of demonic forces. You should know those who do not engage in genuine realization to be the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings.

7.18 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, malign demonic forces will transform themselves into the guise of a buddha and approach a great bodhisattva being, saying, ‘O child of enlightened heritage! The eyes are empty of notions of “I” and “mine.” O child of enlightened heritage! The ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are similarly empty of notions of “I” and “mine.” O child of enlightened heritage! In the same vein, the [other phenomena], up to and including feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded, are empty of notions of “I” and “mine,” and all those up to and including feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded are empty of notions of “I” and “mine.” Similarly, the transcendent perfection of generosity is empty, and [all those] up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom are empty of notions of “I” and “mine.” Similarly, the applications of mindfulness are empty, and [the other causal attributes] from there up to and including the noble eightfold path, and up to the three gateways to liberation, are all empty of notions of “I” and “mine.” Similarly, [the fruitional attributes] from the ten powers of the tathāgatas, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are empty of notions of “I” and “mine.” So what will you achieve through this manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?’ They will not mention or disclose that such [forms] are the creations of demonic forces. You should know those who do not entertain genuine realization to be the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings.

7.19 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, malign demonic forces will transform themselves into the guise of a pratyekabuddha and approach a great bodhisattva being, saying, ‘O child of enlightened heritage! The eastern direction is empty of lord buddhas, bodhisattvas, and śrāvakas. In it there are no lord buddhas, no bodhisattvas, and no śrāvakas. Indeed, all the world systems of the ten directions are similar to the eastern direction!’ They will not mention or disclose that such [forms] are the creations of demonic forces. You should know those who do not entertain genuine realization to be the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings.

7.20 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, malign demonic forces will transform themselves into the guise of a śrāvaka and approach a great bodhisattva being, opposing the attention endowed with omniscience, and promoting the twofold, [overscrupulous] attentiveness associated with the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They will not mention or disclose such [forms] to be the creations of demonic forces. You should know those who do not entertain genuine realization to be the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings.

7.21 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, demonic forces will transform themselves into the guise of a monastic preceptor or an [authentic] master and approach great bodhisattva beings, encouraging them to undertake training divorced from the conduct of the bodhisattvas, separating them from the attention endowed with omniscience, separating them from the applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, separating them from [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and separating them from emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, saying, ‘O child of enlightened heritage! If you cultivate these attributes, you will actualize the level of the śrāvakas! What will you achieve through this manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?’ They will not mention or disclose such [forms] to be the creations of demonic forces. You should know those who do not entertain genuine realization to be the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings.

7.22 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, demonic forces will transform themselves into an invisible guise and approach great bodhisattva beings, saying, ‘O child of enlightened heritage! Come! To what end do you roam in cyclic existence for innumerable countless eons, experiencing the unfathomable [sufferings] of amputation of the hands and feet, and decapitation? What will you achieve through this manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment? You should persevere in those teachings which actualize the fruit of entering the stream!’ They will not mention or disclose such [forms] to be the creations of demonic forces. You should know those who do not entertain genuine realization to be the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings.

7.23 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, demonic forces will transform themselves into the guise of a fully ordained monk, teaching in an apprehending manner the doctrine that the eyes are impermanent. Similarly, they will teach in an apprehending manner the doctrines that [the eyes] are imbued with suffering, that they are not a self, that they are empty, that they are signless, that they are without aspirations, that they are calm, that they are void, that they are purified, that they are non-arising, that they are unceasing, and that they are non-entities. This applies extensively also to [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, just as it applies to the eyes.

7.24 “Similarly, they will teach in an apprehending manner that the applications of mindfulness are impermanent, and likewise, they will teach in an apprehending manner that they are imbued with suffering, that they are without a self, that they are empty, that they are signless, that they are without aspiration, that they are calm, that they are void, that they are purified, that they are non-arising, that they are unceasing, and that they are non-entities. In the same vein, they will teach in an apprehending manner that [all the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are so, and similarly, they will teach in an apprehending manner that the ten powers of the tathāgatas are impermanent, and likewise, they will teach in an apprehending manner that these are imbued with suffering, that they are not a self, that they are empty, that they are signless, that they are without aspirations, that they are calm, that they are void, that they are purified, that they are non-arising,

that they are unceasing, and that they are non-entities. They will not mention or disclose such [forms] to be the creations of demonic forces. You should know those who do not entertain genuine realization to be the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings. Then, having understood [the nature of evil associates], you should abandon them!”

7.25 Thereupon, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What skill in means do great bodhisattva beings possess when they are accepted by [genuine] spiritual mentors, and abandon evil associates?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon their views of self, and similarly, when they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon their view of sentient beings, or their view of living creatures, their view of living organisms, their view of lives, their view of individuals, or their views of humankind, human beings, agents, actors, petitioners, instigators, experiencers, experiencing subjects, knowers, and viewers; and similarly, when they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon nihilist and eternalist views; and similarly, when they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon their view of existence, their view of non-existence, their view of the psycho-physical aggregates, their view of the sensory elements, their view of the sense fields, their view of the [four] truths, and their view of dependent origination; and similarly, when they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon their view of the applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, their views of [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path; and similarly, when they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon their view of the ten powers of the tathāgatas; and in the same vein, when they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon their views [of the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas; and similarly, when they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon their view of sentient beings to be matured, their view of fields to be refined, their view of enlightenment, their view of the buddha, and their view concerning the promulgation of the doctrinal wheel—in all these cases, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings have been accepted by [genuine] spiritual mentors, and have abandoned evil associates.

7.26 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon their view of self, and in the same vein, when they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon their views, up to and including their view concerning the promulgation of the doctrinal wheel, in all these cases, they teach the sacred doctrine without apprehending anything. It is in this way, Śāradvatīputra, that great bodhisattva beings have been accepted by spiritual mentors who are skilled in means, and have abandoned evil associates.”

7.27 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, when great bodhisattva beings teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon all sorts of views, why, O Lord, would great bodhisattva beings have a view concerning physical forms? Similarly, why would they have a view concerning feelings, a view concerning perceptions, a view concerning formative predispositions, a view concerning consciousness, and similarly, why would they have a view concerning the eyes, and in the same vein, why would they have a view concerning [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, and similarly, why would they have a view concerning sights, and in the same vein, [to what end] would they have a view concerning [the other sense ob-

jects], up to and including mental phenomena, and similarly, why would they have a view concerning the sensory element of the eyes, and in the same vein, why would they have a view [concerning the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness, and similarly, why would they have a view concerning the sensory element of sights, and in the same vein, why would they have a view concerning [other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena, and similarly, why would they have a view concerning the applications of mindfulness, and why would they have a view concerning [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path? Similarly, why would they have a view concerning the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, why would they have a view concerning [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas?”

7.28 Then the Blessed One addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who are unskilled in practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom apprehend physical forms and develop a view of physical forms, in an apprehending manner. Similarly, they apprehend feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and develop a view of them in an apprehending manner. Similarly, they apprehend the eyes, and develop a view of the eyes in an apprehending manner, and in the same vein, they apprehend [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, and develop a view of them in an apprehending manner. Similarly, they apprehend sights, and develop a view of sights in an apprehending manner, and in the same vein, they apprehend [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena, and develop a view of them in an apprehending manner. Similarly, they apprehend the sensory element of the eyes, and develop a view of the sensory element of the eyes in an apprehending manner, and in the same vein, they apprehend [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness, and develop a view of them in an apprehending manner. Similarly, they apprehend the sensory element of sights, and develop a view of the sensory element of sights in an apprehending manner, and in the same vein, they apprehend [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena, and develop a view of them in an apprehending manner. Similarly, they apprehend the applications of mindfulness, and develop a view of the applications of mindfulness in an apprehending manner, and in the same vein, they apprehend [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and develop a view of them in an apprehending manner. Similarly, they apprehend the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and develop a view of them in an apprehending manner, and in the same vein, they apprehend [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and develop a view of them in an apprehending manner.”

7.29 “For these reasons, Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas who are unskilled have a view concerning physical forms. Similarly, they have a view concerning feelings, a view concerning perceptions, a view concerning formative predispositions, and a view concerning consciousness. Similarly, they have a view concerning the eyes, and in the same vein, they have a view concerning [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty. Similarly, they have a view concerning sights, and in the same vein, they have a view concerning [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. Similarly, they have a view concerning the sensory element of the eyes, and in the same vein, they have a view concerning [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness. Similarly, they have a view concerning the sensory element of sights, and in the same vein, they have a view concerning [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phe-

nomena. Similarly, they have a view concerning the applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, they have a view concerning [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, they have a view concerning the ten powers of the tathāgatas and in the same vein, they have a view concerning [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. In order that these views might be abandoned, great bodhisattva beings who are adroit and skilled in practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings without apprehending anything.”

7.30 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! I am inspired to say in what sense bodhisattvas are called ‘great beings.’” The Blessed One asked, “Śāradvatīputra, are you inspired to say that?” “Yes, Venerable Lord,” he replied, “I am inspired to say that.”

7.31 “Well then, how is it?” “Venerable Lord! The enlightened mind of the bodhisattvas is equal to the unequaled, and it is not shared in common with any śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas. In that sense a bodhisattva is called a ‘great being.’ If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, bodhisattvas are called ‘great beings,’ it is because they are even unattached to the mind endowed with omniscience, which is uncontaminated and not included within the three world systems.”

7.32 Then the Blessed One addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, what is the mind of great bodhisattva beings, which is equal to the unequaled, and which is not shared in common with any śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas?” Then Senior Śāradvatīputra replied to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Great bodhisattva beings, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, do not consider anything at all that arises or ceases. There is nothing at all that decreases or increases. There is nothing at all that is afflicted or purified. Venerable Lord! That which neither arises nor ceases, which neither decreases nor increases, which is neither afflicted nor purified, and which is neither [identified with] the mindset of the śrāvakas nor with the mindset of the pratyekabuddhas, nor yet with the mind of the completely perfect buddhas, is the mind of great bodhisattva beings—equal to the unequaled, and not shared in common with any śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas.” Then the Blessed One addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, it is as you have said! This mind [of the bodhisattvas] is indeed unattached to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.”

7.33 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! In that case, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to physical forms? Similarly, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness? Similarly, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to the eyes? Is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty? Similarly, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to sights? In the same vein, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena? Similarly, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to the sensory element of the eyes? In the same vein, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness? Similarly, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to the sensory element of sights? In the same vein, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena? Similarly, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to the applications of mindfulness? In the same vein, is

this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path? Similarly, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to the ten powers of the tathāgatas? In the same vein, is this mind [of the bodhisattvas] unattached to [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas?”

7.34 “Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is just as you have said. This mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to physical forms. Similarly, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. Similarly, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to the eyes, and in the same vein, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty. Similarly, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to sights, and in the same vein, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. Similarly, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to the sensory element of the eyes, and in the same vein, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness. Similarly, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to the sensory element of sights, and in the same vein, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena. Similarly, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to the applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is unattached to [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.”

7.35 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “You have said, Venerable Lord, that that mind which is omniscient is not included within the three world systems since it is without contaminants. In that case, Venerable Lord, are the minds of all ordinary persons also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence? Similarly, are the minds of all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and those of all the tathāgatas, free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems?” “Śāradvatīputra,” he replied, “that is so!”

7.36 “Venerable Lord! Are physical forms also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence? Similarly, are feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence?” “Śāradvatīputra, that is so!”

7.37 “Venerable Lord! Are the eyes also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, and in the same vein, are [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence?” “Śāradvatīputra, that is so!”

7.38 “Venerable Lord! Are sights also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence?” “Śāradvatīputra, that is so!”

7.39 “Venerable Lord! Are [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena, free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence?” “Śāradvatīputra, that is so!”

7.40 “Venerable Lord! Are [the sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of the eyes, free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, and in the same vein, are [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness, free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence?” “Śāradvatīputra, that is so!”

7.41 “Venerable Lord! Are sights also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence?” “Śāradvatīputra, that is so!”

7.42 “Venerable Lord! In the same vein, are [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena, free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence?” “Śāradvatīputra, that is so!”

7.43 “Venerable Lord! Are the applications of mindfulness also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, and in the same vein, are [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence?” “Śāradvatīputra, that is so!”

7.44 “Venerable Lord! Are the ten powers of the tathāgatas also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, and in the same vein, are [the other fruition-attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence?” “Śāradvatīputra,” he replied, “it is just as you have said! The minds of all ordinary persons are also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence. Similarly, the minds of all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas are free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence. Similarly, physical forms are also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence. Similarly, the eyes are also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, and the same goes for [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty. Similarly, the sensory element of the eyes is also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, and the same goes for [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness. Similarly, the sensory element of sights is also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, and the same goes for [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena. Similarly, the applications of mindfulness are also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, and the same goes for [the other causal attri-

butes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, the ten powers of the tathāgatas are also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, and in the same vein, [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas are free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence.”

7.45 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “The Venerable Lord has said that great bodhisattva beings are unattached to this mind because there is no mind. In that case, Venerable Lord, are non-existent physical forms unattached to non-existent physical forms, and in the same vein, are [the other non-existent aggregates], up to and including non-existent consciousness, unattached to non-existent consciousness [and the rest]? Venerable Lord! Are non-existent eyes unattached to non-existent eyes, and in the same vein, are [the other non-existent sense organs], up to and including the non-existent mental faculty, unattached to the non-existent mental faculty [and the rest]? Venerable Lord! Are non-existent sights unattached to non-existent sights? Similarly, are [the other non-existent sense objects], up to and including non-existent mental phenomena, unattached to non-existent mental phenomena [and the rest]? Venerable Lord! Is the non-existent sensory element of the eyes unattached to the non-existent sensory element of the eyes? In the same vein, are the [other non-existent sensory elements], up to and including the non-existent sensory element of mental consciousness, unattached to the non-existent sensory element of mental consciousness [and the rest]? Are the non-existent applications of mindfulness unattached to the non-existent applications of mindfulness? In the same vein, are [the other non-existent causal attributes], up to and including the non-existent noble eightfold path, unattached to the non-existent noble eightfold path [and the rest]? Venerable Lord! Are the non-existent ten powers of the tathāgatas unattached to the non-existent ten powers of the tathāgatas? In the same vein, are the [other non-existent fruitional attributes], up to and including the non-existent eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, unattached to the non-existent eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas [and the rest]?”

7.46 “Śāradvatīputra,” he replied, “it is just as you have said! Non-existent physical forms remain unattached to non-existent physical forms, and the same goes for [the other non-existent aggregates], up to and including consciousness. The same goes for the eyes and [the other non-existent sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty. The same goes for sights and [the other non-existent sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. The same goes for the sensory element of the eyes and [the other non-existent sensory elements], up to and including the non-existent sensory element of mental consciousness. The same goes for the sensory element of sights and [the other non-existent sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena. Similarly, the non-existent applications of mindfulness remain unattached to non-existent applications of mindfulness, and the same goes for [the other non-existent causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, the non-existent ten powers of the tathāgatas remain unattached to the non-existent ten powers of the tathāgatas, and the same goes for [the other non-existent fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly have minds that are equal to the unequaled and that are not shared in common with the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. Because this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is non-perceptual, it does not make assumptions, and it does not become fixated.”

7.47 *This completes the seventh chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Non-apprehension.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SEVEN:

NON-APPREHENSION

7.A The spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings are those who teach the doctrine that physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, tangibles and mental phenomena; and feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded up to feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded} are impermanent ... imbued with suffering ... not a self ... empty ... signless ... without aspirations ... calm ... void ... purified ... non-arising ... unceasing, and ... non-entities, and they do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to omniscience.

7.B The spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings, having taught the doctrine so that the bodhisattvas might cultivate the applications of mindfulness, then teach the doctrine so that these applications of mindfulness might become void, and they do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. Similarly, they teach the doctrine so that the bodhisattvas might cultivate the correct exertions ... the supports for miraculous ability ... the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment ... the [noble eightfold] path ... emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... omniscience ... {and also} enlightenment, {and then the doctrine so that these might become void}, and {they} do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to omniscience.

7.C Great bodhisattva beings who would cultivate the transcendent perfection of wisdom {and the transcendent perfections of meditative concentration, perseverance, tolerance, ethical discipline and generosity} without attention endowed with {the non-dual attentiveness of} omniscience, and who would {subsequently} apprehend {as ultimately real} ... {those} transcendent perfection{s} ... will make assumptions on that basis ... Moreover ... bodhisattvas who apprehend {as ultimately real} [the transcendent perfections], without attention endowed with {the non-dual attentiveness of} omniscience, and are attentive to the notion that inner forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes {as well as the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty} are the emptiness of internal phenomena, and so on, up to those who are attentive to the notion that ... {these} are the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, and at the same time apprehend those modes of emptiness {as ultimately real}, will all make assumptions on that basis ... Moreover ... when unskilled bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {and} cultivate the applications of mindfulness, and ... [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and apprehend them {as ultimately real}, they will make assumptions on that basis ... The bodhisattvas who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner are unskilled owing to their lack of skill and they fall into the clutches of evil associates. When they hear this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will indeed be afraid and terrified.

7.D The evil associates of great bodhisattva beings are those who would separate and dissuade them from the transcendent perfection of wisdom {and the other transcendent perfections} ... saying, ‘O child of enlightened heri-

tage, you should not train in this! ... because these transcendent perfections have not been enunciated and explained by the tathāgatas, arhats, and completely perfect buddhas, but rather they have been fabricated by poets! One should not listen to them ... retain them ... comprehend them ... recite them ... be attentive to them ... {nor} demonstrate them to others!' ... Moreover ... the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings include malign demonic forces who are able to transform themselves into the guise of a buddha and approach a bodhisattva, saying, 'O child of enlightened heritage, what will you achieve through ... {these} ... transcendent perfection{s} of wisdom ... meditative concentration ... perseverance ... tolerance ... ethical discipline ... {and} generosity?' ... {or} into the guise of a buddha ... and proceed to teach, demonstrate, analyze, elucidate, and completely disclose the discourses associated with the {lesser vehicles of the} śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas, as well as [the other branches of their scriptures], up to and including the narratives and the established instructions ... {or} into the guise of a buddha ... saying, 'O child of enlightened heritage! You are not a bodhisattva! You lack the mind set on enlightenment! You are not on the irreversible level! You cannot attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!' ... {or} into the guise of a buddha ... saying, 'O child of enlightened heritage! The eyes ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are empty of notions of "I" and "mine." So what will you achieve through this manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?' ... {or} into the guise of a pratyekabuddha ... saying, 'O child of enlightened heritage! The eastern direction is empty of lord buddhas, bodhisattvas, and śrāvakas. In it there are no lord buddhas, no bodhisattvas, and no śrāvakas. Indeed, all the world systems of the ten directions are similar to the eastern direction!' ... {or} into the guise of a śrāvaka ... opposing the {non-dual} attention endowed with omniscience, and promoting the twofold, attentiveness associated with the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas ... {or} into the guise of a monastic preceptor or an [authentic] master ... encouraging them to undertake training divorced from the conduct of the bodhisattvas, separating them from the {non-dual} attention endowed with omniscience ... from the applications of mindfulness ... from [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and ... from emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, saying, 'O child of enlightened heritage! If you cultivate these attributes, you will actualize the level of the śrāvakas! What will you achieve through this manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?' ... {or} into an invisible guise ... saying, 'O child of enlightened heritage! Come! To what end do you roam in cyclic existence for innumerable countless eons, experiencing the unfathomable [sufferings] of amputation of the hands and feet, and decapitation? What will you achieve through this manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment? You should persevere in those teachings which actualize the fruit of entering the stream!' ... {or} into the guise of a fully ordained monk, teaching in an apprehending {dualistic} manner the doctrine that the eyes ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {and} the ten powers of the tathāgatas are impermanent ... imbued with suffering ... not a self ... empty ... signless ... without aspirations ... calm ... void ... purified ... non-arising ... unceasing, and ... non-entities ... {In all these cases} they will not mention or disclose such [forms] to be the {actions and} creations of demonic forces {nor mention the defects of those demonic forces}. You should know those who do not entertain genuine realization to be the evil associates of great bodhisattva beings. Then, having understood [the nature of evil associates], you should abandon them!

7.E When great bodhisattva beings teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon their {false} views of self ... of sentient beings ... of living creatures ... of living organisms ... of lives ... of individuals ... of humankind, human beings, agents, actors, petitioners, instigators, experiencers, experiencing subjects, knowers,

and viewers ... {as well as their} nihilist and eternalist {false} views; and similarly, when they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon their {false} view{s} of existence ... of non-existence ... of the psycho-physical aggregates ... of the sensory elements ... of the sense fields ... of the [four] {noble} truths ... of dependent origination ... of the applications of mindfulness ... of [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... of the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... [of the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... of sentient beings to be matured ... of fields to be refined ... of enlightenment ... of the buddha, and ... the promulgation of the doctrinal wheel ... in all these cases, they teach the sacred doctrine without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. It is in this way ... that great bodhisattva beings have been accepted by spiritual mentors who are skilled in means, and have abandoned evil associates.

7.F “When great bodhisattva beings teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in order that they might abandon all sorts of {false} views, why, O Lord, would great bodhisattva beings have a {false} view concerning physical forms ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas?” ... The Blessed One {replied} ... “Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who are unskilled in practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom apprehend {as real} physical forms and {subsequently} develop a {false} view of physical forms, in an apprehending {dualistic} manner. Similarly, they apprehend {as real} feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and {subsequently} develop a {false} view of them in an apprehending {dualistic} manner ... In order that these {false} views might be abandoned, great bodhisattva beings who are adroit and skilled in practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.”

7.G The enlightened mind of the bodhisattvas is equal to the unequaled, and it is not shared in common with any śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas. In that sense a bodhisattva is called a ‘great being’ ... because they are even unattached to the mind endowed with omniscience, which is uncontaminated and not included within the three world systems. ... Great bodhisattva beings, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, do not consider anything at all that arises or ceases. There is nothing at all that decreases or increases. There is nothing at all that is afflicted or purified ... That which neither arises nor ceases, which neither decreases nor increases, which is neither afflicted nor purified, and which is neither [identified with] the mindset of the śrāvakas nor with the mindset of the pratyekabuddhas, nor yet with the mind of the completely perfect buddhas {which ultimately do not exist}, is the mind of great bodhisattva beings—equal to the unequaled, and not shared in common with any śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas.

7.H This {enlightened} mind [of the bodhisattvas] {equal to the unequaled} is unattached to physical forms ... to feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... to the eyes ... to [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty ... to sights, and ... to [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena ... to the sensory element of the eyes, and ... to [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness ... to the sensory element of sights, and ... to [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena ... to the applications of mindfulness, and ... to [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... to the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and ... to [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

7.I {From the perspective of ultimate reality} the minds of all ordinary persons are also free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent {relative} existence. Similarly, ... the minds of all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas ... physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... {and} [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty ... the sensory element of the eyes ... {and} [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness ... the sensory element of sights ... {and} [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {and} [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas are {also} free from contaminants and not included within the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent {relative} existence.

7.J The Venerable Lord has said that great bodhisattva beings are unattached to this {omniscient} mind {which sees all non-existent phenomena through the singular eye of non-duality} because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} there is no mind {which sees all non-existent phenomena through the singular eye of non-duality} ... {In the same manner} non-existent physical forms remain unattached to non-existent physical forms, and the same goes for [the other non-existent aggregates], up to and including consciousness. The same goes for the eyes and [the other non-existent sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty. The same goes for sights and [the other non-existent sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. The same goes for the sensory element of the eyes and [the other non-existent sensory elements], up to and including the non-existent sensory element of mental consciousness. The same goes for the sensory element of sights and [the other non-existent sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena. Similarly, the non-existent applications of mindfulness remain unattached to non-existent applications of mindfulness, and the same goes for [the other non-existent causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, the non-existent ten powers of the tathāgatas remain unattached to the non-existent ten powers of the tathāgatas, and the same goes for [the other non-existent fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly have minds that are equal to the unequalled and that are not shared in common with the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. Because this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is non-perceptual {of any phenomena as ultimately real}, it does not make assumptions, and it does not become fixated {on these non-existent phenomena}.

COMMENTARY

Omniscience is to be understood as the path of the Great Vehicle—the path of the bodhisattva leading to buddhahood. This path of perfecting the omniscient mind—which is the mind of the ‘all-seeing eye’—sees all phenomena through the singular eye of non-duality, without apprehending any phenomena as ‘ultimately’ real. Thus does the Buddha reveal (above): *“The spiritual mentors to great bodhisattva beings are those who teach the doctrine that physical forms {and so on} are impermanent, and who do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} ... They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the levels of the {first vehicle of the} śrāvakas and {the second vehicle of the} pratyekabuddhas, but exclusively to {the Great Vehicle of} omniscience.”*

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Within the confines of ‘relative’ existence, the omniscient mind, that of the all-seeing eye of the singular eye of non-duality, is beyond the three world systems of karmic rebirth of the worlds of desire, form, and formlessness, and for this reason is uncontaminated by these three world systems. **Yet from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality, where nothing other than Our singularity in God exists—including the notion of an omniscient mind**—the minds of ordinary persons, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, can also be said to be beyond the three world systems, owing to the emptiness of inherent ‘relative’ existence.

*

An assumption is a speculation about a ‘secondary’ thing; for in order to speculate about something, there must be a speculator and an object of speculation. This is the basis of all duality thinking, where the speculator makes real, by the act of speculating, the object of speculation. This is the twofold attentiveness of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. Only by seeing all phenomena through the singular eye of non-duality ~ without apprehending any phenomena as ‘ultimately’ real ~ will all objects of speculation come to an end.

*

In ‘ultimate’ reality, We as a singularity in God, do not perceive anything *beyond* our singularity ~ for no other phenomena exists. **A non-perceptual mind in ‘relative’ reality, however, does not perceive any phenomena to truly exist from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality** ... and, as indicated by the Buddha (above): *“Because this mind [of the bodhisattvas] is non-perceptual, it does not make assumptions, and it does not become fixated.”*

CHAPTER EIGHT: MATURITY

8.1 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do unskilled great bodhisattva beings descend to the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas, and how do they not enter into the maturity of a bodhisattva? What is the immaturity of a bodhisattva? What is the maturity of a bodhisattva?” The Blessed One then addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, the immaturity of a bodhisattva manifests when great bodhisattva beings who have previously regressed descend to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas, and fail to enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.”

8.2 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What is the immaturity of a great bodhisattva being who has previously regressed?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who are unskilled practice the six transcendent perfections, owing to their lack of skill in means they actualize the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas dependent on the [three] gateways to liberation—emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness—and they do not maintain the maturity of the bodhisattvas. That, Śāradvatīputra, is the immaturity of a great bodhisattva being who has previously regressed.”

8.3 “Venerable Lord! Why does this immaturity of great bodhisattva beings occur?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, this ‘immaturity’ entails craving for the sacred doctrine.”

8.4 He asked, “Venerable Lord!” What is the immaturity that craves for the sacred doctrine?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom establi-

sh, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that physical forms are impermanent, and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are impermanent, this craving for the sacred doctrine in the case of great bodhisattva beings is indicative of their immaturity.

8.5 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the aggregates] from physical forms to consciousness are imbued with suffering; when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the aggregates] from physical forms to consciousness are not a self; when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the aggregates] from physical forms to consciousness are empty; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the aggregates] from physical forms to consciousness are signless; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the aggregates] from physical forms to consciousness are without aspirations; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the aggregates] from physical forms to consciousness are calm; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the aggregates] from physical forms to consciousness are void; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the aggregates] from physical forms to consciousness are purified; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the aggregates] from physical forms to consciousness do not arise; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the aggregates] from physical forms to consciousness do not cease; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that physical forms are non-entities; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness, are non-entities—in all such cases, Śāradvatīputra, this craving for the sacred doctrine in the case of great bodhisattva beings indicates their immaturity. Śāradvatīputra, it is in this way that unskilled great bodhisattva beings have formerly regressed, descended to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and failed to enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.

8.6 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the sensory elements] from the eyes to mental phenomena are impermanent, owing to their lack of skill in means; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the sensory elements] from the eyes to mental phenomena are imbued with suffering; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the sensory elements] from the eyes to mental phenomena are not a self; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the sensory elements] from the eyes to mental phenomena are empty; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the sensory elements] from the eyes to mental phenomena are signless; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the sensory elements] from the eyes to mental phenomena are without aspirations; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the sensory elements] from the eyes to mental phenomena are calm; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the sensory elements] from the eyes to mental phenomena are void; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the sensory elements] from the eyes to mental phenomena are purified; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and be-

come fixated on the notion that [the sensory elements] from the eyes to mental phenomena are non-arising; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the sensory elements] from the eyes to mental phenomena are unceasing; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that the eyes are non-entities; and similarly, when they establish, cognize, and become fixated on the notion that [the other sensory elements], up to and including mental phenomena, are non-entities—in all such cases, Śāradvatīputra, this craving for the sacred doctrine in the case of great bodhisattva beings indicates their immaturity. Śāradvatīputra, it is in this way that unskilled great bodhisattva beings have formerly regressed, descended to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and failed to enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.

8.7 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, owing to their lack of skill in means, the same refrain should be extensively applied to all the sensory elements and [all the causal attributes] from the applications of mindfulness, up to and including the noble eightfold path, and likewise, to [all the fruitional attributes] from the ten powers of the tathāgatas, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas—just as has been indicated here in the context of the psycho-physical aggregates. Śāradvatīputra, it is in that way that unskilled great bodhisattva beings have formerly regressed, descended to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and failed to enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.

8.8 “Śāradvatīputra, you also asked what is the maturity of a great bodhisattva being. In this regard, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should train as follows: They should not in any respect make assumptions on account of physical forms. They should not make assumptions on account of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. They should not make assumptions on account of the eyes, and similarly, they should not make assumptions on account of the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty. They should not make assumptions on account of sights, and similarly, they should not make assumptions on account of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena. They should not make assumptions on account of the sensory element of the eyes. They should not make assumptions on account of the sensory element of sights. They should not make assumptions on account of the sensory element of visual consciousness. And in the same vein, they should not make assumptions on account of [all the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness. They should not make assumptions on account of the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, they should not make assumptions on account of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, they should not make assumptions on account of the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless meditative absorptions. They should not make assumptions on account of the applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, they should not make assumptions on account of [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Likewise, they should not make assumptions on account of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, they should not make assumptions on account of [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not make assumptions even on account of the enlightened mind, the mind that is equal to the unequalled, the uncommon mind, the mind of vast extent. If you ask why, it is because the intrinsic nature of this mind is luminosity.”

8.9 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord! What is the nature of luminosity—the intrinsic nature of mind?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, the mind neither has desire, nor is it without desire. It neither has hatred, nor is it without hatred. It neither has delusion, nor is it without delusion. Similarly, it neither has obsessions, fetters, or latent impulses, nor is it without them. Similarly, it neither has all the fetters of philosophical view, nor is it without them. It neither has the mindsets of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, nor is it without them. This, Śāradvatīputra, is the natural luminosity of the mind with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed.”

8.10 Senior Śāradvatīputra then asked as follows: “Lord! Does this mind that is not the mind exist?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, does this nature of mind with which minds are endowed exist or not exist? Does it have being or non-being? In terms of apprehensibility, is it in fact apprehensible?” He replied, “Venerable Lord! That is not the case!”

8.11 [The Lord Buddha] then said, “Śāradvatīputra, if the nature of mind with which minds are endowed has neither existence nor non-existence, and if it is non-apprehensible, then Śāradvatīputra, surely your question ‘Does this mind that is not the mind exist?’ is contestable. How can this reasoning be correct?” Senior Śāradvatīputra then asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What is the nature of mind with which minds are endowed?” He replied, “Śāradvatīputra! That which is unchanging and without conceptual notions regarding all things is called the nature of mind with which minds are endowed.”

8.12 Senior Śāradvatīputra then asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Just as there are no changes and no conceptual notions regarding the actual mind, then are there no changes and no conceptual notions regarding actual physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness? In the same vein, are there no changes and no conceptual notions regarding any [phenomena] at all, up to and including all formative predispositions? If that were the case, there would be no changes and no conceptual notions regarding all [attributes and attainments], up to and including enlightenment.” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, that is right! There are no changes and no conceptual notions regarding any mind. There are no changes and there are no conceptual notions regarding any [phenomena], up to and including all formative predispositions, and similarly regarding [all the attributes and attainments], up to and including enlightenment. Śāradvatīputra, this absence of change and absence of conceptual notions regarding all things is designated as the maturity of a great bodhisattva being who practices the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

8.13 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails the four applications of mindfulness which are correctly retained by skill in means. If you ask what these four are, they may be described as follows: (1) Great bodhisattva beings who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything, with regard to the inner body, continue to observe the physical body, without generating any apperceptions dependent on the physical body. Similarly, those who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything, with regard to the outer body, continue to observe the physical body, without generating any apperceptions dependent on the physical body. Similarly, those who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness with-

out apprehending anything, with regard to the inner and outer body combined, continue to observe the physical body, without generating any apperceptions dependent on the physical body.

8.14 (2) Those who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything, with regard to inner feelings, outer feelings, and combined inner and outer feelings, continue to observe feelings, without generating any apperceptions dependent on feelings.

8.15 (3) Those who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything, with regard to the inner mind, the outer mind, and the combined inner and outer mind, continue to observe the mind, without generating any apperceptions dependent on the mind.

8.16 (4) Those who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything, with regard to inner phenomena, outer phenomena, and combined inner and outer phenomena, continue to observe phenomena, without generating any apperceptions dependent on phenomena.

8.17 “Śāradvatīputra, if you ask how, with regard to the inner body, great bodhisattva beings continue to observe the physical body, when great bodhisattva beings are engaged in conduct, they are fully aware that they are engaged in conduct. When they are standing upright, they are fully aware that they are standing upright. When they are sitting, they are fully aware that they are sitting. When they are lying down, they are fully aware that they are lying down. In whatever ways the body changes its posture, they are fully aware of these. Śāradvatīputra, it is in such ways that great bodhisattva beings who are diligent, alert and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything, with regard to the inner body, continue to observe the physical body.

8.18 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings maintain alertness whether they are going out or returning back. They maintain alertness whether they are looking outwardly or looking introspectively. They maintain alertness whether they are bending or stretching their limbs; whether they are holding an outer patched robe, a waist cloth, or an alms bowl; and whether they are eating, drinking, chewing, tasting, waking up, resting, coming or going, [standing or] sitting, reclining or not reclining, and speaking or not speaking. They maintain alertness whether they are absorbed in meditation or arising from meditation. Śāradvatīputra, it is in this way that when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom with regard to the inner body, they continue to observe the physical body. Furthermore, they do so without apprehending anything.

8.19 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, they breathe in mindfully and breathe out mindfully. They are fully aware that when they inhale a long breath they are inhaling a long breath, and that when they exhale a long breath, they are exhaling a long breath. They are fully aware that when they inhale a short breath, they are inhaling a short breath, and that when they exhale a short breath, they are exhaling a short breath. Śāradvatīputra, this resembles, for example, a potter or the skilled apprentice of a potter who is fully aware that when he is turning the wheel in a long whirl, he is turning the wheel in a long whirl, and who is fully aware that when he is turning the wheel in a short whirl, he is turning the wheel in a short whirl. Likewise, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings breathe in mindfully and breathe out mindfully. When they are inhaling a long breath, they are fully aware that they are inhaling a long

breath. When they are exhaling a long breath, they are fully aware that they are exhaling a long breath. When they are inhaling a short breath, they are fully aware that they are inhaling a short breath. When they are exhaling a short breath, they are fully aware that they are exhaling a short breath. Śāradvatīputra, it is in such ways that great bodhisattva beings who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything, with regard to the inner body, continue to observe the physical body.

8.20 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings analyze this same physical body in terms of its material elements, considering that their bodies comprise the element of earth, the element of water, the element of fire, and the element of wind. Śāradvatīputra, just as a skilled butcher of bulls or the skilled apprentice of a butcher of bulls slays a bull with a sharp instrument, cuts it into four parts, and then examines the quartered carcass as he stands or sits, in the same way, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom also examine this same physical body in terms of its material elements, considering that it comprises the element of earth, the element of water, the element of fire, and the element of wind. Śāradvatīputra, it is in this way that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom with regard to the inner body, continue to observe the physical body. Furthermore, they do so without apprehending anything.

8.21 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings consider that this same body, from the soles of the feet upwards and the crown of the head downwards, is full of manifold impurities. They discern that this body comprises the hairs of the head, the hairs of the body, nails, epidermal skin, inner skin, flesh, ligaments, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, spleen, lungs, liver, stomach, intestines, sigmoid colon, genitals, urinary bladder, excrement, tears, sweat, adipose tissue, saliva, nasal mucous, pus, serum, odors, urine, brain tissue, and cerebral secretions. Śāradvatīputra, this is just as when the grain bins of a householder farmer have been placed on either side of his doorway, filled with diverse grains—sesame, husked rice, beans, kidney beans, barley, wheat, lentils, unhusked rice, [other] grains [such as millet], and mustard—and an observant passer-by, on seeing them, would know that these are sesame, these are husked rice, these are beans, these are kidney beans, these are barley, these are wheat, these are lentils, these are unhusked rice, these are [other] grains [such as millet], and these are mustard. Śāradvatīputra, in the same way, great bodhisattva beings discern that this very body, from the soles of the feet upwards and from the hair and the head downwards, is full of manifold impurities. As such, this body comprises the hairs of the head, the hairs of the body, and in the same vein, [all the aforementioned things], up to and including the brain tissue and cerebral secretions. Śāradvatīputra, it is in this way that great bodhisattva beings who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything, with regard to the inner body, continue to observe the physical body. Furthermore, they should do so without apprehending anything. Śāradvatīputra, this is the maturity of a great bodhisattva being who practices the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

8.22 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the maturity of a great bodhisattva being who practices the transcendent perfection of wisdom also entails the four correct exertions. If you ask what these four are, Śāradvatīputra, they may be described as follows:

8.23 (1) They resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that negative and non-virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might not be developed.

8.24 (2) They resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that negative and non-virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might be renounced.

8.25 (3) They resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might be developed.

8.26 (4) They resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might remain, be unforgotten, flourish and be fully cultivated. Furthermore, they do so without apprehending anything. Śāradvatīputra, this is the maturity of a great bodhisattva being.

8.27 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails the four supports for miraculous ability. If you ask what these four are, Śāradvatīputra, they may be described as follows:

8.28 (1) Great bodhisattva beings imbued with renunciation, who dwell in solitude, maintaining detachment and remaining in a state of cessation, should cultivate the support for miraculous ability combining meditative stability of resolution with the formative force of exertion.

8.29 (2) Similarly, [imbued with renunciation, dwelling in solitude, maintaining detachment, and remaining in a state of cessation], they should cultivate the support for miraculous ability combining meditative stability of mind with the formative force of exertion.

8.30 (3) [Imbued with renunciation, dwelling in solitude, maintaining detachment, and remaining in a state of cessation], they should cultivate the support for miraculous ability combining meditative stability of perseverance with the formative force of exertion.

8.31 (4) [Imbued with renunciation, dwelling in solitude, maintaining detachment, and remaining in a state of cessation], they should cultivate the support for miraculous ability combining meditative stability of scrutiny with the formative force of exertion. “These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. Śāradvatīputra, this is the maturity of a great bodhisattva being.

8.32 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails the five faculties. If you ask what these five are, Śāradvatīputra, they comprise (1) the faculty of faith, (2) the faculty of perseverance, (3) the faculty of recollection, (4) the faculty of meditative stability, and (5) the faculty of wisdom. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. Śāradvatīputra, this is the maturity of a great bodhisattva being.

8.33 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails the five powers. If you ask what these five are, Śāradvatīputra, they comprise (1) the power of faith, (2) the power of perseverance, (3) the power of recollection, (4) the power of meditative stability, and (5) the power of wisdom. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. Śāradvatīputra, this is the maturity of a great bodhisattva being.

8.34 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails the seven branches of enlightenment. If you ask what these seven are, Śāradvatīputra, they comprise (1) the branch of genuine enlightenment that is recollection, (2) the branch of genuine enlightenment that is doctrinal analysis, (3) the branch of genuine enlightenment that is perseverance, (4) the branch of genuine enlightenment that is delight, (5) the branch of genuine enlightenment that is mental and physical refinement, (6) the branch of genuine enlightenment that is meditative stability, and (7) the branch of genuine enlightenment that is equanimity.

8.35 “[Bodhisattvas who are] imbued with renunciation, who dwell in solitude, maintaining detachment and remaining in a state of cessation, should cultivate the branch of genuine enlightenment that is recollection. Similarly, [bodhisattvas who are] imbued with renunciation, dwelling in solitude, maintaining detachment, and remaining in a state of cessation should cultivate the branch of genuine enlightenment that is doctrinal analysis, and the [other] branches of genuine enlightenment, comprising perseverance, delight, mental and physical refinement, meditative stability, and equanimity. All these too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. Śāradvatīputra, this is the maturity of a great bodhisattva being.

8.36 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails [the observance of] the noble eightfold path. If you ask what these eight aspects are, Śāradvatīputra, they comprise (1) correct view, (2) correct thought, (3) correct speech, (4) correct action, (5) correct livelihood, (6) correct effort, (7) correct recollection, and (8) correct meditative stability. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. Śāradvatīputra, this is the maturity of a great bodhisattva being.

8.37 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails absorption in the three gateways to liberation by engaging in the understanding that all things are without duality. It further entails absorption in the four meditative concentrations, experiencing all things non-conceptually, without relishing the bliss of meditative concentration. It entails the absorption in the four immeasurable aspirations through acceptance that phenomena are non-arising. It entails absorption in the four formless meditative absorptions by understanding that the three world systems are non-apprehensible.

8.38 “It entails absorption in the eight aspects of liberation, without mind, the mental faculty, and mental consciousness. It entails absorption in the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise by perceiving cyclic existence and nirvāṇa without duality. It entails absorption in the nine contemplations of impurity by engaging with all things as if they were a mirage. It entails absorption in the ten recollections, without the need for mindfulness and without the need for mentation. It entails absorption in the six aspects of perception by engaging with all things as if they were an illusion.

8.39 “Furthermore, it entails engagement in the ten kinds of knowledge by regarding all things, known and unknown, as the same. It entails absorption in the three [modes of meditative stability], having realized that all things are naturally in equipoise. It entails the meditations on the three faculties [enabling knowledge of all that is unknown, acquiring the knowledge of all things, and endowed with the knowledge of all things] by means of knowledge that is free from [the limitations] of past, present, and future. It entails the meditations on the [eight] sense fields of mast-

ery by engaging in the cognition of a single modality, without differentiation, and it entails absorption in the [ten] sense fields of total consummation through acceptance of the nature of profound phenomena. All these absorptions, too, are cultivated without apprehending anything. Śāradvatīputra, this is the maturity of a great bodhisattva being.

8.40 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails those circumstances when bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom [with regard to the eighteen aspects of emptiness]: In the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of external phenomena is not discerned. In the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of internal phenomena is not discerned. In the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness is not discerned. In the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena is not discerned. In the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent is not discerned. In the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality is not discerned. In the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena is not discerned. In the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena is not discerned. In the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited is not discerned. In the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end is not discerned. In the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of non-dispersal is not discerned. In the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence is not discerned. In the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all intrinsic defining characteristics is not discerned. In the emptiness of all intrinsic defining characteristics, the emptiness of all things is not discerned. In the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of non-apprehension is not discerned. In the emptiness of non-apprehension, the emptiness of non-entities is not discerned. In the emptiness of non-entities, the emptiness of essential nature is not discerned. In the emptiness of essential nature, the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities is not discerned. In the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, the emptiness of essential nature is not discerned. Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly will engage in the maturity of great bodhisattva beings.

8.41 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails the completion of the ten powers of the tathāgatas by encouraging others to understand the teachings without relying on external conditions. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. It also entails the completion of the four assurances by elucidating [the teachings], without making assumptions with respect to oneself and others. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. It further entails the completion of the four unhindered discernments by knowing, without making assumptions, that the vehicles of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas have been rejected. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. It also entails the completion of great loving kindness by [understanding that] sentient beings are not sentient beings. This too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. It also entails the completion of great compassion by [understanding that] the self is not a self. This too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. It further entails the completion of the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas through freedom from thoughts associated with the two modes of awareness. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything.

8.42 “It also entails the completion of the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of

the path, and the understanding of omniscience by engaging with emptiness in all its finest aspects. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. It entails the completion of the six transcendent perfections by discerning [respectively] that thoughts of miserliness, degenerate morality, agitation, indolence, and distraction, as well as thoughts of stupidity, are non-entities. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything.

8.43 “It also entails the completion of the six extrasensory powers, having resolved that all things neither come nor go. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. It entails the completion of the five eyes, having discerned that all things are empty, signless, aspirationless, neither arising nor ceasing, and are neither subject to non-conditioning nor non-origination. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything. It entails the completion of the major and minor marks, having aspired to [the realization] that all things are non-abiding. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything.”

8.44 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom proceed on the path to enlightenment, and how indeed do they enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas? Can they not be overcome by anyone?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not make assumptions about the aggregate of physical forms. Similarly, they do not make assumptions about [the other aggregates], up to and including the aggregate of consciousness. They do not make assumptions about the sense field of the eyes, and similarly, they do not make assumptions about [the other sense fields], up to and including the sense field of the mental faculty. They do not make assumptions about the sense field of sights, and they do not make assumptions about [the other sense fields], starting from there and continuing up to the sense field of mental phenomena. Similarly, they do not make assumptions about the sensory element of the eyes, they do not make assumptions about the sensory element of sights, and they do not make assumptions about the sensory element of visual consciousness. And in the same vein, they do not make assumptions about the sensory element of the mental faculty, and they do not make assumptions about [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena.

8.45 “They do not make assumptions about the applications of mindfulness, and they do not make assumptions about [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. They do not make assumptions about the transcendent perfection of generosity, and they do not make assumptions about the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, they do not make assumptions about the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and likewise, they do not make assumptions about the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

8.46 “Similarly, they do not make assumptions about [their attainments], up to and including the fruit of having entered the stream, and they do not make assumptions about [their other attainments], up to and including arhatship. Similarly, they do not make assumptions about individual enlightenment, or about unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Śāradvatīputra! If great bodhisattva beings flourish accordingly through the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will proceed on the path to enlightenment and they will also enter into the maturity of the

bodhisattvas. They cannot be overcome by anyone!

8.47 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, if great bodhisattva beings who abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and then perfect the pristine cognition of omniscience, are endowed with that cognition, they will never fall into the lower realms of existence, and they will never be belittled among human beings. They will never become impoverished, and if they do possess a corporeal form, they will not acquire a body that is censured by the worlds of humans, gods, and antigods.”

8.48 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord! If great bodhisattva beings are endowed with the cognition whereby they would never regress into the lower realms of existence and never be censured by the worlds of gods, humans, and antigods, what is that cognition?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! If great bodhisattva beings are endowed with that cognition, in the world systems of the eastern direction, which are as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, they will perceive tathāgatas, arhats, and genuinely perfect buddhas—as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges—and they will listen to the sacred teachings from them. They will also perceive the community of the śrāvakas and the community of the bodhisattvas who are associated with those lord buddhas, and they will also perceive the arrays of the enlightened attributes of the buddhafiels. If great bodhisattva beings are endowed with that cognition, they do not maintain notions regarding the buddhas, they do not maintain notions regarding the bodhisattvas, they do not maintain notions regarding the śrāvakas, they have no notions regarding the pratyekabuddhas, they have no notions regarding self, they have no notions regarding non-self, and they have no notions regarding the buddhafiels.

8.49 “If great bodhisattva beings are endowed with that cognition, they do practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, but they do not apprehend that generosity, and then they also practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, but they do not apprehend that transcendent perfection of wisdom. If they are endowed with such cognition, they practice the applications of mindfulness, without apprehending the applications of mindfulness. In the same vein, they practice the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, without apprehending the distinct qualities of the buddhas. Śāradvatīputra! If great bodhisattva beings are endowed with that cognition, they bring all phenomena to perfection, and they are aware that they do not make assumptions about all these phenomena.

8.50 “So it is, Śāradvatīputra, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, who wish to pursue the path to enlightenment, and who wish to enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas should have no opportunities to indulge in physical, verbal, and mental actions that are tainted with the inadmissible transgressions.”

8.51 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What are the physical actions that are tainted with the inadmissible transgressions, which great bodhisattva beings might have? What are the corresponding verbal actions, and what are the corresponding mental actions?” The Blessed One then addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings think, ‘This is the body on the basis of which the self is to be apprehended as the body,’ or similarly, ‘This is the speech [on the basis of which the self is to be apprehended as speech],’ or ‘This is the mind on the basis of which the self is to be apprehended as the mind,’ Śārad-

vaṭīputra, all that denotes physical actions, verbal actions, and mental actions that are tainted with the inadmissible transgressions. However, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not at all apprehend the physical body [and so forth]. Śāradvatīputra, if great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom were to apprehend the physical body [and so forth], and in doing so were to generate through their body, speech, or mind thoughts of miserliness, and if they were to generate thoughts of degenerate morality, thoughts of agitation, thoughts of indolence, thoughts of distraction, or thoughts of stupidity, then, Śāradvatīputra, one should know that they would not be great bodhisattva beings.

8.52 “Śāradvatīputra, if great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will purify the negativity of body, and if they also purify the negativity of speech, and purify the negativity of mind, it follows that those great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom will refine the path to enlightenment, and correctly enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.”

8.53 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings purify the negativity of body? Similarly, how do they purify the negativity of speech and mind?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, whenever great bodhisattva beings do not apprehend the physical body and do not apprehend speech and mind, then, Śāradvatīputra, these great bodhisattva beings continue to pursue the paths associated with the ten virtuous actions, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment. They never develop the mindsets of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but they do indeed develop great compassion at all times for the sake of all sentient beings.

8.54 “Accordingly, Śāradvatīputra, I say that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom will purify the negativity of body. Similarly, I say that they will purify the negativity of speech and mind. Śāradvatīputra, so it is that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom refine the path to enlightenment, and also enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.”

8.55 *This completes the eighth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Maturity.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER EIGHT:

MATURITY

8.A The immaturity of a bodhisattva manifests when great bodhisattva beings who have previously regressed descend to the level(s) of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas, and fail to enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas ... When great bodhisattva beings who are unskilled practice the six transcendent perfections, owing to their lack of skill in means they actualize the level(s) of the śrāvakas and ... pratyekabuddhas dependent on the [three] gateways to liberation—emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness—and they do not maintain the maturity of the bodhisattvas. That ... is the immaturity of a great bodhisattva being who has previously regressed.

8.B Why does this immaturity of great bodhisattva beings occur? ... {because} this ‘immaturity’ entails craving for the sacred doctrine ... When great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom establish,

cognize, and become fixated on the notion that physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, tangibles and mental phenomena; and feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded up to feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded; and [all the causal attributes] from the applications of mindfulness, up to and including the noble eightfold path, and likewise, [all the fruitional attributes] from the ten powers of the tathāgatas, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas} are impermanent ... imbued with suffering ... not a self ... empty ... signless ... without aspirations ... calm ... void ... purified ... non-arising ... unceasing, and ... non-entities—in all such cases ... this craving for the sacred doctrine in the case of great bodhisattva beings indicates their immaturity ... It is in this way that unskilled great bodhisattva beings have formerly regressed, descended to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and failed to enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.

8.C Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should train as follows: They should not in any respect make assumptions on account of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty ... sights ... sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... the sensory element of the eyes ... sights ... visual consciousness ... {and} [all the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless meditative absorptions ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {and} [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not make assumptions even on account of the enlightened mind, the mind that is equal to the unequaled, the uncommon mind, the mind of vast extent. If you ask why, it is because the intrinsic nature of this mind is luminosity.

8.D “What is the nature of luminosity—the intrinsic nature of mind?” The Blessed One replied ... “Śāradvatīputra, the {natural luminosity of the} mind neither has desire {in ultimate reality, nor in the omniscient mind in relative reality}, nor is it without desire {in relative reality}. {Similarly,} it neither has hatred, nor is it without hatred. {Similarly,} it neither has delusion, nor is it without delusion. Similarly, it neither has obsessions, fetters, or latent impulses, nor is it without them. Similarly, it neither has all the fetters of philosophical view, nor is it without them. It neither has the mindsets of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, nor is it without them. This ... is the natural luminosity of the mind with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed.” ... Senior Śāradvatīputra then asked ... “Lord! Does this mind that is not the mind exist?” ... [The Lord Buddha] then said, “ ... If the nature of mind with which minds are endowed has neither existence {in the non-existence of relative reality} nor non-existence {in ultimate reality}, and if it is non-apprehensible {as a ‘secondary’ thing beyond the mind of Our singularity in ultimate reality}, then ... surely your question ‘Does this mind that is not the mind exist?’ is contestable. How can this reasoning be correct?” Senior Śāradvatīputra then asked ... “Venerable Lord! What is the nature of mind with which minds are endowed?” He replied, “ ... That which is unchanging and without conceptual notions regarding all things is called the nature of mind with which minds are endowed.”

8.E {Ultimately} there are no changes and no conceptual notions regarding any mind ... {or} any [phenomena], up to and including all formative predispositions, and ... [all the attributes and attainments], up to and including enlightenment ... This absence of change and absence of conceptual notions regarding all things {from the perspective of ultimate reality} is designated as the maturity of a great bodhisattva being who practices the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

8.F The maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails the four applications of mindfulness which are correctly retained by skill in means ... (1) Great bodhisattva beings who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, with regard to the inner body ... the outer body ... {and} the inner and outer body combined, continue to observe the physical body, without generating any apperceptions {or 'biased assumptions'} dependent on the physical body. (2) Those who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, with regard to inner feelings, outer feelings, and combined inner and outer feelings, continue to observe feelings, without generating any apperceptions {or 'biased assumptions'} dependent on feelings. (3) Those who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, with regard to the inner mind, the outer mind, and the combined inner and outer mind, continue to observe the mind, without generating any apperceptions {or 'biased assumptions'} dependent on the mind. (4) Those who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, with regard to inner phenomena, outer phenomena, and combined inner and outer phenomena, continue to observe phenomena, without generating any apperceptions {or 'biased assumptions'} dependent on phenomena.

8.G If you ask how, with regard to the {example of the} inner body, great bodhisattva beings continue to observe the physical body ... when great bodhisattva beings are engaged in conduct, they are fully aware that they are engaged in conduct ... {or} standing upright, they are fully aware that they are standing upright ... {or} sitting, they are fully aware that they are sitting ... {or} lying down, they are fully aware that they are lying down. In whatever ways the body changes its posture, they are fully aware of these ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings maintain alertness whether they are going out or returning back ... looking outwardly or looking introspectively ... bending or stretching their limbs ... holding an outer patched robe, a waist cloth, or an alms bowl ... eating, drinking, chewing, tasting, waking up, resting, coming or going, [standing or] sitting, reclining or not reclining ... speaking or not speaking ... {and} absorbed in ... or arising from meditation ... Moreover ... they breathe in mindfully and breathe out mindfully. They are fully aware that when they inhale a long {or short} breath they are inhaling a long {or short} breath, and that when they exhale a long {or short} breath, they are exhaling a long {or short} breath ... This resembles, for example, a potter or the skilled apprentice of a potter who is fully aware that when he is turning the wheel in a long whirl, he is turning the wheel in a long whirl, and who is fully aware that when he is turning the wheel in a short whirl, he is turning the wheel in a short whirl ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings analyze this same physical body in terms of its material elements, considering that their bodies comprise the element{s} of earth ... water ... fire, and ... wind ... Just as a skilled butcher of bulls or ... {his} apprentice ... slays a bull with a sharp instrument, cuts it into four parts, and then examines the quartered carcass as he stands or sits, in the same way ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom also examine this same physical body in terms of its material elements ...

Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings consider that this same body, from the soles of the feet upwards and the crown of the head downwards, is full of manifold impurities. They discern that this body comprises the hairs of the head, the hairs of the body, nails, epidermal skin, inner skin, flesh, ligaments, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, spleen, lungs, liver, stomach, intestines, sigmoid colon, genitals, urinary bladder, excrement, tears, sweat, adipose tissue, saliva, nasal mucous, pus, serum, odors, urine, brain tissue, and cerebral secretions ... This is just as when the grain bins of a householder farmer have been placed on either side of his doorway ... and an observant passer-by, on seeing them, would know that these are sesame, these are husked rice, these are beans, these are kidney beans, these are barley, these are wheat, these are lentils, these are unhusked rice, these are {millet} grains, and these are mustard ... It is in this way that great bodhisattva beings who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, with regard to the inner body, continue to observe the physical body ... This is the maturity of a great bodhisattva being who practices the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

8.H Moreover ... the maturity of a great bodhisattva being who practices the transcendent perfection of wisdom also entails the four correct exertions ... They resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that ... {1} negative and non-virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might not be developed ... {2} negative and non-virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might be renounced ... {3} virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might be developed {and} ... {4} virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might remain, be unforgotten, flourish and be fully cultivated ... {and} they do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

8.I Moreover ... the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails the four supports for miraculous ability ... Great bodhisattva beings imbued with renunciation, who dwell in solitude, maintaining detachment and remaining in a state of cessation {of contaminants}, should cultivate the support for miraculous ability combining ... {1} meditative stability of **resolution** with the formative force of exertion ... {2} meditative stability of **mind** with the formative force of exertion ... {3} meditative stability of **perseverance** with the formative force of exertion {and} ... {4} meditative stability of **scrutiny** with the formative force of exertion ... These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

8.J Moreover ... the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails the five faculties ... (1) the faculty of faith, (2) the faculty of perseverance, (3) the faculty of recollection, (4) the faculty of meditative stability, and (5) the faculty of wisdom ... {and} also entails the five powers ... (1) the power of faith, (2) the power of perseverance, (3) the power of recollection, (4) the power of meditative stability, and (5) the power of wisdom. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

8.K Moreover ... the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails the seven branches of enlightenment ... {comprising} the branch of genuine enlightenment {of} ... (1) ... recollection, (2) ... doctrinal analysis, (3) ... perseverance, (4) ... delight, (5) ... mental and physical refinement, (6) ... meditative stability, and (7) ... equanimity ... “[Bodhisattvas who are] imbued with renunciation, who dwell in solitude, maintaining detachment and remaining in a state of cessation {of contaminants}, should cultivate the branch{es} of genuine enlightenment ... without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

8.L Moreover ... the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails [the observance of] the noble eightfold path ... (1) correct view, (2) correct thought, (3) correct speech, (4) correct action, (5) correct livelihood, (6) correct effort, (7) correct recollection, and (8) correct meditative stability. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

8.M Moreover ... the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails absorption in the three gateways to liberation by engaging in the understanding that all things are without duality {from the perspective of ultimate reality} ... in the four meditative concentrations, experiencing all things non-conceptually, without relishing the bliss of meditative concentration ... in the four immeasurable aspirations through acceptance that phenomena are non-arising ... in the four formless meditative absorptions by understanding that the three world systems are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} ... in the eight aspects of liberation, without {the duality consciousness of the individuated} mind, the mental faculty, and mental consciousness ... in the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise by perceiving cyclic existence and nirvāṇa without duality ... in the nine contemplations of impurity by engaging with all things as if they were a mirage ... in the ten recollections, without the need for mindfulness and without the need for mentation ... in the six aspects of perception by engaging with all things as if they were an illusion ... in the ten kinds of knowledge by regarding all things, known and unknown, as the same ... in the three [modes of meditative stability], having realized that all things are naturally in equipoise ... {in} the meditations on the three faculties [enabling knowledge of all that is unknown, acquiring the knowledge of all things, and endowed with the knowledge of all things] by means of knowledge {of the omniscient mind} that is free from [the limitations] of past, present, and future ... {in} the meditations on the [eight] sense fields of mastery by engaging in the cognition of a single modality {in all illusory phenomena}, without differentiation, and ... in the [ten] sense fields of total consummation through acceptance of the {illusory} nature of {all such} profound phenomena. All these absorptions, too, are cultivated without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

8.N Moreover ... the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails those circumstances when bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom [with regard to the eighteen aspects of emptiness]: In the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of external phenomena is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of internal phenomena is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality {defined in this context as the path of nirvāṇa (or extinguishment of the three fires of craving, aversion and ignorance and the individual self) leading to ultimate reality} is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of non-dispersal is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of inherent existence, the empti-

ness of all intrinsic defining characteristics is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of all intrinsic defining characteristics, the emptiness of all things is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of non-apprehension is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of non-apprehension, the emptiness of non-entities is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of non-entities, the emptiness of essential nature is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of essential nature, the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities is not discerned {as ultimately real}. In the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, the emptiness of essential nature is not discerned {as ultimately real}.

8.O Moreover ... the maturity of a great bodhisattva being also entails the completion of the ten powers of the tathāgatas by encouraging others to understand the teachings without relying on external conditions ... the four assurances by elucidating [the teachings], without making assumptions with respect to oneself and others ... the four unhindered discernments by knowing, without making assumptions, that the vehicles of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas have been rejected ... great loving kindness by [understanding that] sentient beings are not sentient beings ... great compassion by [understanding that] the {individuated} self is not a self ... the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas through freedom from thoughts associated with the two modes of awareness {of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas} ... the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, and the understanding of omniscience by engaging with emptiness in all its finest aspects ... the six transcendent perfections by discerning [respectively] that thoughts of miserliness, degenerate morality, agitation, indolence, and distraction, as well as thoughts of stupidity, are non-entities ... the completion of the six extrasensory powers, having resolved that all things neither come nor go ... the five eyes, having discerned that all things are empty, signless, aspirationless, neither arising nor ceasing, and are neither subject to non-conditioning nor non-origination ... {and} the major and minor marks, having aspired to [the realization] that all things are non-abiding. These too should be cultivated without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

8.P When great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not make assumptions about the aggregate of physical forms ... {and} [the other aggregates], up to and including the aggregate of consciousness ... the sense field of the eyes ... {and} [the other sense fields], up to and including the sense field of the mental faculty ... the sense field of sights ... {and} [the other sense fields] ... up to the sense field of mental phenomena ... the sensory element{s} of the eyes ... sights, and ... visual consciousness ... {and} [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental phenomena ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... {and} the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... [their attainments], up to and including the fruit of having entered the stream ... [their other attainments], up to and including arhatship ... individual enlightenment, or ... unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... If great bodhisattva beings flourish accordingly through the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will proceed on the path to enlightenment and they will also enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas. They cannot be overcome by anyone! Moreover ... if great bodhisattva beings who abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and then perfect the pristine cognition of omniscience, are endowed with that cognition, they will never fall into the lower realms of existence, and they will never be belittled among human

beings. They will never become impoverished, and if they do possess a corporeal form, they will not acquire a body that is censured by the worlds of humans, gods, and antigods.

8.Q If great bodhisattva beings are endowed with that {pristine} cognition {of omniscience}, in the world systems of the eastern direction, which are as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, they will perceive tathāgatas, arhats, and genuinely perfect buddhas—as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges—and they will listen to the sacred teachings from them. They will also perceive the community of the śrāvakas and the community of the bodhisattvas who are associated with those lord buddhas, and ... the arrays of the enlightened attributes of the buddhafiels. If great bodhisattva beings are endowed with that cognition, they do not maintain {conceptual} notions regarding the buddhas ... bodhisattvas ... śrāvakas ... pratyekabuddhas ... self ... non-self, and ... buddhafiels ... they do practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, but they do not apprehend {as real} that generosity ... {up to} they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, but they do not apprehend {as real} that transcendent perfection of wisdom ... they practice the applications of mindfulness, without apprehending {as real} the applications of mindfulness ... {up to} they practice the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, without apprehending {as real} the distinct qualities of the buddhas ... If great bodhisattva beings are endowed with that cognition, they bring all phenomena to perfection, and they are aware that they do not make assumptions about all these phenomena. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, who wish to pursue the path to enlightenment, and who wish to enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas should have no opportunities to indulge in physical, verbal, and mental actions that are tainted with the inadmissible transgressions.

8.R When great bodhisattva beings think, ‘This is the body on the basis of which the self is to be apprehended as the body,’ or similarly, ‘This is the speech [on the basis of which the self is to be apprehended as {the} speech],’ or ‘This is the mind on the basis of which the self is to be apprehended as the mind,’ ... all that denotes physical actions, verbal actions, and mental actions that are tainted with the inadmissible transgressions. However ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not at all apprehend the {individuated} physical body {speech and mind as the self} ... If great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom were to apprehend the physical body [and so forth] {as the self}, and in doing so were to generate through their body, speech, or mind thoughts of miserliness ... degenerate morality ... agitation ... indolence ... distraction ... {or} stupidity, then ... one should know that they would not be great bodhisattva beings ... Whenever great bodhisattva beings do not apprehend the physical body ... speech and mind {as the self}, then ... these great bodhisattva beings continue to pursue the paths associated with the ten virtuous actions, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment. They never develop the mindsets of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but they do indeed develop great compassion at all times for the sake of all sentient beings. Accordingly ... I say that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom will purify the negativity of body ... speech and mind ... So it is that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom refine the path to enlightenment, and also enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.

COMMENTARY

The omniscient mind is the ‘all-seeing eye’ of the enlightened Buddha, which sees all phenomena through the singular eye of non-duality, beyond the three worlds of desire, form, and formlessness. Within this mind, the truth of all

phenomena (the Dharma) and the mind of the Buddha are as 'one'; for the Buddha is the Dharma and the Dharma is the Buddha. **This omniscient mind—or truth body—functions within the confines of 'relative' existence to replace the mind of independent thinkers**, who are attached to their own ideas, speculations, and assumptions. Uncontaminated by conceptual notions, there *is* no craving for the sacred doctrine; for the omniscient mind understands from the perspective of 'ultimate' reality, the Dharma and the omniscient mind are merely illusions ~ serving as a raft to ferry the unawakened mind, from the shore of delusion to the shore of enlightenment.

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The intrinsic nature of the enlightened (omniscient) mind is luminosity. **By default, all individuals are endowed with this natural luminosity of mind**, which is unchanging and without conceptual notions, which is why the Buddha states (above): *"That which is unchanging and without conceptual notions regarding all things is called the nature of mind with which minds are endowed."* This mind of the individual becomes contaminated within 'relative' existence when the mind superimposes conceptual notions upon the natural luminosity of this mind. This process gives rise to a 'separate sense of self' and a build-up of ideas to reinforce its individuality ~ whereby new ideas must be assimilated with 'apperception' against an already existing body of ideas.

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Conceptual notions are like marker-pen scribbling's on the whiteboard of Our natural luminosity of mind ~ and when removed with a wiper, the only thing left is Our natural luminosity of mind, that is unchanging and without conceptual notions. For this reason the intrinsic nature of mind of Our singularity in God in 'ultimate' reality is luminosity, and is unchanging and without conceptual notions. The intrinsic nature of the omniscient mind, the all-seeing eye which sees all phenomena through the singular eye of non-duality in 'relative' reality, is also luminosity, and is unchanging and without conceptual notions. And the intrinsic nature with which all minds are endowed in 'relative' existence, is also luminosity, and is unchanging and without conceptual notions. Here the Buddha states (above): *"If the nature of mind with which minds are endowed has neither existence {in relative reality} nor non-existence {in ultimate reality}, and if it is non-apprehensible {as a 'secondary' thing beyond the mind of Our singularity in ultimate reality}, then surely ... your question 'Does this mind that is not the mind exist?', is contestable."*

*

Apperception is the generating of a 'biased assumption' of a sensory perception, such as a poor man finding a dollar bill on the ground and generating a belief he is now rich ... or an individual who has seen a man behaving badly in the past and generating a belief he is now evil. Any conditioned response, such as a thought of desire, hate or fear, is an example of an apperception ~ such as a young man seeing a red ferrari and generating the assumption this will make him happy; or a young woman witnessing her bag being stolen and generating the assumption this is a great injustice; or an elderly woman diagnosed with a chronic illness and generating the assumption this will lead to her death. The four applications of mindfulness help us to overcome these immature assumptions and are described by the Buddha in the chapter (above) as: *"Great bodhisattva beings who are diligent, alert, and mindful, after eliminating worldly covetousness and sadness without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} ... continue to observe the physical body {as well as feelings, the mind, and phenomena}, without generating any apperceptions {that being any biased assumptions or conclusions} dependent on {any of these}."*

9.1 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! In what circumstances do great bodhisattva beings enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas, and what is this vehicle of the bodhisattvas wherein emancipation is not attained through limited vehicles?” The Blessed One then addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, whenever great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, they do not practice their generosity for the sake of a limited number of sentient beings. When they practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they do not maintain their ethical discipline for the sake of a limited number of sentient beings. It is the same when they practice the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, and the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration; and when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not cultivate wisdom for the sake of a limited number of sentient beings. Rather, when they practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, they practice their generosity for the sake of all sentient beings, and so on in the same vein. When they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they cultivate wisdom for the sake of all sentient beings.

9.2 “Great bodhisattva beings do not don the great armor for the sake of a limited number of sentient beings, thinking, ‘So many sentient beings will I lead to final nirvāṇa in the expanse of non-residual nirvāṇa, and so many sentient beings will I not lead to final nirvāṇa; so many sentient beings will I establish in enlightenment, and so many sentient beings will I not establish [in enlightenment].’ Rather, they don the great armor for the sake of all sentient beings, thinking, ‘I myself should complete the transcendent perfection of generosity. I should also connect all sentient beings with the transcendent perfection of generosity. In the same vein, I myself should complete the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the same goes for the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, and the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. I myself should complete the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and I should also connect all sentient beings with the transcendent perfection of wisdom.’ Śāradvatīputra, it is to that extent that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

9.3 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, with regard to great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, all the acts of generosity that they make are offered with an omniscient mind, and, making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate these [acts] for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, without apprehending anything. This, Śāradvatīputra, is the armor of the transcendent perfection of generosity, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

9.4 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings offer their generosity, they do so with an omniscient mind, and dedicate this for the sake of all sentient beings in common, without being fascinated by the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. This, Śāradvatīputra, is called the armor of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, offered by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

9.5 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice their generosity, they do so attentive to the omniscient mind, and for the sake of all sentient beings in common, they exhibit endurance, satisfaction, and confidence with respect to [all] phenomena. These [attributes] are called the armor of the transcendent perfection of tolerance. Similarly, the indefatigability, relentlessness, and tenacity with which they persevere while practicing

their generosity and so forth, are called the armor of the transcendent perfection of perseverance. Likewise, the one-pointedness of their minds in omniscience when they practice their generosity, attentive to all sentient beings, without permitting the mindsets of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas to arise, is the armor of the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice generosity, focusing on the notion that senses are illusory, and grant their gifts without apprehending the giver, the gift, and the recipient, this is the armor of the transcendent perfection of wisdom offered by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

9.6 “Śāradvatīputra, whenever great bodhisattva beings with an omniscient mind neither conceptualize these six transcendent perfections nor apprehend them, these great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor. “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they grant their generosity with a mind endowed with omniscience, and dedicate this for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings. This is the transcendent perfection of generosity of great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.

9.7 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they do not hanker for the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and much less still for the levels of ordinary people. This is the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline possessed by great bodhisattva beings. “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline exhibit endurance, satisfaction, and confidence with respect to [all] phenomena, this is the transcendent perfection of tolerance, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.

9.8 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline exhibit indefatigability, relentlessness, and tenacity with respect to [all] phenomena, this is the transcendent perfection of perseverance, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline. “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline are not separated from thoughts preceded by great compassion, owing to their attentiveness endowed with omniscience, and do not permit the mindsets of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas to arise, less still the mindsets of ordinary people, this is the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.

9.9 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, whenever great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline focus on the notion that all phenomena are illusory, and when, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, they neither make assumptions about nor apprehend ethical discipline, this is the transcendent perfection of wisdom possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline. Śāradvatīputra, so it is that when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline they are said to don the great armor that is retained by means of all six transcendent perfections. “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of tolerance, they practice their generosity with a mind endowed with omniscience and dedicate this for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect en-

lightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, and so on in the same vein as before.

9.10 “Also, the same goes for the transcendent perfection of perseverance, just as has been indicated in the context of the transcendent perfection of generosity. “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration they become absorbed in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions, but they will not be reborn and they will not be captivated on account of these [absorptions]. This is the transcendent perfection of wisdom possessed by great bodhisattva beings, skillful in practicing the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration.

9.11 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration they become absorbed in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions, and then, through their vision of freedom and their vision of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, they may indeed enter into the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas, whereupon all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas will be overwhelmed. This, Śāradvatīputra, is the transcendent perfection of wisdom possessed by great bodhisattva beings, skillful in practicing the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. Śāradvatīputra, it is in this way that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

9.12 “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings don the great armor in these ways, then, throughout the world systems, from the eastern direction up to the intermediate directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, all the lord buddhas who reside therein will purposefully declare and incant in their eulogies, ‘This great bodhisattva being, in such and such a world system, has donned the great armor, is bringing sentient beings to maturity, is refining the buddhafields, and is even conjuring emanational forms through miraculous abilities!’”

9.13 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord! By means of what is it said that great bodhisattva beings who have entered upon the Great Vehicle, ride upon the Great Vehicle?” The Blessed One then addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the six transcendent perfections, they achieve and then maintain the first meditative concentration, where there is freedom from the passions [of the senses], and freedom from negative and non-virtuous attributes, while ideation and scrutiny are present, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from freedom. They then achieve and maintain the second meditative concentration, where there is an intense inner clarity, free from both ideation and scrutiny—the absence of ideation and scrutiny being due to one-pointed mental focus, while the joy and bliss that arise from meditative stability are present. They then achieve and maintain the third meditative concentration, where bliss remains but joy is absent due to the absence of attachment to joy—this is what sublime beings describe as ‘equanimous, mindful, and pure’. And they then achieve and maintain the fourth meditative concentration where even that sense of bliss is abandoned, and neither suffering nor bliss is present because blissful and unhappy states of mind have both previously subsided, while equanimity and mindfulness are utterly pure.

9.14 “Similarly, they achieve and maintain the mind that is endowed with loving kindness, its volition permeating a single direction of space because it is vast, extensive, non-dual, immeasurable, free from enmity, free from harm, without rivalry, perfected, and well-cultivated. Likewise, they then achieve and maintain the mind endowed with

loving kindness, the volition of which permeates a second [direction of space], and similarly, a third, a fourth, the nadir, the zenith, the horizon, and the entire universe. “In the same way, they then achieve and maintain the mind that is endowed with compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity, its volition permeating the entire universe. These combined [practices] of the four immeasurable aspirations and the [four] meditative concentrations form the supremely excellent Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings.

9.15 “When great bodhisattva beings are absorbed in these meditative concentrations, conjoined with the aspects of the immeasurable aspirations, replete with the [appropriate] signs and indications [of successful practice], and then arise [from these meditative states], making common cause with all sentient beings, they act so as to perfect omniscience. This indeed, Śāradvatīputra, is the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings. “When great bodhisattva beings, their minds endowed with omniscience and preceded by great compassion, correctly describe and communicate these meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, and formless absorptions to others, so that they might abandon afflicted mental states—expounding, analyzing, and elucidating them, and demonstrating the drawbacks of their experiences, as well as genuine emancipation—this is the transcendent perfection of generosity possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

9.16 “When those who have cultivated a mind endowed with omniscience hone and cultivate the first meditative concentration and [the others], up to and including the fourth meditative concentration, and abide in these meditative concentrations without permitting the cultivation of other mindsets, that is to say, those of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas—this, Śāradvatīputra, is the unblemished transcendent perfection of ethical discipline possessed by great bodhisattva beings. “Also, when any great bodhisattva beings, without being separated from the attention associated with omniscience, think, ‘I should teach the sacred doctrine to all sentient beings in order that they might abandon all afflicted mental states,’ and then exhibit endurance, satisfaction, investigation, and contemplation with respect to those attentions, this, Śāradvatīputra, is the transcendent perfection of tolerance possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

9.17 “Also, when any great bodhisattva beings, through their attention endowed with omniscience, constantly dedicate all the roots of their virtuous actions for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, and then exhibit indefatigability and relentlessness, this, Śāradvatīputra, is the transcendent perfection of perseverance possessed by great bodhisattva beings. “Also, when any great bodhisattva beings, through their attention endowed with omniscience, become absorbed in the meditative concentrations, meditative stabilities, [formless] absorptions, and the [gateways to] liberation, and then arise [from those meditative states] without descending to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, this is the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

9.18 “Also, when any great bodhisattva beings, through their attention endowed with omniscience, are absorbed in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions, they definitively discern that all the aspects of their meditative concentrations are facets of impermanence, modes of suffering, and aspects of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, yet they enter neither into the maturity of the śrāvakas nor into the maturity of the pratyekabuddhas, because these [insights] are retained by great compassion. This, Śāradva-

tīputra, is the transcendent perfection of wisdom possessed by great bodhisattva beings. “These indeed, Śāradvatīputra, represent the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings.

9.19 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the same also applies when great bodhisattva beings definitively cultivate in all respects the four applications of mindfulness, and likewise [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and when they cultivate in all respects the meditative stability of emptiness, the meditative stability of signlessness, and the meditative stability of aspirationlessness, and when they cultivate in all respects [all the other fruitional attributes], from the ten powers of the tathāgatas up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. This, Śāradvatīputra, is the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings.

9.20 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings are absorbed in loving kindness, they focus on the nature of mind that benefits sentient beings, thinking, ‘I should save all sentient beings!’ Also, when they are absorbed in compassion, they focus on the nature of mind that directs compassion and love to all those beings, and when they are absorbed in empathetic joy, they also focus on all sentient beings, thinking, ‘I should liberate all sentient beings!’ Also, when they are absorbed in equanimity, they focus on those beings, meditating, ‘May all sentient beings achieve the cessation of contaminants!’ This, Śāradvatīputra, is the transcendent perfection of generosity, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the four immeasurable aspirations.

9.21 “Also, when any great bodhisattva beings become absorbed in the aspects of those meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, and formless absorptions, replete with the [appropriate] signs and indications [of success in practice], and then arise [from those meditative states], without dedicating their merit to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas, and instead only dedicating it to omniscience, this is the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions.

9.22 “When great bodhisattva beings, through their attention endowed with omniscience, abide in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions, without confusing them, and do not desire those two levels—the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas—but accept and desire only omniscience, this is the transcendent perfection of tolerance, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions.

9.23 “Also, when any great bodhisattva beings, through their attention endowed with omniscience, maintain their indefatigability and relentlessness in order to abandon non-virtuous actions and adopt virtuous actions, this is the transcendent perfection of perseverance, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who abide in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations and the formless absorptions. “Also, when any great bodhisattva beings become absorbed in those meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, and formless absorptions, and then arise [from those meditative states], but are not captivated by those meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, and formless absorptions, and are not subject to rebirth on account of them, this is the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, originating from the skillful means of great bodhisattva beings who abide in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions.

9.24 “Also, when any great bodhisattva beings, through their attention endowed with omniscience, are absorbed in the meditative stabilities of the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions, and then arise [from those states], but definitively discern that all of those are facets of impermanence, modes of suffering, aspects of selflessness, and aspects of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, without entering either into the maturity of the śrāvakas or into the maturity of the pratyekabuddhas, this, Śāradvatīputra, is the transcendent perfection of wisdom, originating from the skillful means of great bodhisattva beings who practice the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions.

9.25 “Śāradvatīputra, these six transcendent perfections of great bodhisattva beings are the Great Vehicle that is retained by skillful means originating from the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations and the formless absorptions. “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings understands the emptiness of internal phenomena without apprehending anything. Likewise, in the same vein, it also understands [all the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, without apprehending anything.

9.26 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings does not cause one to know that ‘all things are distraction’ or ‘this is meditative equipoise.’ Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings does not cause one to know that ‘this is permanent’ or ‘this is impermanent.’ Similarly, in the same vein, it does not cause one to know that ‘this is imbued with happiness,’ ‘this is imbued with suffering,’ ‘this is a self,’ or ‘this is not a self,’ and it does so without apprehending anything. “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings does not cause one to know past time. It does not cause one to know future time and present time—nor does it not cause one to know the three times, but it does so without apprehending anything.

9.27 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings does not cause one to know the world system of desire. It does not cause one to know the world system of form and the world system of formlessness—nor does it not cause one to know the three world systems, but it does so without apprehending anything. “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings does not cause one to know mundane phenomena. It does not cause one to know supramundane, conditioned, unconditioned, contaminated, and uncontaminated phenomena—nor does it not cause one to know mundane phenomena, and nor does it not cause one to know supramundane, conditioned, unconditioned, contaminated, and uncontaminated phenomena, but it does so without apprehending anything.”

9.28 “Śāradvatīputra, that on which great bodhisattva beings abide is the [Great] Vehicle that enters into the maturity of the bodhisattvas. This is not the emancipation associated with limited vehicles, that is to say, with the vehicle of the śrāvakas or the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas. If you ask why, it is because the Great Vehicle and the great armor are not distinct from one another. The great armor itself is the Great Vehicle, and the Great Vehicle itself is the great armor. It is the Great Vehicle and the great armor that constitute the maturity of the bodhisattvas.”

9.29 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord! To what extent is it said of great bodhisattva beings that they abide in the Great Vehicle?” The Blessed One then addressed Senior Śāradvatīpu-

tra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, they abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and because they act without apprehending anything, they do not apprehend gifts, they do not apprehend their transcendent perfection of generosity, nor do they apprehend recipients. Similarly, when they practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and so forth], and because they act without apprehending anything, they do not apprehend virtuous phenomena, nor do they apprehend non-virtuous, determinate, indeterminate, mundane, supramundane, conditioned, unconditioned, contaminated, or uncontaminated phenomena. They do not apprehend the transcendent perfection of wisdom, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, or the cultivators of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Śāradvatīputra, it is to that extent that great bodhisattva beings are said to abide in the Great Vehicle.

9.30 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings, their unconfused minds endowed with omniscience, should cultivate the four applications of mindfulness in order to terminate this cultivation, and they do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they should cultivate the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and so on, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, all in order to put an end to cultivation, and they do so without apprehending anything. Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who undertake cultivation accordingly are said to abide in the Great Vehicle.

9.31 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, owing to the non-apprehension of sentient beings, great bodhisattva beings understand that a so-called ‘bodhisattva’ is a mere name or conventional term. Similarly, it follows that so-called ‘physical forms’ are nothing but a mere designation, and the same goes for feelings, perceptions, and formative predispositions because they too are non-apprehensible. Also, since consciousness is non-apprehensible, it follows that so-called ‘consciousness’ is nothing but a mere name or conventional term.

9.32 “Since the eyes are non-apprehensible, it follows that so-called ‘eyes’ are nothing but a mere name or conventional term. Similarly, since [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, are non-apprehensible, it follows that so-called ‘ears, nose, tongue, body and mental faculty’ are nothing but mere names or conventional terms. Similarly, since sights are non-apprehensible, it follows that so-called ‘sights’ are nothing but a mere name or conventional term. Similarly, since sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena are non-apprehensible, it follows that so-called ‘sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena’ are nothing but mere names or conventional terms.

9.33 “Since the applications of mindfulness are non-apprehensible, it follows that the so-called ‘four applications of mindfulness’ are nothing but mere names or conventional terms, and the same goes for [all other causal attributes], up to and including the [noble eightfold] path. Since they are all non-apprehensible, it follows that the same goes for the so-called ‘[four] correct exertions, [four] supports for miraculous ability, five faculties, five powers, seven branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path.’

9.34 “In the same way, since the emptiness of internal phenomena and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are non-apprehensible, they are nothing but mere names or conventional terms. Likewise, the so-called ‘ten powers of the tathāgatas’ are nothing but mere names or conventional terms, and the same goes for [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Since these are all non-apprehensible, it follows that all [fruitional attributes], up to and including the so-called ‘[eighteen] distinct qualities of the buddhas,’ are nothing but mere names or conventional terms.

9.35 “Since [unconditioned phenomena], up to and including the finality of existence, are non-apprehensible, it follows that the so-called ‘real nature, expanse of reality, maturity, and finality of existence’ are all nothing but mere names or conventional terms. Since enlightenment is non-apprehensible, it follows that this so-called ‘enlightenment’ is nothing but a mere name or conventional term; and in the same way, since a ‘genuinely perfect buddha’ is non-apprehensible, it is nothing but a mere name or conventional term. Śāradvatīputra, it is to that extent that great bodhisattva beings are said to abide in the Great Vehicle.

9.36 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, perfect the five extrasensory powers which are without degeneration, and they bring sentient beings to maturity. They also refine the buddhafiels, they pass from one buddhafielf to another buddhafielf, they honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to the lord buddhas, and they repeatedly listen to the sacred doctrines of this most supreme vehicle of the bodhisattvas, in the presence of those lord buddhas. Mounted on this vehicle, they proceed to the buddhafiels in order to benefit sentient beings and in order to behold the buddhas, but, in addition, they are without the notion of a buddhafielf, they are without the notion of sentient beings, and they are even without the notion of a buddha. Indeed, abiding on the level of non-duality, they acquire as many corporeal forms as will facilitate their appropriate acts for the welfare of sentient beings. Until they attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment, they will never be separated from this [Great] Vehicle.

9.37 “Having obtained omniscience, they continue to turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine, which cannot be turned by virtuous ascetics, brāhmin priests, gods, demonic forces, Brahmā deities, or anyone else. Whichever lord buddhas are alive and reside in the world systems of the eastern direction, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and whichever buddhas are alive and reside similarly in the world systems of the other directions, up to and including the intermediate directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, they will all offer praise and chant their eulogies, saying, ‘Such and such a great bodhisattva being, in such and such a world system, has ridden the Great Vehicle, and subsequently obtained the understanding of all the aspects of omniscience. Having obtained the understanding of all the aspects of omniscience, that one turns in the world the wheel of the sacred doctrine, which cannot be turned by virtuous ascetics, brāhmin priests, or anyone else!’ Śāradvatīputra! It is to that extent that great bodhisattva beings are said to abide in the Great Vehicle.

9.38 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings entails the six transcendent perfections. If you ask what these six are, they comprise the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance,

the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. These are the six transcendent perfections. “If, among them, you ask what is the transcendent perfection of generosity—Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience give inner or outer objects to those who desire them, and having done so, then dedicate the merit of these gifts for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, that, Śāradvatīputra, is the transcendent perfection of generosity, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

9.39 “Then, if you ask what is the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline—Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience adopt and practice correctly the path of the ten virtuous actions and then also correctly introduce, secure, and establish others on the path of virtuous actions, and do so without apprehending anything, this, Śāradvatīputra, is the unblemished transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.” “If you ask what is the transcendent perfection of tolerance—Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings [who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience] themselves possess the excellent endowment of tolerance, and then also correctly introduce, secure, and establish others in tolerance, and they do so without apprehending anything, this, Śāradvatīputra, is the transcendent perfection of tolerance, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

9.40 “If you ask what is the transcendent perfection of perseverance—Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience are indefatigable with respect to the six transcendent perfections, and also correctly introduce, secure, and establish sentient beings in the six transcendent perfections, and do so without apprehending anything, this, Śāradvatīputra, is the transcendent perfection of perseverance, possessed by great bodhisattva beings. “If you ask what is the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration—Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience are themselves skillfully absorbed in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions, and on that account are no longer subject to rebirth, while they also correctly introduce, secure, and establish others in these meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, and formless absorptions, doing so without apprehending anything, this, Śāradvatīputra, is the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

9.41 “If you ask what is the transcendent perfection of wisdom—Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience definitively discern the nature of all things, and are without fixation on all things, without apprehending anything, and having become unfixated on all things, then also correctly introduce, secure, and establish others in that definitive discernment of the nature of all things, and they do so without apprehending anything, this, Śāradvatīputra, is the transcendent perfection of wisdom, possessed by great bodhisattva beings. Śāradvatīputra! This is the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings.”

9.42 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Is the transcendent perfection of generosity mundane, or is it supramundane? Is this also the case with respect to the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom? Venerable Lord! If the transcendent perfection of generosity were mundane, and that were also the case with respect to the other transcendent perfections, up to and including

the transcendent perfection of wisdom, then, Venerable Lord, in what way could one perfect the transcendent perfection of mundane generosity, and likewise, the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom? What would be the point? Mundane things are conditioned, and since anything that is conditioned is impermanent, how could something that is impermanent be perfected as a transcendent perfection? Also, how could the transcendent perfection of generosity be supramundane? If [the transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, were so, they would not be created. How could something that is not created be perfected?”

9.43 The Blessed One then addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, the transcendent perfection of generosity is both mundane and supramundane. The transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom also are both mundane and supramundane.” Śāradvatīputra then asked, “What is the mundane transcendent perfection of generosity? What is the supramundane transcendent perfection of generosity?”

9.44 “Śāradvatīputra, those great bodhisattva beings who have become liberal donors bequeath food to virtuous ascetics, brāhmins, the destitute, wandering mendicants, forest-dwelling anchorites, and to beggars who are in need of food. They offer drink to those in need of drink, and in the same vein, they donate clothing, incense, garlands, unguents, bedding, mats, and homes to those who are in need of them. They donate lodgings to those who are in need of lodgings, they offer medicines to those in need of medicine, they offer provisions to those in need of provisions; and similarly, they offer appropriate human resources to beggars, and likewise, they offer their sons, they offer their daughters, they offer their wives and courtesans; and similarly, they offer their heads, eyes, ears, nose, marrow, hands, limbs, and appendages. In doing so, they practice liberality while adhering to the ownership of property, thinking, ‘I am giving. They are receiving. O! I am without miserliness. I am a donor. I give alms. O! I give everything. I respect the lord buddhas. I practice the transcendent perfection of generosity. I, having given this gift, dedicate it for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, and without apprehending anything! Through this, my gift, may all sentient beings attain happiness in this lifetime! May they attain final nirvāṇa in the expanse of reality that is beyond sorrow, and where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates!’ However, in giving their gifts they are tied by three fetters. What, you may ask, are the three? They comprise the notion of self, the notion of others, and the notion of the act of giving. This act of giving gifts, when tied by these three fetters, Śāradvatīputra, is called the transcendent perfection of mundane generosity. If you ask why it is called the transcendent perfection of mundane generosity, it is because those who practice in such mundane ways do not move beyond and transcend the mundane. For that reason, it is designated as ‘mundane.’

9.45 “What, you may ask, is the supramundane transcendent perfection of generosity? It is the purity of the three spheres [of subject, object, and their interaction]. In this context, the mind that is preceded by the great compassion of great bodhisattva beings does not apprehend the dispensing of gifts. It does not apprehend the giver, nor does it apprehend the recipient. This absence of giving and the absence of rejoicing in the ripening impact of giving, Śāradvatīputra, is called the purity of the three spheres [of subject, object, and their interaction].

9.46 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings offer gifts to all sentient beings, and even after making their gifts, they practice liberality toward those same beings, but they do not apprehend those sentient beings. They do not consider the recipient. They do not even rejoice in the ripening impact of their giving. Although they also dedicate their gifts for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, they do not consider even the slightest indication [of anything]. This, Śāradvatīputra, is called the transcendent perfection of supramundane generosity. If you ask why it is called the transcendent perfection of supramundane generosity, it is because it goes beyond the mundane, it is superior to the mundane, and transcends the mundane. [For that reason], it is called the transcendent perfection of supramundane generosity.

9.47 “In the same vein, the abiding mode of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline is mundane, and its non-abiding mode is supramundane. What has already been said for the transcendent perfection of generosity should be fully applied here, and also for the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, and the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. The abiding mode of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is mundane, and its non-abiding mode is supramundane. “Śāradvatīputra, just as great bodhisattva beings perfect the mundane and supramundane transcendent perfection of generosity, so it is that they perfect the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. This indeed, Śāradvatīputra, is the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings, their great armor, and the maturity of the bodhisattvas.”

9.48 *This completes the ninth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Teaching.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER NINE:
TEACHING

9.A Whenever great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of generosity {and the other transcendent perfections}, they do not practice their generosity ... maintain their ethical discipline ... practice ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration; and ... cultivate wisdom for the sake of a limited number of sentient beings. Rather, when they practice {maintain and} cultivate {these} ... {they do so} for the sake of all sentient beings. Great bodhisattva beings do not don the great armor for the sake of a limited number of sentient beings, thinking, ‘So many sentient beings will I lead to final nirvāṇa in the expanse of non-residual nirvāṇa, and so many sentient beings will I not lead to final nirvāṇa; so many sentient beings will I establish in enlightenment, and so many sentient beings will I not establish [in enlightenment].’ Rather, they don the great armor for the sake of all sentient beings, thinking, ‘I myself should complete ... {and} connect all sentient beings with the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration ... {and} wisdom.’ ... It is to that extent that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

9.B Moreover ... with regard to great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, all the acts of generosity that they make are offered with an omniscient mind, and, making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate these [acts] for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. This ... is the **armor of the transcendent perfection of generosity**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings ... Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings offer their generosity, they do so ... with-

out being fascinated by the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. This ... is called the **armor of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline**, offered by great bodhisattva beings ... Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings practice their generosity ... they exhibit endurance, satisfaction, and confidence with respect to [all] phenomena. These ... are called the **armor of the transcendent perfection of tolerance**. Similarly, the indefatigability, relentlessness, and tenacity with which they persevere while practicing their generosity and so forth, are called the **armor of the transcendent perfection of perseverance**. Likewise, the one-pointedness of their minds in omniscience when they practice their generosity, attentive to all sentient beings {as themselves}, without permitting the {self-centered} mindsets of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas to arise, is the **armor of the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration**. Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings practice generosity, focusing on the notion that senses are illusory, and grant their gifts without apprehending {as real} the giver, the gift, and the recipient, this is the **armor of the transcendent perfection of wisdom** offered by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

9.C Whenever great bodhisattva beings with an omniscient mind neither conceptualize these six transcendent perfections nor apprehend them {as ultimately real}, these great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor. Moreover ... **when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline**, they grant their generosity with a mind endowed with omniscience, and dedicate this for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings. This is the transcendent perfection of **generosity** of great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline ... They do not hanker for the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and much less still for the levels of ordinary people. This is the transcendent perfection of **ethical discipline** possessed by great bodhisattva beings {who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline} ... {When they} exhibit endurance, satisfaction, and confidence with respect to [all] phenomena, this is the transcendent perfection of **tolerance**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline ... {When they} exhibit indefatigability, relentlessness, and tenacity with respect to [all] phenomena, this is the transcendent perfection of **perseverance**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline ... {When they} are not separated from thoughts preceded by great compassion, owing to their {non-dual} attentiveness endowed with omniscience, and do not permit the mindsets of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas to arise, less still the mindsets of ordinary people, this is the transcendent perfection of **meditative concentration**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline ... {And when they} focus on the notion that all phenomena are illusory, and when, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, they neither make assumptions about nor apprehend {as real} ethical discipline, this is the transcendent perfection of **wisdom** possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline ... So it is that when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline they are said to don the great armor that is retained by means of all six transcendent perfections.

9.D Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of tolerance, they practice their generosity with a mind endowed with omniscience and dedicate this for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, and so on in the same vein as before. Also, the same goes for the transcendent perfection of perseverance, just as has been indicated in the context {above}.

9.E Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration they become absorbed in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions, but they will not be reborn and they will not be captivated on account of {becoming fixated on} these [absorptions] ... and then, through their vision of freedom and their vision of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, they may indeed enter into the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas {through emanational displays}, whereupon all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas will be overwhelmed. This ... is the transcendent perfection of wisdom possessed by great bodhisattva beings, skillful in practicing the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration ... When great bodhisattva beings don the great armor in these ways, then, throughout the world systems, from the eastern direction up to the intermediate directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, all the lord buddhas who reside therein will purposefully declare and incant in their eulogies, ‘This great bodhisattva being, in such and such a world system, has donned the great armor, is bringing sentient beings to maturity, is refining the buddha-fields, and is even conjuring emanational forms through miraculous abilities!’

9.F By means of what is it said that great bodhisattva beings ... ride upon the Great Vehicle? ... When great bodhisattva beings practice the six transcendent perfections, they achieve and then maintain the **first meditative concentration**, where there is freedom from the passions [of the senses], and freedom from negative and non-virtuous attributes, while ideation and scrutiny are present, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from freedom. They then achieve and maintain the **second meditative concentration**, where there is an intense inner clarity, free from both ideation and scrutiny—the absence of ideation and scrutiny being due to one-pointed mental focus, while the joy and bliss that arise from meditative stability are present. They then achieve and maintain the **third meditative concentration**, where bliss remains but joy is absent due to the absence of attachment to joy—this is what sublime beings describe as ‘equanimous, mindful, and pure’. And they then achieve and maintain the **fourth meditative concentration** where even that sense of bliss is abandoned, and neither suffering nor bliss is present because blissful and unhappy states of mind have both previously subsided, while equanimity and mindfulness are utterly pure. Similarly, they achieve and maintain the mind that is endowed with **{1} loving kindness**, its volition permeating a single direction of space because it is vast, extensive, non-dual, immeasurable, free from enmity, free from harm, without rivalry, perfected, and well-cultivated. Likewise, they then achieve and maintain the mind endowed with loving kindness, the volition of which permeates a second [direction of space], and similarly, a third, a fourth, the nadir, the zenith, the horizon, and the entire universe. “In the same way, they then achieve and maintain the mind that is endowed with **{2} compassion**, **{3} empathetic joy**, and **{4} equanimity**, its volition permeating the entire universe. These combined [practices] of the four immeasurable aspirations and the [four] meditative concentrations form the supremely excellent Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings.

9.G When great bodhisattva beings are absorbed in these meditative concentrations, conjoined with the aspects of the immeasurable aspirations, {or definitively cultivate in all respects the four applications of mindfulness, or likewise [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, or when they cultivate in all respects the meditative stability of emptiness, the meditative stability of signlessness, and the meditative stability of aspirationlessness, or when they cultivate in all respects [all the other fruitional attributes], from the ten powers of the tathāgatas up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas} replete with the [appropriate] signs and indications [of successful practice], and then arise, making common cause with all sentient beings, they act so as

to perfect omniscience. This indeed ... is the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings. When great bodhisattva beings, their minds endowed with omniscience and preceded by great compassion, correctly describe and communicate these meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, and formless absorptions {up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas} to others, so that they might abandon afflicted mental states—expounding, analyzing, and elucidating them, and demonstrating the drawbacks of their experiences, as well as genuine emancipation—this is the transcendent perfection of **generosity** possessed by great bodhisattva beings. When those who have cultivated a mind endowed with omniscience hone and cultivate the first meditative concentration ... up to and including the fourth meditative concentration, and abide in these meditative concentrations {up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas} without permitting the cultivation of other mindsets, that is to say, those of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas—this ... is the unblemished transcendent perfection of **ethical discipline** possessed by great bodhisattva beings. Also, when any great bodhisattva beings, without being separated from the attention associated with omniscience, think, ‘I should teach the sacred doctrine to all sentient beings in order that they might abandon all afflicted mental states,’ and then exhibit endurance, satisfaction, investigation, and contemplation with respect to those attentions, this ... is the transcendent perfection of **tolerance** possessed by great bodhisattva beings. Also, when any great bodhisattva beings, through their attention endowed with omniscience, constantly dedicate all the roots of their virtuous actions for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, and then exhibit indefatigability and relentlessness, this ... is the transcendent perfection of **perseverance** possessed by great bodhisattva beings. Also, when any great bodhisattva beings, through their attention endowed with omniscience, become absorbed in the meditative concentrations, meditative stabilities, [formless] absorptions, and the [gateways to] liberation {up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas}, and then arise {from these} without descending to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, this is the transcendent perfection of **meditative concentration** possessed by great bodhisattva beings. Also, when any great bodhisattva beings, through their attention endowed with omniscience, are absorbed in the meditative concentrations ... {up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas}, they definitively discern that all the aspects of {these} ... are facets of impermanence, modes of suffering, and aspects of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, yet they enter neither into the maturity of the śrāvakas nor into the maturity of the pratyekabuddhas {which go beyond these}, because these [insights] {for the sake of all sentient beings} are retained by great compassion. This ... is the transcendent perfection of **wisdom** possessed by great bodhisattva beings. These indeed ... represent the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings.

9.H Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings are absorbed in loving kindness, they focus on the nature of mind that benefits sentient beings, thinking, ‘I should save all sentient beings!’ Also, when they are absorbed in compassion, they focus on the nature of mind that directs compassion and love to all those beings, and when they are absorbed in empathetic joy, they also focus on all sentient beings, thinking, ‘I should liberate all sentient beings!’ Also, when they are absorbed in equanimity, they focus on those beings, meditating, ‘May all sentient beings achieve the cessation of contaminants!’ This ... is the transcendent perfection of **generosity**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who practice the four immeasurable aspirations. Also, when {they} ... become absorbed in the aspects of those meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, and formless absorptions, replete with the [appropriate] signs and indications [of success in practice], and then arise {from these}, without dedicating their merit to the level of the śrāvakas or ... the pratyekabuddhas, and instead only dedicating it to omniscience, this is the transcendent perfec-

tion of **ethical discipline**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings ... When ... through their attention endowed with omniscience, {they} abide in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions, without confusing them, and do not desire those two levels—the level of the śrāvakas or ... the pratyekabuddhas—but accept and desire only omniscience, this is the transcendent perfection of **tolerance**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings ... Also, when ... through their attention endowed with omniscience, {they} maintain their indefatigability and relentlessness in order to abandon non-virtuous actions and adopt virtuous actions, this is the transcendent perfection of **perseverance**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings ... Also, when {they} ... become absorbed in those meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, and formless absorptions, and then arise {from these}, but are not captivated by {them} ... and are not subject to rebirth on account of them, this is the transcendent perfection of **meditative concentration**, originating from the skillful means of great bodhisattva beings ... Also, when ... through their attention endowed with omniscience, {they} are absorbed in the ... meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions, and then arise {from these}, but definitively discern that all of those are facets of impermanence, modes of suffering, aspects of selflessness, and aspects of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, without entering either into the maturity of the śrāvakas or ... the pratyekabuddhas {which go beyond these}, this ... is the transcendent perfection of **wisdom**, originating from the skillful means of great bodhisattva beings ... These six transcendent perfections of great bodhisattva beings are the Great Vehicle that is retained by **skillful means** originating from the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations and the formless absorptions.

9.I Moreover ... the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings understands the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. Moreover ... {from the perspective of ultimate reality} the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings does not cause one to know that ‘all things are distraction’ or ‘this is meditative equipoise’ ... ‘this is permanent’ or ‘this is impermanent’ ... ‘this is imbued with happiness,’ {or} ‘this is imbued with suffering,’ ‘this is a self,’ or ‘this is not a self,’ ... {but} it does so {in relative reality} without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. Moreover ... {from the perspective of ultimate reality} the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings does not cause one to know past time ... future time and present time—nor does it not cause one to know the three times ... {It} does not cause one to know the world system{s} of desire ... form and ... formlessness—nor does it not cause one to know the three world systems ... {It} does not cause one to know mundane ... supramundane, conditioned, unconditioned, contaminated, and uncontaminated phenomena—nor does it not cause one to know {these} ... phenomena, {...} but it does so {in relative reality} without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. That on which great bodhisattva beings abide is the [Great] Vehicle that enters into the maturity of the bodhisattvas. This is not the emancipation associated with {the} limited vehicles ... of the śrāvakas or ... the pratyekabuddhas ... because the Great Vehicle and the great armor are not distinct from one another. The great armor itself is the Great Vehicle, and the Great Vehicle itself is the great armor. It is the Great Vehicle and the great armor that constitute the maturity of the bodhisattvas.

9.J When great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, they abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and because they act without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, they do not apprehend {as real} gifts ... their transcendent perfection of generosity, nor ... recipients. Similarly, when they practice the transcendent perfection{s} of ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentra-

tion, and ... wisdom, they abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and because they act without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, they do not apprehend {as real} virtuous ... non-virtuous, determinate, indeterminate, mundane, supramundane, conditioned, unconditioned, contaminated, or uncontaminated phenomena. They do not apprehend {as real} the transcendent perfection of wisdom, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, or the cultivators of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. It is to that extent that great bodhisattva beings are said to abide in the Great Vehicle. Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings, their unconfused minds endowed with omniscience, should cultivate the four applications of mindfulness ... the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, all in order to put an end to cultivation, and they do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} ... Great bodhisattva beings who undertake cultivation accordingly are said to abide in the Great Vehicle.

9.K Moreover ... owing to the non-apprehension of sentient beings {and all other phenomena as ultimately real}, great bodhisattva beings understand that a so-called 'bodhisattva' is a mere name or conventional term. Similarly, it follows that so-called 'physical forms' are nothing but a mere designation, and the same goes for feelings, perceptions ... formative predispositions ... {and} consciousness ... {the} eyes ... ears, nose, tongue, body and mental faculty ... sights ... sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... {the} four applications of mindfulness ... [four] correct exertions, [four] supports for miraculous ability, five faculties, five powers, seven branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... {the} ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {and} [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {the} real nature {of phenomena}, {the} expanse of {relative} reality, {the} maturity {of understanding with respect to all things}, and {the} finality of {relative} existence ... enlightenment ... {up to and including} 'genuinely perfect buddha' ... It is to that extent that great bodhisattva beings are said to abide in the Great Vehicle.

9.L Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, perfect the five extrasensory powers which are without degeneration, and they bring sentient beings to maturity. They also refine the buddhafiels, they pass from one buddhafiels to another buddhafiels, they honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to the lord buddhas, and they repeatedly listen to the sacred doctrines of this most supreme vehicle of the bodhisattvas, in the presence of those lord buddhas. Mounted on this vehicle, they proceed to the buddhafiels in order to benefit sentient beings and in order to behold the buddhas, but, in addition, they are without the notion of a buddhafiels ... the notion of sentient beings, and ... the notion of a buddha. Indeed, abiding on the level of non-duality {where they see themselves as every 'one'}, they acquire as many corporeal forms as will facilitate their appropriate acts for the welfare of sentient beings. Until they attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment, they will never be separated from this [Great] Vehicle. Having obtained omniscience, they continue to turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine, which cannot be turned by virtuous ascetics, brāhmin priests, gods, demonic forces, Brahmā deities, or anyone else. Whichever lord buddhas are alive and reside in the world systems of the eastern direction ... up to and including the intermediate directions ... they will all offer praise and chant their eulogies, saying, 'Such and such a great bodhisattva being, in such and such a

world system, has ridden the Great Vehicle, and subsequently obtained the understanding of all the aspects of omniscience ... !' ... It is to that extent that great bodhisattva beings are said to abide in the Great Vehicle.

9.M Moreover ... the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings entails ... **the transcendent perfection of generosity**— ... when great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience give inner or outer objects to those who desire them, and having done so, then dedicate the merit of these gifts for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings ... **the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline**— ... when great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience adopt and practice correctly the path of the ten virtuous actions and then also correctly introduce, secure, and establish others on the path of virtuous actions, and do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} ... **the transcendent perfection of tolerance**— ... when great bodhisattva beings [who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience] themselves possess the excellent endowment of tolerance, and then also correctly introduce, secure, and establish others in tolerance, and they do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} ... **the transcendent perfection of perseverance**— ... when great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience are indefatigable with respect to the six transcendent perfections, and also correctly introduce, secure, and establish sentient beings in the six transcendent perfections, and do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} ... **the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration**— ... when great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience are themselves skillfully absorbed in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions, and on that account are no longer subject to rebirth, while they also correctly introduce, secure, and establish others in these ... doing so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} ... {and} **the transcendent perfection of wisdom**— ... when great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience definitively discern the nature of all things, and are without fixation on all things, without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, and having become unfixated on all things, then also correctly introduce, secure, and establish others in that definitive discernment of the nature of all things ... This is the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings.

9.N The transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... are both mundane and supramundane. Those great bodhisattva beings who have become liberal donors bequeath food to virtuous ascetics, brāhmins, the destitute, wandering mendicants, forest-dwelling anchorites, and to beggars who are in need of food. They offer drink to those in need of drink, and ... donate clothing, incense, garlands, unguents, bedding, mats, and homes to those who are in need of them. They donate lodgings ... medicines ... {and} provisions to those in need of {these} ... appropriate human resources to beggars, and likewise, they offer their sons ... daughters ... wives and courtesans ... their heads, eyes, ears, nose, marrow, hands, limbs, and appendages. In doing so, they practice liberality while adhering to the ownership of property, thinking, 'I am giving. They are receiving. O! I am without miserliness. I am a donor. I give alms. O! I give everything. I respect the lord buddhas. I practice the transcendent perfection of generosity. I, having given this gift, dedicate it for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, and without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}! Through this, my gift, may all sentient beings attain happiness in this lifetime! May they attain final nirvāṇa in the expanse of {relative} reality that is beyond sorrow, and where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates!' However, in giving their gifts they are tied by three fetters ... They com-

prise the notion of self, the notion of others, and the notion of the act of giving. This act of giving gifts, when tied by these three fetters ... is called the transcendent perfection of mundane generosity ... because those who practice in such mundane ways do not move beyond and transcend the mundane ... The supramundane transcendent perfection of generosity ... is the purity of the three spheres [of subject, object, and their interaction]. In this context, the mind that is preceded by the great compassion of great bodhisattva beings does not apprehend {as real} the dispensing of gifts ... the giver, nor ... the recipient. This absence of giving and the absence of rejoicing in the ripening impact of giving ... is called the purity of the three spheres [of subject, object, and their interaction]. Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings offer gifts to all sentient beings, and even after making their gifts, they practice liberality toward those same beings, but they do not apprehend {as real} those sentient beings. They do not consider the recipient {as real}. They do not even rejoice in the ripening impact of their giving. Although they also dedicate their gifts for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, they do not consider even the slightest indication [of anything] {as real}. This ... is called the transcendent perfection of supramundane generosity ... because it goes beyond ... is superior to ... and transcends the mundane ... Just as great bodhisattva beings perfect the mundane and supramundane transcendent perfection of generosity ... they {also} perfect the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the ... perfection of wisdom. This ... is the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings, their great armor, and the maturity of the bodhisattvas.

COMMENTARY

Before the mind of every sentient being can awaken from the consciousness of duality to the consciousness of non-duality, it must don the great armor of the six transcendent perfections, to attain the omniscient mind. Here the natural luminosity of the mind of every sentient being is seen as 'undivided' and 'uncontaminated' by the illusory nature of 'relative' existence. This natural luminosity of the mind of every sentient being can be likened to a single great ocean ~ and where an individual 'self' appears, this can be likened to a droplet of that ocean being contaminated with the appearance of a specific form of algae, unique to that individual self. **The omniscient mind sees the 'illusion' of contaminants which give rise to the appearance of individual 'selves'** ~ never losing sight there *are* no individual droplets, only a single great ocean of luminous mind.

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Continual rebirth for illusory sentient beings is imbued with suffering, even for a buddha who must be born and perish, and endure the elements, in a physical body ~ and much more so for ordinary beings who must endure the elements of physical, mental and emotional turmoil. A great bodhisattva being, free from duality, understands the suffering his singular mind endures in the three worlds of desire, form and formlessness ~ and in not identifying as an individual 'self', sets forth with great compassion to free his whole mind that is under the spell of individuality. For while a śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha can rest in enlightenment, free from suffering in a state of nirvāṇa, their merits will eventually expire and they will subsequently endure further rebirth and suffering. The Buddha explains (above): *"When any great bodhisattva beings, through their attention endowed with omniscience, are absorbed in the meditative concentrations {and when definitively cultivating in all respects the four applications of mindfulness up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas} ... they definitively discern that all {these} ... are facets of impermanence, modes of suffering, and aspects of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, yet they enter neither into the maturity of the śrāvakas nor into the maturity of the pratyekabuddhas {which go beyond these}, be-*

cause these [insights] {for the sake of all sentient beings} are retained by great compassion.” And thereby is the making of ‘common cause’ with all sentient beings.

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Where there are no others, there is no individual ‘self’ or giving of gifts. Such is the understanding of the transcendent perfection of ‘supramundane’ generosity.

CHAPTER TEN: EXTRASENSORY POWERS

10.1 Then, Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When it is said that they should don the great armor, what is the extent of the great armor that they should don?” The Blessed One then addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings should don the armor of the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly, they should don the armor of the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They should don the armor of the applications of mindfulness, and don the armor of [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. They should don the armor of the emptiness of internal phenomena, and don the armor of the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Similarly, they should don the armor of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and they should don the armor of the [other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. They should don the armor of [the attainments], up to and including omniscience. They should don the armor of the buddha body. Then they will illuminate the world systems of the great trichilocosm.

10.2 “In the same manner, they illuminate the world systems of the eastern direction, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. Similarly, they illuminate the world systems of the other directions, up to and including the intermediate directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. Having permeated [all directions with light], they cause the world systems of the great trichilocosm to shake, to shake more intensely, and to shake with utmost intensity, and in six ways. In the same manner, they cause the chiliocosm, extending from the eastern direction up to and including the intermediate directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, to shake, to shake more intensely, and to shake with utmost intensity, and in six ways. It is by means of this illumination that great bodhisattva beings don the armor of the transcendent perfection of generosity, and of the [other attributes], up to and including the buddha body.

10.3 “They emanate the world systems of the great trichilocosm as a natural expanse of beryl, and having done so, they emanate the array of a universal monarch, and having emanated the array of a universal monarch, they give food to all those in need of nourishment, and similarly, they give drink, clothing, garlands, incense, unguents, homes, lodgings, lamps, and so on, up to and including medicines. In the same vein, they dispense other benefits to sentient beings, including appropriate human resources, and having made such gifts, they then teach sentient beings the sacred doctrine that is endowed with the six transcendent perfections. Those sentient beings, too, on hearing the sacred doctrine, will never commit transgressions, and will never be separated from the six transcendent perfections until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment. Subhūti, it is to that extent that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

10.4 “Subhūti, if, for example, an illusionist or the apprentice of an illusionist, standing at a crossroads, in the presence of a large gathering of people, were to offer food to those in need of nourishment, and dispense [all those other aforementioned] gifts, up to and including the appropriate human resources, do you think, Subhūti, that this illusionist or this apprentice of an illusionist would have dispensed any gift to any sentient being?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he responded.

10.5 The Blessed One then said, “Subhūti, in the same manner, great bodhisattva beings, having emanated the array of a universal monarch, proceed to offer food to those in need of nourishment, and in the same vein, they grant [the other aforementioned] gifts up to and including the appropriate human resources, but they have not actually dispensed any gifts to any sentient being. If you ask why, it is because, commencing from the reality of illusion, such is the reality of all things.

10.6 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they will be reborn in the family of a universal monarch, since they are able to take birth at will. Dwelling as mighty lords in the family of a universal monarch, they will establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, on the path of the ten virtuous actions. Likewise, they will establish them in the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, and the four formless absorptions. The same goes for the four applications of mindfulness, and so on, up to and including the noble eightfold path, and the three gateways to liberation. They will also establish them in the [fruitful attributes], from the ten powers of the tathāgatas up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Those sentient beings, too, will never be separated from the teachings of the sacred doctrine until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.

10.7 “Subhūti, if, for example, an illusionist or the apprentice of an illusionist had conjured up a large gathering of people and established them on the path of the ten virtuous actions, and so on, until he had established them in the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, do you think, Subhūti, that this illusionist or this apprentice of an illusionist would have established any sentient beings on the path of the ten virtuous actions, and in the same vein, do you think he would have established anyone in [those other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

10.8 The Blessed One then said, “Subhūti, in the same manner, great bodhisattva beings establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, on the path of the ten virtuous actions, and in the same vein, establish them [in the other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, but they have not actually established any sentient beings at all. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because, commencing with the reality of illusion, this is in fact the reality of all things. Subhūti, so it is that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

10.9 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, they will establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, in tolerance. Subhūti, if one were to ask in what way great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, establish sentient beings,

one hundred billion trillions in number, in tolerance, in this regard, Subhūti, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, great bodhisattva beings don their armor, while thinking, 'If all sentient beings were to approach me, and even strike me with sticks, weapons, or clods of earth, I would not generate any thoughts of anger toward any sentient beings, and I would indeed establish all sentient beings in such patient endurance.' Having donned their armor, even if they were afflicted on being struck by the clods of earth, sticks, or weapons hurled by enemies and assailants, they would never generate a thought of anger toward any sentient beings, but instead they would establish sentient beings, one hundred billion trillions in number, in such patient endurance.

10.10 "Subhūti, if, for example, an illusionist or the apprentice of an illusionist had conjured up a large gathering of people, and established them in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, do you think, Subhūti, that this illusionist or this apprentice of an illusionist would have established any sentient beings in tolerance?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

10.11 The Blessed One then said, "Subhūti, in the same manner, great bodhisattva beings establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, in tolerance, but they have not actually established any sentient beings at all. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because, commencing with the reality of illusion, this is in fact the reality of all things. Subhūti, so it is that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

10.12 "Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, they will encourage, secure, and establish sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number, in the transcendent perfection of perseverance. Their minds endowed with omniscience, they will encourage, secure, and establish those sentient beings in physical and mental perseverance, in order that they might abandon non-virtuous doctrines and undertake the excellent virtuous doctrines.

10.13 "Subhūti, if, for example, an illusionist or the apprentice of an illusionist had conjured up a large gathering of people, and then encouraged, secured, and established sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number, in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, do you think, Subhūti, that this illusionist or this apprentice of an illusionist would have established any sentient beings in perseverance?" "No, Venerable Lord!"

10.14 The Blessed One then said, "Subhūti, in the same manner, great bodhisattva beings establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, but they have not actually established any sentient beings at all. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because, commencing with the reality of illusion, this is in fact the reality of all things. Subhūti, so it is that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

10.15 "Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, they will encourage, secure and establish sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number, in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. Subhūti, if one were to ask in what way great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, encourage, secure and establish sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number, in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, in this regard, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings abide in the meditative stability of sameness with regard to all things, and

they do not consider whether anything is in equipoise or distracted. In that manner exclusively they encourage, secure and establish sentient beings in meditative concentration; and, in various ways, they encourage, secure and establish them, so that they will never be separated from the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

10.16 “Subhūti, if, for example, an illusionist or the apprentice of an illusionist, had conjured up a large gathering of people, and then encouraged, secured and established sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number, in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, do you think, Subhūti, that this illusionist or the apprentice of an illusionist would have established any sentient beings in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he responded.

10.17 The Blessed One then said, “Subhūti, in the same manner, great bodhisattva beings establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, but they have not actually established any sentient beings at all. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because, commencing with the reality of illusion, this is in fact the reality of all things. Subhūti, so it is that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.”

10.18 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will encourage, secure and establish sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number, in the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Subhūti, if one were to ask in what way great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, encourage, secure and establish sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number, in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, in this regard, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings abide in the ineffable transcendent perfection of wisdom, and do not apprehend anything that may be arising, ceasing, afflicted, purified, or extraneous, to that extent, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom. In that manner exclusively they encourage, secure, and establish sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number, in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

10.19 “Subhūti, if, for example, an illusionist or the apprentice of an illusionist had conjured up a large gathering of people, and then encouraged, secured, and established sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number, in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, do you think, Subhūti, that this illusionist or this apprentice of an illusionist would have established any sentient beings in the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he responded.

10.20 The Blessed One then said, “Subhūti, in the same manner, do great bodhisattva beings establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, but they have not actually established any sentient beings at all. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because, commencing with the reality of illusion, this is in fact the reality of all things. Subhūti, so it is that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

10.21 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings have donned the great armor, they assume corporeal

forms appropriate for training sentient beings who habitually engage in negative acts and have regressed into misconduct, in all the fields of the eastern direction, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. They abide in the transcendent perfection of generosity, and in the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They encourage, secure, and establish [those beings] in the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly, they encourage, secure, and establish them in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. At all times they teach the sacred doctrine—that is to say, the six transcendent perfections—to sentient beings. Sentient beings, too, on hearing this sacred doctrine will never be separated from the six transcendent perfections until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.

10.22 “Just as indicated here in the context of the eastern direction, the same goes also for all the other buddha fields throughout the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. Subhūti, the passage commencing with the words, ‘the illusionist or the skilled apprentice of an illusionist,’ as indicated above, along with the examples given in the first [part of this] chapter, is similarly applicable here. Subhūti, so it is that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

10.23 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings have donned the great armor and abide with a mind endowed with omniscience, they do not permit the development of any other mindsets, namely, those of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. For the latter may think, ‘I must establish this many sentient beings in the transcendent perfection of generosity, but I must not establish that many sentient beings,’ and so [with the other transcendent perfections], up to ‘I must establish this many sentient beings in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, but I must not establish that many. Similarly, I must establish this many sentient beings in the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and the three gateways to liberation, but I must not establish that many [in all these causal attributes], up to and including the three gateways to liberation. Similarly, I must establish this many sentient beings in the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and so on, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, but I must not establish that many in [all these fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, I must establish this many sentient beings in the fruit of entering the stream, I must establish this many in the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, in the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, in arhatship, and in individual enlightenment, but, similarly, I must not establish that many in [all those fruits], up to and including individual enlightenment. Similarly, I must establish this many sentient beings in omniscience, but I must not establish that many.’ Subhūti, you should not think like that! Rather, you should think, ‘I should establish innumerable and countless sentient beings in the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly, in the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. I should establish innumerable and countless sentient beings in the applications of mindfulness, and so on, up to and including omniscience.’ Subhūti, the passage commencing with the words, ‘the illusionist or the skilled student of an illusionist,’ is similarly applicable here, just as has been indicated above. Subhūti, so it is that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.”

10.24 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “As I investigate the teachings given by the Venerable Lord, on

account of the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, great bodhisattva beings, alas, should know that they are seeking armor that is a non-existent armor. If you ask why, it is because physical forms are empty of physical forms. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of consciousness and [the other aggregates]. Similarly, the eyes are empty of the eyes, and so [with the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, which is empty of the mental faculty. Similarly, visual consciousness is empty of visual consciousness, and so [with the other modes of consciousness], up to and including mental consciousness, which is empty of mental consciousness. Sensory contact that is visually compounded is empty of sensory contact that is visually compounded, and so [with the other compounded aspects of sensory contact], up to and including sensory contact that is mentally compounded, which is empty of sensory contact that is mentally compounded. Similarly, feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded are empty of feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded, and so [with the other conditioned feelings], up to and including feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded, which are empty of feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded.

10.25 “Venerable Lord! Similarly, the transcendent perfection of generosity is empty of the transcendent perfection of generosity, and so [with the other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, which is empty of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. The applications of mindfulness are empty of the applications of mindfulness, and so [with the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, which is empty of the noble eightfold path. The emptiness of internal phenomena is empty of the emptiness of internal phenomena, and so [with the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, which is empty of the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. The ten powers of the tathāgatas are empty of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and so [with the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, which are empty of the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Venerable Lord! Bodhisattvas are also empty of bodhisattvas. The great armor is also empty of the great armor. It is for that reason, Venerable Lord, that great bodhisattva beings, alas, should know that they are seeking armor which is a non-existent armor.” The Blessed One then addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have said! Subhūti, omniscience is neither created nor is it conditioned. Even the sentient beings for whom great bodhisattva beings don the great armor are uncreated and unconditioned.”

10.26 Then, Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! For what reason is omniscience neither created nor conditioned? Why are the sentient beings for whom great bodhisattva beings seek the great armor uncreated and unconditioned?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, omniscience is itself neither created nor conditioned because its creator is non-apprehensible. Those sentient beings, too, are neither created nor conditioned. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because physical forms are uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned; similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. Similarly, Subhūti, the ‘self’ is uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. Similarly, Subhūti, [the other aforementioned postulated subjects of perception], up to and including knowers and viewers, are uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the ‘self’ and so forth are absolutely non-apprehensible.

10.27 “Subhūti, dreams also are uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because

they are absolutely non-apprehensible. Similarly, echoes, optical aberrations, magical displays, mirages, and phantoms are uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because they are absolutely non-apprehensible. Subhūti, the emptiness of internal phenomena is uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned, and in the same vein, Subhūti, the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. If you ask why, it is because the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities [and the aforementioned aspects of emptiness] are absolutely non-apprehensible.

10.28 “Similarly, [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because these [attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are absolutely non-apprehensible. Subhūti, the real nature is uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. Similarly, Subhūti, the unmistakable real nature, the inalienable real nature, reality, the expanse of reality, the abiding of phenomena [in real nature], the maturity [of the bodhisattvas], and the finality of existence are uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. If you ask why, it is because these [unconditioned phenomena], up to and including the finality of existence, are absolutely non-apprehensible.

10.29 “Subhūti, bodhisattvas are uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. Similarly, the understanding of all phenomena and the understanding of omniscience are uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. If you ask why, it is because [those understandings], up to and including omniscience, are absolutely non-apprehensible. Subhūti, for these reasons omniscience is uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. The sentient beings for whom great bodhisattva beings don the great armor are also uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned. Subhūti, one should know that it is for that reason that great bodhisattva beings don the great armor.”

10.30 Then, Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! According to my inquiry into the meaning of the words spoken by the Blessed One, physical forms, Venerable Lord, are neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated.”

10.31 Senior Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra then addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, are physical forms neither fettered nor liberated? Similarly, are feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness neither fettered nor liberated?” “Senior Pūrṇa, that is the case! Physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated.”

10.32 Then Senior Pūrṇa addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, what are those physical forms that are neither fettered nor liberated? Similarly, what are the feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness that are neither fettered nor liberated?” “Senior Pūrṇa, physical forms which resemble dreams are neither fettered nor liberated. Likewise, feelings which resemble dreams, perceptions which resemble dreams, formative predispositions which resemble dreams, and consciousness which resembles dreams are neither fettered nor liberated. In the same vein, physical forms, which resemble echoes, and [the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness, which resembles echoes, are neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly, Senior Pūrṇa, physical forms that resemble optical aberrations, magical displays, mirages, and phantoms are neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness that resemble phantoms [and the like] are

neither fettered nor liberated. Senior Pūrṇa, physical forms of the past are neither fettered nor liberated; similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness of the past are neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly, Senior Pūrṇa, physical forms of the future are neither fettered nor liberated; and similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness of the future are neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly, Senior Pūrṇa, physical forms of the present are neither fettered nor liberated; and similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness of the present are neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated because they are non-existent. Similarly, consciousness and all [the other aggregates] are neither fettered nor liberated because feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-existent. Similarly, physical forms are all neither fettered nor liberated because physical forms are void. Similarly, consciousness and all [the other aggregates] are neither fettered nor liberated because feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are void. Similarly, physical forms are all neither fettered nor liberated because physical forms are non-arising. Similarly, consciousness and all [the other aggregates] are neither fettered nor liberated because feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-arising. Similarly, physical forms are all neither fettered nor liberated because physical forms are unceasing. Similarly, consciousness and all [the other aggregates] are neither fettered nor liberated because feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are unceasing.

10.33 “Likewise, Senior Pūrṇa, virtuous physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated; similarly, virtuous feelings, virtuous perceptions, virtuous formative predispositions, and virtuous consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated. Likewise, non-virtuous physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated, and similarly, non-virtuous feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated. Likewise, indeterminate physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated, and similarly, indeterminate feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated. In the same vein, mundane physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated, and similarly, mundane feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated. Supramundane physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated, and similarly, supramundane feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated. Contaminated physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated, and similarly, contaminated feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated. Uncontaminated physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated, and similarly, uncontaminated feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated, and similarly, why feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated, it is because physical forms are non-existent, and because feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-existent. Similarly, physical forms and [the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness, are neither fettered nor liberated because they are void, because they are non-arising and unceasing, and because they are not fettered and not bound.

10.34 “Senior Pūrṇa, all things are neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, all things are neither fettered nor liberated because all things are non-existent. Similarly, all things are neither fettered nor liberated because all things are void, because they are non-arising, because they are unceasing, because they are not fettered, and because they are not bound. Senior Pūrṇa, the transcendent perfection of generosity is also neither fettered nor liberated. Similar-

ly, Senior Pūrṇa, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom are also neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, the transcendent perfection of generosity is neither fettered nor liberated because it is non-existent. Similarly, the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, are neither fettered nor liberated because they are non-existent.”

10.35 “Senior Pūrṇa, the emptiness of internal phenomena is also neither fettered nor liberated, and similarly, the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly, the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven aspects of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, [all other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are also neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, those [attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are neither fettered nor liberated because they themselves are non-existent, because they themselves are void, because they themselves are unfettered, and because they themselves are unliberated. Senior Pūrṇa, enlightenment too is neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly, Senior Pūrṇa, the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, omniscience, and the bodhisattvas are also neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, they are neither fettered nor liberated because they themselves are non-existent, because they themselves are void, because they themselves are non-arising, because they themselves are non-ceasing, and so on, even up to the attainment of buddhahood.

10.36 “Senior Pūrṇa, the real nature, the inalienable real nature, reality, the expanse of reality, the abiding nature of phenomena, the maturity [of the bodhisattvas], the finality of existence, and [other] unconditioned phenomena are also neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, these phenomena, up to and including unconditioned phenomena, are neither fettered nor liberated because they are themselves non-existent, because they are themselves void, because they are themselves non-arising, because they are themselves unceasing, because they are themselves not fettered, and because they are themselves not liberated.

10.37 “Senior Pūrṇa, in this regard, the transcendent perfection of generosity possessed by great bodhisattva beings is neither fettered nor liberated. The other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and [the attainments], up to and including omniscience, are also neither fettered nor liberated. The same refrain should be applied here, as has been indicated in the preceding [part of this] chapter.

10.38 “They abide in the transcendent perfection of generosity that is neither fettered nor liberated. They abide in the [other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, which are neither fettered nor liberated. In the same vein, they abide in [the attainments], up to and including omniscience, which are neither fettered nor liberated. They bring to maturity sentient beings who are neither fettered nor liberated. They refine fields that are exclusively neither fettered nor liberated. They venerate the emanations of the lord buddhas who are exclusively neither fettered nor liberated. They also listen to the doctrines delivered by those emanations of the lord buddhas, which are neither fettered nor liberated. They will never be separated from those emanations of

the lord buddhas who are neither fettered nor liberated. They will never be separated from the extrasensory powers that are neither fettered nor liberated. They will never be separated from the five eyes that are neither fettered nor liberated. They will never be separated from the mnemonic incantations that are neither fettered nor liberated. They will indeed actualize the understanding of all phenomena that is neither fettered nor liberated. They will develop the understanding of the aspects of the path that is neither fettered nor liberated. They will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in omniscience that is neither fettered nor liberated. They will turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine that is neither fettered nor liberated. They will consolidate in the three vehicles sentient beings who are neither fettered nor liberated.

10.39 “Senior Pūrṇa, so it is that great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all things, by means of the six transcendent perfections which are neither fettered nor liberated. This is because all things are themselves non-existent, because they themselves are calm, because they themselves are void, because they themselves are non-arising, and because they themselves are unceasing. Senior Pūrṇa, one should know that it is in this way that great bodhisattva beings possess the great armor which is neither fettered nor liberated.”

10.40 [Then the Lord Buddha said], “Moreover, Subhūti, the great armor of great bodhisattva beings entails the refinement of the six extrasensory powers. If you ask what these six are, they comprise (1) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of miraculous activities, (2) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of divine clairvoyance, (3) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of divine clairaudience, (4) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of the minds of others, (5) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of the recollection of past lives, and (6) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of the cessation of contaminants. Subhūti, these are the six extrasensory powers of great bodhisattva beings.

10.41 “Subhūti, if you ask what constitutes the refinement of the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of miraculous activities which great bodhisattva beings have—Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, experience many facets of miraculous ability. They may cause this very [earth] to shake. Similarly, having been singular [in form], they can become multiple, and having been multiple [in form], they can become singular. Similarly, they may experience themselves as visible and as invisible. They can move directly through walls. They can move directly through enclosures. They can move directly through mountains, without impediment, as if they were moving, for example, through space. They can also move through space, sitting with their legs crossed, just like a bird on the wing. They can hover above the earth and levitate, as if they were in water. They can walk on water, without sinking, as if they were on solid ground. They can also emit smoke and flames of fire, like a great conflagration. However miraculous, powerful, and mighty the sun and the moon might be, they can reach out to touch them with their hands. They can even overwhelm the Brahmā world realms with their physical bodies. Yet, they do not make assumptions on account of such miraculous abilities, nor do they make assumptions about those miraculous abilities, and they do not even apprehend them, because anything on account of which they might make assumptions, anything about which they might make assumptions, and the assumptions which they might make are all essentially empty, essentially void, and essentially non-apprehensible. They focus on omniscience, and apart from that have no wish to attain miraculous abilities. Subhūti, such is the refinement of great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, in the extrasensory power that realizes miraculous abilities.

10.42 “Subhūti, if you ask what constitutes the refinement of the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of divine clairvoyance, which great bodhisattva beings have—Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, perceive through their pure clairvoyance that surpasses the vision of humans those sentient beings who are dying, those who are being reborn, those who are beautiful, those who are ugly, those in the blissful higher realms, those in the wretched lower realms, and those who are inferior, average, or excellent, according to the past actions they have accumulated. ‘Alas! These sentient beings are endowed with misconduct of body, speech, and mind. They deprecate sublime beings. They maintain wrong views. Alas! Due to the causes and conditions of adopting wrong views as correct, when their bodies have decayed and they are dead, they will be reborn in inferior realms, falling into the lower abodes, as denizens of the hells! Alas! These sentient beings are endowed with noble conduct of body. They are endowed with noble conduct of speech, and they are endowed with noble conduct of mind. Due to these causes and conditions, when their bodies have decayed and died, they will be reborn as gods and humans, within the blissful and exalted world realms!’ and so on in the same vein, down to, they see sentient beings in the world systems of all the ten directions, according to the past deeds they have accumulated, and, ‘These will be reborn among the gods and humans in the world systems of the happy, exalted realms.’ Subhūti, this constitutes the refinement of great bodhisattva beings who possess the extrasensory power that realizes divine clairvoyance.

10.43 “Subhūti, if you ask what constitutes the refinement of the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of divine clairaudience, which great bodhisattva beings have—Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, possess clairaudience that surpasses the human range of hearing. But even though they can hear the voices of gods and humans, they do not make assumptions on account of their clairaudience, thinking, ‘I can hear voices,’ and they do not even apprehend the sounds that their ears hear because these are essentially empty, essentially void, and essentially non-apprehensible. They focus on omniscience, and apart from that have no other wish to attain clairaudience. Subhūti, such is the refinement of great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, who possess the extrasensory power that realizes clairaudience.

10.44 “Subhūti, if you ask what constitutes the refinement of the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of other minds, which great bodhisattva beings have—Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, perceive with their own minds the minds of other sentient beings and the minds of other individuals, exactly as they are. That is to say, they perceive minds that are afflicted with desire correctly as minds that are afflicted with desire; [and they perceive minds free from desire correctly, as minds that are free from desire. They perceive minds afflicted with hatred correctly, as minds that are afflicted with hatred; and they perceive minds free from hatred correctly, as minds that are free from hatred. They perceive minds afflicted with delusion correctly, as minds that are afflicted with delusion; and they perceive minds free from delusion correctly, as minds that are free from delusion. Similarly, they perceive minds endowed with craving correctly, as minds that are endowed with craving; and they perceive minds free from craving correctly, as minds that are free from craving. Similarly, they perceive minds endowed with grasping correctly, as minds that are endowed with grasping; and they perceive minds free from grasping correctly, as minds that are free from grasping. Indeed, they correctly perceive minds that are composed, minds that are distracted, minds that are narrow, minds that are spacious, minds that are equipoised, minds that are not equipoised, minds that are liberated, minds that are unliberated, and minds that are surpassed, as minds that are surpassed, [and so forth]. They correctly perceive minds that are not surpassed as minds that are not sur-

passed. Yet, they do not make assumptions on account of these [observations]. If you ask why, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence these minds are not minds. In the same vein, the same refrain should be applied extensively here, just as has been presented above. Subhūti, this constitutes the refinement of the extrasensory power of great bodhisattva beings that realizes the knowledge of the minds of others.

10.45 “Subhūti, if you ask what constitutes the refinement of the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of the recollection of past lives, which great bodhisattva beings have—Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, actualize the extrasensory power of realizing the recollection of past lives, and on that basis, they may recollect one thought, or from that up to a hundred thoughts, or even up to a thousand thoughts. They may also recollect one day, or from that up to a hundred days, up to a thousand days, or even up to a hundred thousand days. They may also recollect one month, or from that up to a hundred months, up to a thousand months, or even up to a hundred thousand months. They may also recollect one year, or from that they may recollect up to a hundred thousand years. They may also recollect a single eon, or from that up to many hundreds of eons, many thousands of eons, many hundreds of thousands of eons, and even many hundred billion trillions of eons. ‘In that life such was my name. Such was my family. Such was my social class. Such was the food I ate. Such was the duration of my life. Such was the extent of the lifespan I could have had. Such was the extent of the particular lifespan I actually had. Such were the experiences of happiness and suffering I had. Deceased from there, I was born as so and so, and then dying there, I was reborn here!’ In this way, they can recollect many of their own past lives and those of other sentient beings, and other individuals, along with their circumstances and locations. Yet, they do not make assumptions on account of this extrasensory power, and so on. Subhūti, this is called the refinement of the extrasensory power that realizes the recollection of past lives with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed.

10.46 “Subhūti, if you ask what constitutes the refinement of the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of the cessation of contaminants, which great bodhisattva beings have—Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, actualize the extrasensory power of realizing the cessation of contaminants, and yet they do not rest in the levels of the śrāvakas and the levels of the pratyekabuddhas. Nor are they attached to any attributes through which manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment would be attained. Through the adamant meditative stability that comes from that extrasensory power, they abandon all involuntary reincarnation through propensities, and yet, they do not make assumptions on account of that extrasensory power of realizing the cessation of contaminants because it is essentially empty, essentially void, and essentially non-apprehensible. Apart from focusing on omniscience, they have no other wish. Subhūti, this is the refinement of the extrasensory power that realizes the cessation of contaminants, which great bodhisattva beings have. “Subhūti, one should know that these are called the refinements of the six extrasensory powers of great bodhisattva beings who abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

10.47 *This completes the tenth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Extrasensory Powers.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TEN:
EXTRASENSORY POWERS

10.A Great bodhisattva beings should don the armor of the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the applications of mindfulness, and ... [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and ... the [other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... [the attainments], up to and including omniscience ... {and} the buddha body. Then they will illuminate the world systems of the great trichiliocosm ... {including} the world systems of the eastern direction ... up to and including the intermediate directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. Having permeated [all directions with light], they cause the world systems of the great trichiliocosm {and the chiliocosm} to shake, to shake more intensely, and to shake with utmost intensity, and in six ways ... It is by means of this illumination that great bodhisattva beings don the armor of the transcendent perfection of generosity, and of the [other attributes], up to and including the buddha body. They emanate the world systems of the great trichiliocosm as a natural expanse of beryl, and having done so, they emanate the array of a universal monarch ... {giving} food ... drink, clothing, garlands, incense, unguents, homes, lodgings, lamps, and so on, up to and including medicines ... including appropriate human resources {to all those in need of nourishment} ... and having made such gifts, they then teach sentient beings the sacred doctrine that is endowed with the six transcendent perfections. Those sentient beings, too, on hearing {the} sacred doctrine, will never commit transgressions, and will never be separated from the six transcendent perfections until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment ... It is to that extent that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

10.B “If, for example, an illusionist or the apprentice of an illusionist, standing at a crossroads, in the presence of a large gathering of people, were to {abide in the transcendent perfection of **generosity** and (the others as described below) and} offer food to those in need of nourishment, and dispense [all those other aforementioned] gifts, up to and including the appropriate human resources, do you think, Subhūti, that this illusionist or this apprentice of an illusionist would have dispensed any gift to any sentient being?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he responded. The Blessed One then said, “Subhūti, in the same manner, great bodhisattva beings, having emanated the array of a universal monarch, proceed to offer food {etc.} to those in need of nourishment ... but they have not actually dispensed any gifts to any sentient being ... Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of **ethical discipline**, they will be reborn in the family of a universal monarch, since they are able to take birth at will. Dwelling as mighty lords in the family of a universal monarch, they will establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, on the path of the ten virtuous actions ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Those sentient beings, too, will never be separated from the teachings of the sacred doctrine until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment ... In the same manner, great bodhisattva beings establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, on the path of the ten virtuous actions ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, but they have not actually established any sentient beings at all ... Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of **tolerance**, they will establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, in tolerance ... while thinking, ‘If all sentient beings were to approach me, and even strike me with sticks, wea-

pons, or clods of earth, I would not generate any thoughts of anger toward any sentient beings, and I would indeed establish all sentient beings in such patient endurance.’ Having donned their armor, even if they were afflicted on being struck by the clods of earth, sticks, or weapons hurled by enemies and assailants, they would never generate a thought of anger toward any sentient beings, but instead they would establish sentient beings, one hundred billion trillions in number, in such patient endurance ... In the same manner, great bodhisattva beings establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, in tolerance, but they have not actually established any sentient beings at all ... Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of **perseverance**, they will encourage, secure, and establish sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number ... in physical and mental perseverance, in order that they might abandon non-virtuous doctrines and undertake the excellent virtuous doctrines ... In the same manner, great bodhisattva beings establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, but they have not actually established any sentient beings at all ... Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of **meditative concentration**, they will encourage, secure and establish sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number, in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration ... {Abiding} in the meditative stability of sameness with regard to all things, ... they do not consider whether anything is in equipoise or distracted ... In the same manner, great bodhisattva beings establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, but they have not actually established any sentient beings at all ... Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of **wisdom**, they will encourage, secure and establish sentient beings, one hundred billion trillion in number, in the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... When great bodhisattva beings abide in the ... transcendent perfection of wisdom, and do not apprehend {as real} anything that may be arising, ceasing, afflicted, purified, or extraneous, to that extent ... do great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... In the same manner, do great bodhisattva beings establish sentient beings, many hundreds of billion trillions in number, in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, but they have not actually established any sentient beings at all ... because, commencing with the reality of illusion, this is in fact the reality of all things ... So it is that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.”

10.C Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings have donned the great armor, they assume corporeal forms appropriate for training sentient beings who habitually engage in negative acts and have regressed into misconduct, in all the {buddha}fields of the eastern direction {and throughout the ten directions}, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. They abide ... and establish [those beings] in the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom. At all times they teach the sacred doctrine—that is to say, the six transcendent perfections—to sentient beings. Sentient beings, too, on hearing this sacred doctrine will never be separated from the six transcendent perfections until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment ... The passage commencing with the words, ‘the illusionist or the skilled apprentice of an illusionist,’ ... along with the examples given in the first [part of this] chapter, is similarly applicable here ... So it is that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

10.D Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings have donned the great armor and abide with a mind endowed with omniscience, they do not permit the development of any other {dualistic} mindsets, namely, those of the śrāvākas and pratyekabuddhas. For the latter may think, ‘I must establish this many sentient beings in the transcendent

perfection{s} ... in the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and the three gateways to liberation ... in the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... in the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, in arhatship, and in individual enlightenment ... {and} in omniscience, but I must not establish that many.’ ... You should not think like that! Rather, you should think, ‘I should establish innumerable and countless sentient beings in the transcendent perfection{s} ... up to and including omniscience.’ ... The passage commencing with the words, ‘the illusionist or the skilled student of an illusionist,’ is similarly applicable here, just as has been indicated above ... So it is that great bodhisattva beings are said to don the great armor.

10.E On account of the **emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics**, great bodhisattva beings ... should know that they are seeking armor that is a non-existent armor ... because physical forms are empty of physical forms. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... up to and including the mental faculty ... visual consciousness ... up to and including mental consciousness ... sensory contact that is visually compounded ... up to and including sensory contact that is mentally compounded ... feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded ... up to and including feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... bodhisattvas ... {and} the great armor is also empty of the great armor {and the rest}. It is for that reason ... great bodhisattva beings ... should know that they are seeking armor which is a non-existent armor.

10.F Omniscience is itself neither created nor conditioned because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} its creator is non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}. Those sentient beings, too, are neither created nor conditioned ... because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} physical forms are uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned; similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the ‘self’ ... up to and including knowers and viewers ... dreams ... echoes, optical aberrations, magical displays, mirages, and phantoms ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the real nature {of all phenomena} ... {being} the unmistakable real nature, the inalienable real nature, {relative} reality, the expanse of {relative} reality, the abiding of phenomena {in the real nature}, the maturity {of understanding with respect to all things}, and the finality of {relative} existence ... bodhisattvas ... the understanding of all phenomena and the understanding of omniscience are {also} uncreated, undestroyed, and unconditioned ... because {these} ... up to and including omniscience, {from the perspective of ultimate reality} are absolutely non-apprehensible ... One should know that it is for that reason that great bodhisattva beings don the great armor.

10.G Physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated. Physical forms {up to and including consciousness} which resemble dreams ... echoes ... optical aberrations, magical displays, mirages, and phantoms are neither fettered nor liberated ... Physical forms {up to and including consciousness} of the past {future and present} are neither fettered nor liberated ... Virtuous ... non-virtuous ... indeterminate ... mundane ... supramundane ... contaminated ... {and} un-

contaminated physical forms {up to and including consciousness} are neither fettered nor liberated ... All things are neither fettered nor liberated ... The transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom are also neither fettered nor liberated ... The emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven aspects of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are also neither fettered nor liberated ... The understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, omniscience, and the bodhisattvas are also neither fettered nor liberated ... even up to the attainment of buddhahood ... The real nature {of all phenomena}, {being} the inalienable real nature, {relative} reality, the expanse of {relative} reality, the abiding {real} nature of phenomena, the maturity {of understanding with respect to all things}, the finality of {relative} existence, and [other] unconditioned phenomena are also neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why ... because they are themselves non-existent, because they are themselves void, because they are themselves non-arising, because they are themselves unceasing, because they are themselves not fettered, and because they are themselves not liberated.

10.H {Great bodhisattvas} abide in the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {and} in [the attainments], up to and including omniscience, which are neither fettered nor liberated. They bring to maturity sentient beings who are neither fettered nor liberated. They refine fields that are exclusively neither fettered nor liberated. They venerate the emanations of the lord buddhas who are exclusively neither fettered nor liberated. They also listen to the doctrines delivered by those emanations of the lord buddhas, which are neither fettered nor liberated. They will never be separated from those emanations of the lord buddhas who are neither fettered nor liberated. They will never be separated from the extrasensory powers ... from the five eyes ... {and} from the mnemonic incantations that are neither fettered nor liberated. They will indeed actualize the understanding of all phenomena that is neither fettered nor liberated. They will develop the understanding of the aspects of the path that is neither fettered nor liberated. They will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in omniscience that is neither fettered nor liberated. They will turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine that is neither fettered nor liberated. They will consolidate in the three vehicles sentient beings who are neither fettered nor liberated ... So it is that great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all things, by means of the six transcendent perfections which are neither fettered nor liberated. This is because all things are themselves non-existent, because they themselves are calm, because they themselves are void, because they themselves are non-arising, and because they themselves are unceasing ... One should know that it is in this way that great bodhisattva beings possess the great armor which is neither fettered nor liberated.

10.I The great armor of great bodhisattva beings entails the refinement of the six extrasensory powers ... {which} comprise (1) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of miraculous activities, (2) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of divine clairvoyance, (3) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of divine clairaudience, (4) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of the minds of others, (5) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of the recollection of past lives, and (6) the extrasensory power realizing knowledge of the cessation of contaminants.

10.J If you ask what constitutes the refinement of the **extrasensory power realizing knowledge of miraculous ac-**

tivities which great bodhisattva beings have— ... abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, {they} experience many facets of miraculous ability. They may cause this very [earth] to shake ... Having been singular [in form], they can become multiple, and having been multiple, they can become singular ... They may experience themselves as visible and as invisible ... {and} move directly through walls ... enclosures ... {and} mountains, without impediment, as if they were moving ... through space. They can also move through space, sitting with their legs crossed, just like a bird on the wing. They can hover above the earth and levitate, as if they were in water. They can walk on water, without sinking, as if they were on solid ground. They can also emit smoke and flames of fire, like a great conflagration. However miraculous, powerful, and mighty the sun and the moon might be, they can reach out to touch them with their hands. They can even overwhelm the Brahmā world realms with their physical bodies. Yet, they do not make assumptions on account of {nor} ... about those miraculous abilities, and they do not even apprehend them {as ultimately real}, because anything on account of which they might make assumptions, anything about which they might make assumptions, and the assumptions which they might make are all essentially empty ... void, and {from the perspective of ultimate reality} non-apprehensible. They focus on omniscience, and apart from that have no wish to attain miraculous abilities.

10.K If you ask what constitutes the refinement of the **extrasensory power realizing knowledge of divine clairvoyance**, which great bodhisattva beings have— ... abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, {they} perceive through their pure clairvoyance that surpasses the vision of humans those sentient beings who are dying, those who are being reborn, those who are beautiful, those who are ugly, those in the blissful higher realms, those in the wretched lower realms, and those who are inferior, average, or excellent, according to the past actions they have accumulated. ‘Alas! These sentient beings are endowed with misconduct of body, speech, and mind. They deprecate sublime beings. They maintain wrong views. Alas! Due to the causes and conditions of adopting wrong views as correct, when their bodies have decayed and they are dead, they will be reborn in inferior realms, falling into the lower abodes, as denizens of the hells! Alas! These sentient beings are endowed with noble conduct of body. They are endowed with noble conduct of speech, and they are endowed with noble conduct of mind. Due to these causes and conditions, when their bodies have decayed and died, they will be reborn as gods and humans, within the blissful and exalted world realms!’ and so on in the same vein, down to, they see sentient beings in the world systems of all the ten directions, according to the past deeds they have accumulated, and, ‘These will be reborn among the gods and humans in the world systems of the happy, exalted realms.’

10.L If you ask what constitutes the refinement of the **extrasensory power realizing knowledge of divine clairaudience**, which great bodhisattva beings have— ... abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, {they} possess clairaudience that surpasses the human range of hearing. But even though they can hear the voices of gods and humans, they do not make assumptions on account of their clairaudience, thinking, ‘I can hear voices,’ and they do not even apprehend {as real} the sounds that their ears hear because these are essentially empty, essentially void, and {from the perspective of ultimate reality} essentially non-apprehensible. They focus on omniscience, and apart from that have no other wish to attain clairaudience.

10.M If you ask what constitutes the refinement of the **extrasensory power realizing knowledge of other minds**, which great bodhisattva beings have— ... abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, {they} perceive with

their own minds the minds of other sentient beings and the minds of other individuals, exactly as they are ... {as} minds that are afflicted with {or free from} desire {hatred or delusion} correctly as minds that are afflicted with {or free from} desire {hatred or delusion} ... {as} minds endowed with {or free from} craving {or grasping} correctly, as minds that are endowed with {or free from} craving {or grasping} ... {as} minds that are composed ... distracted ... narrow ... spacious ... equipoised ... not equipoised ... liberated ... unliberated, and ... surpassed {or not surpassed}, as minds that are surpassed {or not surpassed}, [and so forth] ... Yet, they do not make assumptions on account of these [observations] ... {because} owing to the emptiness of inherent existence these {individuated} minds are not minds.

10.N If you ask what constitutes the refinement of the **extrasensory power realizing knowledge of the recollection of past lives**, which great bodhisattva beings have— ... abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, {they} actualize the extrasensory power of realizing the recollection of past lives, and on that basis, they may recollect one thought, or from that up to a hundred thoughts, or ... a thousand thoughts. They may also recollect one day, or from that up to a hundred days ... a thousand days, or ... a hundred thousand days. They may also recollect one month, or from that up to a hundred months ... a thousand months, or ... a hundred thousand months. They may also recollect one year, or from that ... up to a hundred thousand years. They may also recollect a single eon, or from that up to many hundreds of eons, many thousands of eons, many hundreds of thousands of eons, and even many hundred billion trillions of eons. ‘In that life such was my name. Such was my family. Such was my social class. Such was the food I ate. Such was the duration of my life. Such was the extent of the lifespan I could have had. Such was the extent of the particular lifespan I actually had. Such were the experiences of happiness and suffering I had. Deceased from there, I was born as so and so, and then dying there, I was reborn here!’ In this way, they can recollect many of their own past lives and those of other sentient beings, and other individuals, along with their circumstances and locations. Yet, they do not make assumptions on account of this extrasensory power, and so on.

10.O If you ask what constitutes the refinement of the **extrasensory power realizing knowledge of the cessation of contaminants**, which great bodhisattva beings have— ... abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, {they} actualize the extrasensory power of realizing the cessation of contaminants, and yet they do not rest in the levels of the śrāvakas and the levels of the pratyekabuddhas. Nor are they attached to any attributes through which manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment would be attained. Through the adamant meditative stability that comes from that extrasensory power, they abandon all involuntary reincarnation through propensities, and yet, they do not make assumptions on account of that extrasensory power of realizing the cessation of contaminants because it is essentially empty, essentially void, and {from the perspective of ultimate reality} essentially non-apprehensible. Apart from focusing on omniscience, they have no other wish.

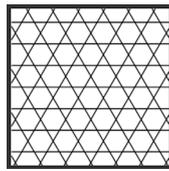
COMMENTARY

From the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality, where nothing exists apart from Our singularity in God, there *is* no creator or creation or conditioning, and subsequently no uncreation or unconditioning ~ and thus no creation of omniscience, or any other phenomena. However from the perspective of ‘relative’ reality, where illusion abounds, there *is* the ‘relative’ conjuring or creation of sentient beings and the path of enlightenment from delusion to omniscience, and there *is* the ‘relative’ conjuring or creation of worlds in the illusion of space and time. Thus the Buddha confirms in the chapter (above) the existence of a creator in ‘relative’ existence: **“Omniscience is itself neither created nor cond-**

itioned because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} its creator is non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}.”

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The Buddha reveals (above) great bodhisattva beings will illuminate the worlds system of ‘relative’ existence, emanating these world systems as a **natural expanse of beryl**, when they have donned the armor of the “buddha body”. Beryl is a hexagonal crystalline structure, and when shown as a natural expanse in ‘grid form structure’ appears as the Star of David and Flower of Life. The Star of David is the MerKaBa Light Body (or Wheel of Ezekiel), and when the upper pyramid (of Vajradhara) merges with the lower pyramid (of Vajrasattva), the individual being becomes, in ‘relative’ existence, a great emanation of expanding Light. [Read also *The Teaching of the Diamond-Holder*, p. 652]



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Vajradhara means “Diamond-Holder” and Vajrasattva means “Diamond-Being”. **Within the illusion of ‘relative’ existence the great illusionist, Vajradhara, has created a diamond structure to contain its relationship with every conjured individuated being.** The upper pyramid of the Diamond-Holder connects with the lower pyramid of the Diamond-Being located within the mindstream of every conjured individuated being via the five wisdom buddhas (of Vairocana, Amoghasiddhi, Amitābha, Ratnasambhava, and Akṣobhya). As each conjured individuated being dons the armor of the “buddha body”, transcending the illusion of ‘individuality’, the upper and lower pyramids then merge as one, whereby its Light Body radiates as an expanse of beryl throughout the world systems of the great trichilocosm.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: NON-ABIDING

11.1 “Moreover, Subhūti, the great armor of great bodhisattva beings consists of the five refined eyes. What are these five, you may ask? They comprise (1) the eye of flesh, (2) the eye of divine clairvoyance, (3) the eye of wisdom, (4) the eye of the sacred doctrine, and (5) the eye of the buddhas. These are called the five eyes.”

11.2 Senior Subhūti then asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What is the refined eye of flesh, possessed by great bodhisattva beings?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, there are great bodhisattva beings who can indeed see with their eyes of flesh as far as a hundred yojanas. There are great bodhisattva beings who can indeed see with their eyes of flesh as far as two hundred yojanas. There are great bodhisattva beings who can indeed see with their eyes of flesh as far as three hundred yojanas. There are great bodhisattva beings who can indeed see with their eyes of flesh as far as four hundred, five hundred, and six hundred yojanas. Also, Subhūti, there are great bodhisattva beings who can indeed see with their eyes of flesh across one entire continent of Jambudvīpa. Again, Subhūti, there are great bodhisattva beings who can see with their eyes of flesh across two entire continents of Jambudvīpa, and in the same vein, there are also those who can see with their eyes of flesh across one world system comprising all four continents. Again, Subhūti, there are great bodhisattva beings who can indeed see with their eyes of flesh across an entire chiliocosm. Also, Subhūti, there are great bodhisattva beings who can indeed see with their eyes of flesh across

an entire dichiliocosm. Again, Subhūti, there are great bodhisattva beings who can indeed see with their eyes of flesh across an entire trichiliocosm. Subhūti, such is the refined eye of flesh possessed by great bodhisattva beings.”

11.3 Then he asked, “Venerable Lord! What is the refined eye of clairvoyance, possessed by great bodhisattva beings?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, there are great bodhisattva beings who perceive all within range of the clairvoyance of the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm. Similarly, there are great bodhisattva beings who perceive all within range of the clairvoyance of the gods from the Trayastrimśa, Yāma, Tuṣita, Nirmāṇarata, and Paranirmitavaśavartin realms as far as the Akaniṣṭha realm. However, Subhūti, the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm do not reciprocally perceive the divine clairvoyance of the bodhisattvas, nor do the gods up to and including those of the Akaniṣṭha realm perceive it. Again, Subhūti, with their divine clairvoyance great bodhisattva beings can observe the death and rebirth of sentient beings, in accordance with their accumulated past actions, in the world systems of the eastern direction, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. They also perceive those who are beautiful, those who are ugly, those dwelling in the blissful higher realms, those in the wretched lower realms, and those who are inferior, average or excellent, thinking, ‘Alas! These sentient beings are endowed with misconduct of body, endowed with misconduct of speech, endowed with misconduct of mind. They deprecate sublime beings. They possess wrong views. Alas! Due to the causes and conditions of adopting wrong views as correct, after their bodies have decayed and died, they will be reborn within inferior realms, falling into the lower abodes, among the denizens of the hells! Alas! These sentient beings are endowed with noble conduct of body, endowed with noble conduct of speech, and endowed with noble conduct of mind,’ and so on, up to, ‘Due to these causes and conditions, when their bodies have decayed, they will be reborn among the gods and humans, within the blissful and exalted world realms!’ Similarly, they can see sentient beings in the world systems of all the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, according to the past deeds they have accumulated, and so on, up to ‘These will be reborn among the gods and humans in the world systems of the happy, exalted realms.’ Subhūti, such is the refined eye of clairvoyance, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.”

11.4 Then he asked, “Venerable Lord! What is the refined eye of wisdom, possessed by great bodhisattva beings?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, with their eye of wisdom, great bodhisattva beings do not conceive of anything that is conditioned, unconditioned, mundane, supramundane, contaminated, or uncontaminated. There is nothing at all that great bodhisattva beings see with their eye of wisdom, nothing that they hear, nothing that they recall, and nothing of which they are conscious. Subhūti, such is the refined eye of wisdom, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.”

11.5 Then he asked, “Venerable Lord! What is the refined eye of the sacred doctrine, possessed by great bodhisattva beings?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, with their eye of the sacred doctrine, great bodhisattva beings know that this individual person is a follower on account of faith, this one is a follower of the doctrine, this one abides in emptiness, this one abides in signlessness, and this one abides in aspirationlessness.

11.6 “[They know that] this individual is developing the five faculties through emptiness—the gateway to liberation—and afterward will acquire unimpeded meditative stability by means of these five faculties. Through unimpeded meditative stability, this individual will develop [insight into] the knowledge of liberation, and then, through that

[insight into] the knowledge of liberation, will forsake the three fetters. If you ask what are these three formless absorptions, they are (1) false views about perishable composites, (2) hesitation, and (3) a sense of moral and ascetic supremacy. By having abandoned those three fetters, this individual will be known as one who has entered the stream, and, after attaining the path of cultivation, will be tied to one more rebirth, wearing down attachment to the [world system of] desire and to malice. Then, through further development on the path of cultivation, this same individual will abandon attachment to [the world system of] desire and to malice in their entirety, and, having forsaken those two [modes of attachment], will no longer be subject to rebirth. Then, through further development on the path of cultivation, this same individual will forsake the five fetters associated with the higher realms. If you ask what are these five fetters, they comprise (1) attachment to the world system of form, (2) attachment to the world system of formlessness, (3) fundamental ignorance, (4) pride, and (5) mental agitation. After abandoning these five formless absorptions, this individual is said to become an arhat.

11.7 “[They know that] this individual is developing the five faculties through signlessness—the gateway to liberation—and afterward will acquire unimpeded meditative stability by means of these five faculties. Through unimpeded meditative stability, this individual will develop [insight into] the knowledge of liberation, and then, through [insight into] the knowledge of liberation, will forsake the three fetters. If you ask what these three are, they comprise false views about perishable composites, hesitation, and a sense of moral and ascetic supremacy. By having abandoned those three fetters, this individual will be known as one who has entered the stream, and, after attaining the path of meditation, will be tied to one more rebirth, wearing down both attachment to the [world system of] desire and malice. Then, through further development on the path of cultivation, this same individual will abandon attachment to [the world system of] desire and to malice in their entirety, and, having forsaken those two [modes of attachment], will no longer be subject to rebirth. Then, through further development on the path of cultivation, this same individual will forsake the five fetters associated with the higher realms. If you ask what are these five fetters, they comprise attachment to the world system of form, attachment to the world system of formlessness, fundamental ignorance, pride, and mental agitation. After abandoning these five fetters, this individual is said to become an arhat.

11.8 “[They know that] this individual is developing the five faculties through aspirationlessness—the gateway to liberation—and afterward will acquire unimpeded meditative stability by means of these five faculties. Through unimpeded meditative stability, this individual will develop [insight into] the knowledge of liberation, and then, through [insight into] the knowledge of liberation, will forsake the three fetters. If you ask what are these three formless absorptions, they comprise false views about perishable composites, hesitation, and a sense of moral and ascetic supremacy. By having abandoned those three fetters, this individual will be known as one who has entered the stream, and, after attaining the path of cultivation, will be tied to one more rebirth, wearing down both attachment to the [world system of] desire and malice. Then, through further development of the path of cultivation, this [same individual] will abandon attachment to [the world system of] desire and malice in their entirety, and, having forsaken those two [modes of attachment], will no longer be subject to rebirth. Then, through further development on the path of cultivation, this same individual will forsake the five fetters associated with the higher realms. If you ask what are these five formless absorptions, they comprise attachment to the world system of form, attachment to the world system of formlessness, fundamental ignorance, pride, and mental agitation. After abandoning these five formless

absorptions, this individual is said to become an arhat. Subhūti, such is the refined eye of the sacred doctrine, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

11.9 “Moreover, Subhūti, whenever great bodhisattva beings cognize in that manner, they will know that all things associated with the origin of suffering are subject to cessation, and then, Subhūti, they will attain the five faculties, beginning with faith. Subhūti, such is the refined eye of the sacred doctrine, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

11.10 “Moreover, Subhūti, whenever great bodhisattva beings cognize in that manner, they will know that this individual is a beginner bodhisattva, practicing the transcendent perfection of generosity, having just begun to set his or her mind on enlightenment, and so on, and similarly, that this one is practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They will know that this one, skilled in the faculties of faith and perseverance, will consistently obtain an excellent corporeal form, and that this bodhisattva, steadfast on account of the roots of virtuous actions, will be reborn among the royal class, standing out like a tall sāl tree, or among the priestly class, standing out like a tall sāl tree, or among the householder class, standing out like a tall sāl tree. They will know that this one will be reborn among the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm, and in the same vein, that that one will be reborn among the gods of the Paranirmitavaśavartin realm. They will know that even though such individuals abide therein, they will continue to bring sentient beings to maturity; to honor sentient beings with everything that actualizes their happiness; to refine the fields as well; to please, honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to the tathāgatas, arhats, and genuinely perfect buddhas; and they will not descend to the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas. Indeed, they will know that these bodhisattvas will not regress until manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment has been attained. Subhūti, such is the refined eye of the sacred doctrine, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

11.11 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings know that this bodhisattva has been foreordained by the tathāgatas to attain unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment, and that one has not been so foreordained. These bodhisattvas will achieve their own benefit, and those will not. These bodhisattvas will regress, and those will not. The extrasensory powers of these bodhisattvas are perfected, while [the extrasensory powers] of those ones are unperfected. This bodhisattva, with perfected extrasensory powers, will proceed to honor, praise, venerate, respect, and make offerings to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas in the world systems of the eastern direction, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. This bodhisattva will attain the extrasensory powers, and that one will not. This bodhisattva will refine the fields in which enlightenment is attained, and that one will not. This bodhisattva has brought sentient beings to maturity, and that one has not. This bodhisattva is praised by the lord buddhas throughout the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. These bodhisattvas stand alongside and will stand alongside the lord buddhas, but those do not and will not. The lifespan of this bodhisattva who has attained enlightenment will be estimable, and the lifespan of that bodhisattva who has attained enlightenment will be innumerable. The monastic community of this bodhisattva who has attained enlightenment will be estimable, while the monastic community of that one will be innumerable. The bodhisattva community of this bodhisattva who has attained enlightenment will be estimable, while the bodhisattva community of that one will be innumerable. This bodhisattva will engage in austerities, and that one will not. This bodhisattva is in his final rebirth, and that one is not. This bodhisattva will come to sit upon the Seat of Enlightenment, and that one will not. This bo-

dhisattva will withstand the demonic forces, and that one will not. Subhūti, such is the refined eye of the sacred doctrine, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.”

11.12 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What is the refined eye of the buddhas, possessed by great bodhisattva beings?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, immediately after attaining the mind set on enlightenment, become absorbed in adamant meditative stability, and then attain omniscience. They are endowed with the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas; with regard to all things, in all their aspects, there is nothing at all that the eye of the buddhas possessed by great bodhisattva beings does not see, hear, recall, or perceive with extrasensory power. Subhūti, such is the refined eye of manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment, possessed by great bodhisattva beings. “Subhūti, these are the five extremely refined eyes of great bodhisattva beings. Subhūti, the refinement of these five eyes, possessed by great bodhisattva beings should be known as donning the great armor.”

11.13 Then, Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord! In what things should great bodhisattva beings, who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, abide?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in anything at all. If you ask why, it is because the act of abiding, the abider, and that in which they would abide are non-apprehensible.”

11.14 Then, Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord! According to my inquiry into the meaning of the words spoken by the Blessed One, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in physical forms. Similarly, they should not abide in feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. They should not abide in the eyes. Similarly, they should not abide in the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty. Similarly, they should not abide in sights. Similarly, they should not abide in sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena. They should not abide in visual consciousness, and they should not abide in [the other aspects of consciousness], up to and including mental consciousness. In the same vein, they should not abide in [the sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of phenomena. They should not abide in sensory contact that is visually compounded. They should not abide in feelings that are visually compounded, and they should not abide in [the other aspects of feelings], up to and including feelings due to sensory contact that is mentally compounded. They should not abide in the earth element. They should not abide in the water element, the fire element, and the wind element. They should not abide in the space element. They should not abide in the consciousness element. They should not abide in fundamental ignorance, and they should not abide in [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death.

11.15 “If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because physical forms are empty of physical forms. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of consciousness [and the other aggregates]. Venerable Lord! The emptiness of physical forms is not physical forms, and physical forms do not exist elsewhere apart from the emptiness of physical forms. This is because the nature of physical forms is also emptiness and emptiness indeed is physical forms. Venerable Lord, for these reasons great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in physical forms.

11.16 “Similarly, the emptiness of feelings, the emptiness of perceptions, the emptiness of formative predispositions, and the emptiness of consciousness are not consciousness [and the other aggregates]. Consciousness [and those other aggregates] do not exist elsewhere, apart from the emptiness of consciousness [and so forth]. The nature of consciousness is indeed emptiness and emptiness indeed is consciousness. Venerable Lord, for these reasons great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in feelings, and they should not abide [in the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness.

11.17 “In the same vein, they should not abide in fundamental ignorance, and they should not abide in the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death. If one were to ask why, it is because the emptiness of [the links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, is not aging and death [and the aforementioned links]. Also, aging and death do not exist elsewhere apart from the emptiness of aging and death. The nature of aging and death is also emptiness and emptiness indeed is aging and death. Venerable Lord, for these reasons great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in [the links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death.

11.18 “Moreover, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in the four applications of mindfulness. If one were to ask why, it is because the applications of mindfulness are empty of the applications of mindfulness, and emptiness does not exist elsewhere, apart from the applications of mindfulness. Nor do the applications of mindfulness exist elsewhere, apart from emptiness. This is because the nature of the applications of mindfulness is indeed emptiness and emptiness indeed is the applications of mindfulness. In the same vein, they should not abide in [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. If one were to ask why, it is because the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas are empty of the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and emptiness does not exist elsewhere, apart from the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Nor do the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas exist elsewhere, apart from emptiness. The nature of the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas is indeed emptiness and emptiness indeed is the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Venerable Lord, for these reasons great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

11.19 “Moreover, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, they should not abide in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If one were to ask why, it is because those transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, are empty of the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the aforementioned transcendent perfections]. Emptiness does not exist elsewhere, apart from the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Nor does the transcendent perfection of wisdom exist elsewhere, apart from emptiness. The nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is indeed emptiness and emptiness indeed is the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Venerable Lord, for these reasons great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in [the transcendent perfections], from the transcendent perfection of generosity up to and including the transcendent perfec-

tion of wisdom.

11.20 “Moreover, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in syllables. They should not abide in the words that syllables form. They should not abide in singular expressions, dual expressions, or plural expressions. If one were to ask why, it is because syllables are empty of syllables; in the same vein, the refrain indicated in the preceding [part of] this chapter should also be applied here.

11.21 “Moreover, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in the extrasensory powers. If one were to ask why, it is because the extrasensory powers are empty of the extrasensory powers. The extrasensory powers are not emptiness, and emptiness is not the extrasensory powers. However, emptiness does not exist elsewhere, apart from the extrasensory powers. Nor do the extrasensory powers exist elsewhere, apart from emptiness. The nature of the extrasensory powers is indeed emptiness and the nature of emptiness indeed is the extrasensory powers. Venerable Lord, for these reasons great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in extrasensory powers.

11.22 “Moreover, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in the notion that physical forms are impermanent. Similarly, they should not abide in the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are impermanent. If one were to ask why, it is because the impermanence of physical forms is empty of the impermanence of physical forms. That which is the impermanence of physical forms is not emptiness, and that which is emptiness is not the impermanence of physical forms. However, emptiness does not exist elsewhere, apart from the impermanence of physical forms. Nor does the impermanence of physical forms exist elsewhere, apart from emptiness. The impermanence of physical forms is indeed emptiness and emptiness indeed is the impermanence of physical forms. Similarly, the same refrain also should be applied extensively in the case of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. Venerable Lord, for these reasons great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in the impermanence of physical forms, and so on, up to and including the impermanence of consciousness.

11.23 “In the same vein, they should not abide in the notion that the aggregates, from physical forms up to and including consciousness, are imbued with happiness, nor should they abide in the notion that the aggregates, from physical forms up to and including consciousness, are imbued with suffering. They should not abide in the notion that the aggregates, from physical forms up to and including consciousness, are empty, nor should they abide in the notion that the aggregates, from physical forms up to and including consciousness, are signless, and nor should they abide in the notion that the aggregates, from physical forms up to and including consciousness, are aspirationless. Nor should they abide in the notion that the aggregates, from physical forms up to and including consciousness, are calm. Nor should they abide in the notion that the aggregates, from physical forms up to and including consciousness, are void. Nor should they abide in the notion that the aggregates, from physical forms up to and including consciousness, are afflicted. Nor should they abide in the notion that the aggregates, from physical forms up to and including consciousness, are non-arising. Nor should they abide in the notion that the aggregates, from physical forms up to and including consciousness, are unceasing. Nor should they abide in the notion that the aggregates, from physical forms up to and including consciousness, are not entities. If one were to ask why, it is exactly as stated above,

in the context of the aggregate of physical forms.

11.24 “Moreover, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in the real nature of phenomena. If one were to ask why, it is because the real nature of phenomena is empty of the real nature of phenomena. Emptiness does not exist elsewhere, apart from the real nature of phenomena. Nor does the real nature of phenomena exist elsewhere, apart from emptiness. The real nature of phenomena is indeed emptiness and emptiness indeed is the real nature of phenomena. Venerable Lord, for these reasons great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in the real nature of phenomena. In the same vein, they should not abide in actual reality, the expanse of reality, the maturity of all things, and the finality of existence. If one were to ask why, it is exactly as stated above.

11.25 “Moreover, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in all the gateways of mnemonic incantation or in all the gateways of meditative stability. If one were to ask why, it is because the gateways of mnemonic incantation and the gateways of meditative stability are empty of the gateways of mnemonic incantation and the gateways of meditative stability. The same refrain should be extensively applied here, as before.

11.26 “Venerable Lord, when unskilled bodhisattvas who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom engage with physical forms while their mental faculties resort to notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ and when they engage with feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness in a similar manner, they engage in the conditioning of physical forms, and similarly, they engage in the conditioning of feelings, in the conditioning of perceptions, in the conditioning of formative predispositions, and in the conditioning of consciousness. Engaging in such conditioning, they cannot grasp the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they do not engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Without perfecting the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will not attain emancipation in omniscience.

11.27 “Venerable Lord, when bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, if, owing to their lack of skill in means, they engage with physical forms while their mental faculties resort to notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ and if they engage with feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness in a similar manner, they will engage in the conditioning of physical forms, and similarly, they will engage in the conditioning of feelings, they will engage in the conditioning of perceptions, they will engage in the conditioning of formative predispositions, and they will engage in the conditioning of consciousness. Engaging in such conditioning, they cannot grasp the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they cannot engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Without perfecting the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will not attain emancipation in omniscience.

11.28 “Venerable Lord, when unskilled bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom while their mental faculties resort to notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ and so on, and if they engage in the gateways of mnemonic incantation and the gateways of meditative stability, they will engage in the conditioning of the gateways of mnemonic incantation and the gateways of meditative stability. Engaging in such conditioning, they cannot grasp the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they cannot engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Without

perfecting the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will not attain emancipation in omniscience. If one were to ask why, it is because physical forms cannot be appropriated, and similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness cannot be appropriated. The non-appropriation of physical forms is not physical forms, on account of the emptiness of its inherent existence. Similarly, the non-appropriation of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is not consciousness [and the other aggregates], on account of the emptiness of their inherent existence. In the same vein, the gateways of mnemonic incantation and the gateways of meditative stability cannot be appropriated. On account of the emptiness of their inherent existence, the non-appropriation of the gateways of mnemonic incantation or the gateways of meditative stability is not the gateways of mnemonic incantation or the gateways of meditative stability. The transcendent perfection of wisdom also cannot be appropriated, on account of the emptiness of its inherent existence.

11.29 “Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner should determine that all things are empty of inherent existence. They should determine that there is no mental wandering whatsoever, with respect to anything. This is the spacious, immeasurable, and indefinable method of great bodhisattva beings, known as the maṇḍala of the meditative stability of non-appropriation, which is not shared in common with all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

11.30 “Omniscience, also, cannot be appropriated, on account of the emptiness of internal phenomena, on account of the emptiness of external phenomena, and similarly, on account of the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, and on account of the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of that which is not to be abandoned, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all intrinsic defining characteristics, the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of non-apprehension, the emptiness of non-entities, the emptiness of essential nature, and the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. If one were to ask why, it is because this omniscience cannot be acquired by means of indications. If one were to ask why, it is because indications are afflictive.

11.31 “What, one might ask, constitute those indications? Indications include sights. Indications include sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles and mental phenomena. In the same vein, the gateways of mnemonic incantation are indications. [Other meditative experiences], up to and including the gateways of meditative stability, are indications. These are called indications. They are also afflictive, and they should not be acquired. They should not be experienced. Otherwise, the wandering mendicant Śreṇika also would not have gained faith in this omniscient pristine cognition.

11.32 “What you may ask, is faith? It implies conviction, ideation, volition, reliance, attention, appraisal and scrutiny—all without any kind of sign or indication. Therefore, indications should not be acquired. The wandering mendicant Śreṇika indeed became a follower [of the Great Vehicle] endowed with faith, owing to the power of his volition, and he subsequently entered into it by understanding the emptiness of inherent existence. He did not appropriate physical forms, nor did he appropriate feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, or consciousness in the manner of indications. If one were to ask why, it is because the appropriation of all things, which are empty of their own defining characteristics, did not arise. Again, if one were to ask why, it is because he did not consider that understa-

nding to be due to the attainment of clear realization of internal phenomena. Nor did he consider that understanding to be due to the attainment of clear realization of external phenomena, or due to the attainment of clear realization of both external and internal phenomena. Nor, on account of the emptiness of internal phenomena, did he consider that understanding to be anything other than clear realization.

11.33 “If one were to ask why, it is because he did not consider anything which could engender that understanding, any understanding that could be engendered, or anything from which that understanding could be engendered. He did not consider that understanding to be inside physical forms, nor inside feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, or consciousness. He did not consider that understanding to be outside physical forms, nor [outside the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness. He did not consider that understanding to be anything other than physical forms. He did not consider it to be anything other than feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. In this manner, the wandering mendicant Śreṇika resolved that, intent on this sacred doctrine, he would become a follower with faith in the understanding of all phenomena, and that, owing to his non-apprehension of all things, he would appropriate nothing at all, since he had taken reality as his standard and was not attentive to indications. Inasmuch as all things cannot be appropriated, he did not apprehend anything that he might have grasped or anything that he might have relinquished. Since he did not make assumptions about anything, he did not make assumptions even on the basis of nirvāṇa.

11.34 “Venerable Lord! Owing to the non-appropriation of all things, [bodhisattvas] do not grasp physical forms, and similarly, they do not grasp feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. In the same vein, owing to the non-appropriation of all things, they do not grasp all the gateways of mnemonic incantation and [other meditative attributes], up to and including the gateways of meditative stability. Owing to the non-existence of transmigration from one world to another at the time of death, they do not make assumptions even on account of this transcendent perfection of wisdom. Without having perfected [the causal attributes], from the four applications of mindfulness up to the noble eightfold path, and [the fruitional attributes], from the ten powers of the tathāgatas up to the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, they will not pass into final nirvāṇa prematurely. If one were to ask why, it is because they consider that those applications of mindfulness are not applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein because they consider that [all the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are not the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas [and the rest]. This is the transcendent perfection of wisdom characterized by the non-appropriation of physical forms, possessed by great bodhisattva beings, and similarly the non-appropriation of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and so on, up to the non-appropriation of the gateways of mnemonic incantation and the gateways of meditative stability, and so on, from the non-appropriation of the applications of mindfulness up to the noble eightfold path, and, in the same vein, from the ten powers of the tathāgatas up to the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

11.35 “Moreover, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should investigate: ‘What is this transcendent perfection of wisdom, whereby is this transcendent perfection of wisdom, whose is this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and for what purpose is this transcendent perfection of wisdom?’ When great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they should determine that

the non-existence and non-apprehension of anything at all denote the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

11.36 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, what are the things that do not exist and that are non-apprehensible?” He replied, “Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena, owing to the emptiness of external phenomena, owing to the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, owing to the emptiness of emptiness, owing to the emptiness of great extent, owing to the emptiness of ultimate reality, owing to the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, owing to the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, owing to the emptiness of the unlimited, owing to the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, owing to the emptiness of that which is not to be abandoned, owing to the emptiness of inherent existence, owing to the emptiness of all intrinsic defining characteristics, owing to the emptiness of all things, owing to the emptiness of non-apprehension, owing to the emptiness of non-entities, owing to the emptiness of essential nature, and owing to the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that the things associated with the transcendent perfection of wisdom are non-existent, and non-apprehensible. In the same vein, the things associated with the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the things associated with the transcendent perfection of perseverance, and similarly, Senior Śāradvatīputra, the things associated with the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the things associated with the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the things associated with the transcendent perfection of generosity are non-existent and non-apprehensible.

11.37 “Moreover, Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena, and similarly, owing to the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that physical forms are non-existent and non-apprehensible. Similarly, Senior Śāradvatīputra, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are also non-existent and non-apprehensible. Senior Śāradvatīputra, even the emptiness of internal phenomena is non-existent and non-apprehensible, and in the same vein, Senior Śāradvatīputra, the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are non-existent and non-apprehensible. Senior Śāradvatīputra, the applications of mindfulness are non-existent and non-apprehensible. In the same vein, [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and [the fruitional attributes], from the ten powers of the tathāgatas up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are non-existent and non-apprehensible. Senior Śāradvatīputra, the six extrasensory powers are non-existent and non-apprehensible. The real nature is non-existent and non-apprehensible. Senior Śāradvatīputra, the reality of phenomena, the abiding nature of phenomena, the maturity of all things and [other unconditioned phenomena], up to and including the finality of existence, are non-existent and non-apprehensible. Entering the stream is non-existent and non-apprehensible, and the same goes for [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship, which are non-existent and non-apprehensible. The pratyekabuddhas are non-existent and non-apprehensible. The bodhisattvas are non-existent and non-apprehensible. Senior Śāradvatīputra, the buddhas are non-existent and non-apprehensible. Senior Śāradvatīputra, even omniscience is non-existent and non-apprehensible.

11.38 “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they should investigate and make their determination accordingly. When they investigate and make their determination in that manner, if they are not disheartened, if they are not intimidated, if they are not afraid, if they are not terrified, and if they will not be terrified, one should know that these great bodhisattva beings will never be separated from the

transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

11.39 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, why should one know that these great bodhisattva beings will never be separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” Senior Subhūti then replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, physical forms are without the nature of physical forms, and this is correctly and definitively cognized when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, Senior Śāradvatīputra, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are without the nature of consciousness [and the other aggregates], and this is correctly and definitively cognized when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, Senior Śāradvatīputra, the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom are without the nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the other transcendent perfections], and this is correctly and definitively cognized by great bodhisattva beings. In the same vein, [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and [the unconditioned phenomena], up to and including the finality of existence, are without the nature of the finality of existence [and the aforementioned], and this is correctly and definitively cognized when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is for this reason that one should know great bodhisattva beings to be never separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

11.40 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, what is the nature of physical forms? What is the nature of feelings, perceptions, and formative predispositions? What is the nature of consciousness? In the same vein, Senior Subhūti, what is the nature of the finality of existence, and so forth?” Senior Subhūti then replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, the nature of physical forms is non-entity. Similarly, the nature of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is non-entity. In the same vein, the nature of [all attributes and unconditioned phenomena], up to and including the finality of existence, is non-entity. Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is for this reason that one should know that physical forms are without the nature of physical forms, and in the same vein, that [unconditioned phenomena], up to and including the finality of existence, are without the defining characteristics of the finality of existence [and so forth]. One should know that even defining characteristics are without their nature, and their nature is without defining characteristics.

11.41 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, will great bodhisattva beings who undertake this training attain emancipation in omniscience?” “Yes, Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is as you have said! Great bodhisattva beings who undertake this training will attain emancipation in omniscience. If you ask why, Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is because all things are unborn [in cyclic existence] and unemancipated [in nirvāṇa].”

11.42 “Senior Subhūti, why are all things unborn and unemancipated?” “Senior Śāradvatīputra, physical forms are empty of the nature of physical forms, and in that regard, there is no birth; nor is the emancipation of nirvāṇa apprehensible. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of the nature of consciousness [and the other aggregates], and in that regard, there is no birth; nor is the emancipation of nirvāṇa apprehensible. In the same vein, [all attributes and unconditioned phenomena], up to and including the finality of

existence, are empty of the nature of the finality of existence [and so forth], and in that regard, there is no birth; nor is the emancipation of nirvāṇa apprehensible.”

11.43 *This completes the eleventh chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Non-abiding.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ELEVEN:

NON-ABIDING

11.A The great armor of great bodhisattva beings consists of the five refined eyes ... {comprising} (1) the eye of flesh, (2) the eye of divine clairvoyance, (3) the eye of wisdom, (4) the eye of the sacred doctrine, and (5) the eye of the buddhas.

11.B There are great bodhisattva beings who can indeed see with their eyes of flesh as far as a hundred ... two hundred ... three hundred ... four hundred, five hundred, and six hundred yojanas ... across one entire continent of Jambudvīpa ... two entire continents of Jambudvīpa ... one world system comprising all four continents ... an entire chiliocosm ... an entire dichiliocosm ... {and} an entire trichiliocosm ... Such is the **refined eye of flesh** possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

11.C There are great bodhisattva beings who perceive all within range of the clairvoyance of the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika ... Trayastriṃśa, Yāma, Tuṣita, Nirmānarata, and Paranirmitavaśavartin realms as far as the Akaniṣṭha realm. However ... the gods of {these} ... realm{s} do not reciprocally perceive {their} ... divine clairvoyance ... With their divine clairvoyance great bodhisattva beings can observe the death and rebirth of sentient beings, in accordance with their accumulated past actions, in the world systems of the eastern direction {and in all the ten directions}, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges ... {and} perceive those who are beautiful ... ugly ... dwelling in the blissful higher realms ... in the wretched lower realms, and those who are inferior, average or excellent, thinking, ‘Alas! These sentient beings are endowed with misconduct of body ... speech ... {and} mind. They deprecate sublime beings. They possess wrong views. Alas! Due to the causes and conditions of adopting wrong views as correct, after their bodies have decayed and died, they will be reborn within inferior realms, falling into the lower abodes, among the denizens of the hells! Alas! These sentient beings are endowed with noble conduct of body ... speech, and ... mind,’ and so on, up to, ‘Due to these causes and conditions, when their bodies have decayed, they will be reborn among the gods and humans, within the blissful and exalted world realms!’ ... Such is the **refined eye of clairvoyance**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

11.D With their eye of wisdom, great bodhisattva beings do not conceive of anything that is conditioned, unconditioned, mundane, supramundane, contaminated, or uncontaminated {as ultimately real}. There is nothing at all that great bodhisattva beings see {as real} with their eye of wisdom, nothing that they hear, nothing that they recall, and nothing of which they are conscious ... Such is the **refined eye of wisdom**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

11.E With their eye of the sacred doctrine, great bodhisattva beings know that this individual person is a follower on account of faith, this one is a follower of the doctrine, this one abides in emptiness, this one abides in signless-

ness, and this one abides in aspirationlessness ... this individual is developing the five faculties through emptiness {or signlessness or aspirationlessness}—the gateway{s} to liberation—and afterward will acquire unimpeded meditative stability by means of these five faculties. Through unimpeded meditative stability, this individual will develop [insight into] the knowledge of liberation, and then ... will forsake the three fetters ... {comprising the formless absorptions of} (1) false views about perishable composites, (2) hesitation, and (3) a sense of moral and ascetic supremacy. By having abandoned those three fetters, this individual will be known as one who has entered the stream, and, after attaining the path of cultivation, will be tied to one more rebirth, wearing down attachment to the [world system of] desire and to malice. Then, through further development on the path of cultivation ... will abandon attachment to [the world system of] desire and to malice in their entirety, and, having forsaken those two, will no longer be subject to rebirth. Then, through further development on the path of cultivation ... will forsake the five fetters associated with the higher realms ... {comprising} (1) attachment to the world system of form, (2) attachment to the world system of formlessness, (3) fundamental ignorance, (4) pride, and (5) mental agitation. After abandoning these five formless absorptions, this individual is said to become an arhat. Moreover ... they will know that all things associated with the origin of suffering are subject to cessation, and then ... will attain the five faculties, beginning with faith ... They will know that this individual is a beginner bodhisattva, practicing the transcendent perfection of generosity, having just begun to set his or her mind on enlightenment, and so on ... {up to} this one is practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They will know that this one, skilled in the faculties of faith and perseverance, will consistently obtain an excellent corporeal form, and that this bodhisattva, steadfast on account of the roots of virtuous actions, will be reborn among the royal class ... or among the priestly class ... or among the householder class, standing out like a tall sāl tree. They will know that this one will be reborn among the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm, and ... that one will be reborn among the gods of the Paranirmitavaśavartin realm. They will know that even though such individuals abide therein, they will continue to bring sentient beings to maturity; to honor sentient beings with everything that actualizes their happiness; to refine the fields as well; to please, honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to the tathāgatas, arhats, and genuinely perfect buddhas; and they will not descend to the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas. Indeed, they will know that these bodhisattvas will not regress until manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment has been attained ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings know that this bodhisattva has been foreordained by the tathāgatas to attain unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment, and that one has not been so foreordained. These bodhisattvas will achieve their own benefit, and those will not. These bodhisattvas will regress, and those will not. The extrasensory powers of these bodhisattvas are perfected, while ... those ones are unperfected. This bodhisattva, with perfected extrasensory powers, will proceed to honor, praise, venerate, respect, and make offerings to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas in the world systems of the eastern direction, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. This bodhisattva will attain the extrasensory powers, and that one will not. This bodhisattva will refine the fields in which enlightenment is attained, and that one will not. This bodhisattva has brought sentient beings to maturity, and that one has not. This bodhisattva is praised by the lord buddhas throughout the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. These bodhisattvas stand alongside and will stand alongside the lord buddhas, but those do not and will not. The lifespan {as well as monastic and bodhisattva community} of this bodhisattva who has attained enlightenment will be estimable, and the lifespan {and monastic and bodhisattva community} of that bodhisattva ... will be innumerable ... This bodhisattva will engage in austerities, and that one will not. This bodhisattva is in his final rebirth, and that one is not. This bodhisattva will come to sit upon the Seat of Enlightenment, and that one

will not. This bodhisattva will withstand the demonic forces, and that one will not ... Such is the **refined eye of the sacred doctrine**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.

11.F Great bodhisattva beings, immediately after attaining the mind set on enlightenment, become absorbed in adamant meditative stability, and then attain omniscience. They are endowed with the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas; with regard to all things, in all their aspects, there is nothing at all that the eye of the buddhas possessed by great bodhisattva beings does not see, hear, recall, or perceive with extrasensory power ... Such is the **refined eye of manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment**, possessed by great bodhisattva beings ... The refinement of these five eyes, possessed by great bodhisattva beings should be known as donning the great armor.

11.G Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not abide in anything at all ... because the act of abiding, the abider, and that in which they would abide are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} ... Great bodhisattva beings ... should not abide in physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... in the eyes ... the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty ... in sights ... sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... in visual consciousness ... up to and including mental consciousness ... in [the sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of phenomena ... in sensory contact that is visually compounded ... in feelings that are visually compounded ... up to and including feelings due to sensory contact that is mentally compounded ... in the earth element ... the water element, the fire element, and the wind element ... in the space element ... in the consciousness element ... in fundamental ignorance, and ... in [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death ... in the four applications of mindfulness ... in [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... in the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... in syllables ... in the words that syllables form ... in singular expressions, dual expressions, or plural expressions ... in the extrasensory powers ... in the notion that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are impermanent ... imbued with happiness ... imbued with suffering ... empty ... signless ... aspirationless ... calm ... void ... afflicted ... non-arising ... unceasing ... {and} not entities ... in the real nature of phenomena ... in actual {relative} reality, the expanse of {relative} reality, the maturity of {understanding with respect to} all things, and the finality of {relative} existence ... in all the gateways of mnemonic incantation ... {and} in all the gateways of meditative stability ... || This is because the emptiness of physical forms {and the rest} is not physical forms {and the rest}, and physical forms {and the rest} do not exist elsewhere apart from the emptiness of physical forms {and the rest}. This is because the nature of physical forms {and the rest} is also emptiness and emptiness indeed is physical forms {and the rest}. ||

11.H When unskilled bodhisattvas ... practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {or} when bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, if, owing to their lack of skill in means {or ability to use one's own expedient methods to bring oneself or others closer to enlightenment}, they engage with physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, up to and including the gateways of mnemonic incantation and the gateways of meditative stability} while their mental faculties resort to notions of 'I' and 'mine,'

... they will engage in the conditioning of physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, up to and including the gateways of mnemonic incantation and the gateways of meditative stability}. Engaging in such conditioning, they cannot grasp the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they cannot engage in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Without perfecting the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will not attain emancipation in omniscience ... {This is} because physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, up to and including the gateways of mnemonic incantation and the gateways of meditative stability} cannot be appropriated {from the perspective of ultimate reality} ... The non-appropriation of physical forms {and the rest} is not physical forms {and the rest}, on account of the emptiness of {their} ... inherent existence ... The transcendent perfection of wisdom also cannot be appropriated {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, on account of the emptiness of its inherent existence. Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner should determine that all things are empty of inherent existence. They should determine that there is no mental wandering whatsoever, with respect to anything {as ultimately real}. This is the spacious, immeasurable, and indefinable method of great bodhisattva beings, known as the **maṇḍala of the meditative stability of non-appropriation**, which is not shared in common with all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

11.1 Omniscience, also, cannot be appropriated {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, on account of the emptiness of internal phenomena ... the emptiness of external phenomena ... the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena ... the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of that which is not to be abandoned, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all intrinsic defining characteristics, the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of non-apprehension, the emptiness of non-entities, the emptiness of essential nature, and the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... because this omniscience cannot be acquired by means of indications {or the mark of indicative signs} ... {as} indications are afflictive ... Indications include sights ... sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles and mental phenomena ... {up to and including} the gateways of mnemonic incantation ... {and} the gateways of meditative stability ... These are called indications. They are also afflictive, and they should not be acquired {as indicators on the path of omniscience}. They should not be experienced {as indicators on the path of omniscience}. Otherwise, the wandering mendicant Śreṇika also would not have gained faith in this {non-dual} omniscient pristine cognition {which is free of all dualistic indicative signs} ... Faith ... implies conviction, ideation, volition, reliance, attention, appraisal and scrutiny—all without any kind of sign or indication. Therefore, indications should not be acquired {on the path of omniscience}. The wandering mendicant Śreṇika indeed became a follower [of the Great Vehicle] endowed with faith, owing to the power of his volition, and he subsequently entered into it by understanding the emptiness of inherent existence. He did not appropriate physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, or consciousness in the manner of indications ... because the appropriation of all things, which are empty of their own defining characteristics, did not arise {in his non-dualistic mind} ... If one were to ask why, it is because he did not consider that {non-dual} understanding to be due to the attainment of clear realization of internal phenomena ... external phenomena, or ... both external and internal phenomena. Nor, on account of the emptiness of internal phenomena, did he consider that {non-dual} understanding to be anything other than clear realization ... {This} is because he did not consider {as real} anything which could engender that {non-dual} understanding, any un-

derstanding that could be engendered {by a secondary ‘thing’}, or anything {as real} from which that {non-dual} understanding could be engendered. He did not consider that {non-dual} understanding to be inside {or outside or anything other than} physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, or consciousness ... In this manner, the wandering mendicant Śreṇika resolved that, intent on this sacred doctrine, he would become a follower with faith in the understanding of all phenomena, and that, owing to his non-apprehension of all things {as ultimately real}, he would appropriate nothing at all, since he had taken {ultimate} reality as his standard and was not attentive to indications. Inasmuch as all things cannot be appropriated {as ultimately real}, he did not apprehend {as real} anything that he might have grasped or anything that he might have relinquished. Since he did not make assumptions about anything {at all}, he did not make assumptions even on the basis of nirvāṇa.

11.J Owing to the non-appropriation of all things {as ultimately real}, [bodhisattvas] do not grasp {as real} physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {up to and including} the gateways of mnemonic incantation and ... the gateways of meditative stability. Owing to the non-existence of transmigration from one world to another at the time of death, they do not make assumptions even on account of this transcendent perfection of wisdom. Without having perfected [the causal attributes], from the four applications of mindfulness up to the noble eightfold path, and [the fruitional attributes], from the ten powers of the tathāgatas up to the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, they will not pass into final nirvāṇa prematurely ... because they consider that those applications of mindfulness are not applications of mindfulness, and ... that [all the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are not the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas [and the rest]. This is the transcendent perfection of wisdom characterized by the non-appropriation of physical forms, possessed by great bodhisattva beings, and similarly the non-appropriation of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... up to {and including} the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should investigate: ‘What is this transcendent perfection of wisdom, whereby is this transcendent perfection of wisdom, whose is this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and for what purpose is this transcendent perfection of wisdom?’ When great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they should determine that the non-existence and non-apprehension of anything at all denote the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

11.K It is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {up to and including} the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that the things associated with the transcendent perfection{s} of wisdom ... meditative concentration ... perseverance ... tolerance ... ethical discipline, and ... generosity are {from the perspective of ultimate reality} non-existent and non-apprehensible. Moreover ... it is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and [the fruitional attributes], from the ten powers of the tathāgatas up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the six extrasensory powers ... the real nature {of phenomena} ... the {relative} reality of phenomena, the abiding nature of phenomena, the maturity of {understanding with respect to} all things and [other unconditioned phenomena], up to and including the finality of {relative} existence ... entering the stream ... {and} [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship ... pratyekabuddhas ...

bodhisattvas ... the buddhas ... {and} even omniscience ... {are from the perspective of ultimate reality} non-existent and non-apprehensible ... When great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom {in this manner}, they should investigate and make their determination accordingly. When they investigate and make their determination in that manner, if they are not disheartened, if they are not intimidated, if they are not afraid, if they are not terrified, and if they will not be terrified, one should know that these great bodhisattva beings will never be separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

11.L Physical forms are without the nature of physical forms ... Similarly ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and [the unconditioned phenomena], up to and including the finality of {relative} existence, are without the nature of the finality of {relative} existence [and the aforementioned], and this is correctly and definitively cognized when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... It is for this reason that one should know great bodhisattva beings to be never separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom. The nature of physical forms ... up to and including the finality of {relative} existence, is non-entity ... It is for this reason that one should know that physical forms are without the nature of physical forms, and ... that [unconditioned phenomena], up to and including the finality of {relative} existence, are without the defining characteristics of the finality of {relative} existence [and so forth]. One should know that even defining characteristics {of phenomena} are without their nature, and their nature is without defining characteristics.

11.M Great bodhisattva beings who undertake this training will attain emancipation in omniscience ... because all things are unborn and unemancipated ... Physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {and} [all attributes and unconditioned phenomena], up to and including the finality of {relative} existence, are empty of the nature of the finality of {relative} existence [and so forth], and in that regard, there is no birth; nor is the emancipation of nirvāṇa {being the extinguishment of the three fires of craving, aversion and ignorance and the individual self} apprehensible {as ultimately real}.

COMMENTARY

In ultimate reality, We as a singularity in God, exist naturally liberated ~ defined by the state of emptiness, signlessness and aspirationless. Here We exist *empty* of all intrinsic defining characteristics, and are thus without any *signs* of intrinsic defining characteristics, and are thus without any *aspiration* for intrinsic defining characteristics. As nothing apart from Our singularity exists, We accordingly have no aspiration to be anything other than Our singularity, or to have anything apart from Our singularity, which is empty of the existence of extraneous phenomena, and thus without any defining signs. **Yet in order for every awakening being to reach this state of liberation, they must understand and become absorbed and established in the three gateways to liberation of emptiness, signlessness and aspirationlessness of the one-pointedness of the non-dual omniscient mind.** In 'relative' existence our unawakened mind, which grasps at the signs of illusory phenomena, and strives to aspire to these illusory phenomena, which are empty of inherent existence, must therefore be replaced with the one-pointedness of the non-dual omniscient mind. Accordingly the Buddha reveals in chapter twenty of *The Transcendent perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: "*Emptiness as a gateway to liberation has the defining characteristic of emancipation, signlessness as*

a gateway to liberation has the defining characteristic of non-grasping, aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation has the defining characteristic of non-striving ... {whereby each} constitute ... one-pointedness of mind."

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When the unawakened mind in the confines of 'relative' existence seeks to abide in any phenomena (from physical forms up to and including the omniscient mind of the buddhas) it is seeking to abide in emptiness, for any phenomena extraneous to Our singularity in God is indeed emptiness. Even in Our singularity we cannot abide, for this would imply a duality of states ~ for We *are* the singularity of the singularity in God, and the singularity in God is Us. **In the act of seeking to abide in any phenomena, we are forming an aspiration ~ to abide in a sign extraneous to Ourselves that has all the hallmarks of emptiness.** Thus the Buddha reveals (above): *"Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner should determine that all things are empty of inherent existence. They should determine that there is no mental wandering whatsoever ... {which is} the maṇḍala of the meditative stability of non-appropriation."*

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The emptiness of that which is not to be abandoned is a play on words and variant of the emptiness of non-dispersal (that being non-separation and non-disintegration). In the chapter (above) the Buddha instructs great bodhisattva beings not to abandon / separate themselves from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, but always to remember ... *"that {from the perspective of ultimate reality} the things associated with the transcendent perfection of wisdom are non-existent, and non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}."*

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From the perspective of ultimate reality, **the natural luminosity of mind is all there is**, unchanging and free from contaminants and conceptual notions such as 'I' and 'mine'. Only in the illusion of 'relative' existence can conceptual notions such as 'I' and 'mine' be superimposed upon the natural luminosity of this mind, which remains unaffected by the non-existence of these conceptual notions. As We look through the singularity of Our "undivided" mind in the confines of 'relative' existence, We see Our mind as the 'one and only' mind in everything We see.

CHAPTER TWELVE: MEDITATIVE STABILITY

12.1 Senior Subhūti then said to the Blessed One, "Venerable Lord! If, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they engage unskillfully with physical forms, then they are merely engaging with mental images, and if they engage in the same manner with feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Also, if they engage with the notion that physical forms are permanent, or the notion that these are impermanent, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are permanent, or that these are impermanent, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that physical forms are imbued with happiness, or that these are imbued with suffering, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are imbued with happiness, or that these are imbued with suffering,

then they are merely engaging with mental images.

12.2 “If they engage with the notion that the self exists in physical forms, or that the self does not exist therein, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that the self exists in feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, or that the self does not exist therein, then they are merely engaging with mental images. If they engage with the notion that physical forms are empty, or that these are not empty, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty, or that these are not empty, then they are merely engaging with mental images. If they engage with the notion that signs exist in physical forms, or that signs do not exist therein, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that signs exist in feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, or that signs do not exist therein, then they are merely engaging with mental images. If they engage with the notion that aspirations exist in physical forms, or that aspirations do not exist therein, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that aspirations exist in feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, or that aspirations do not exist therein, then they are merely engaging with mental images. If they engage with the notion that physical forms are calm, or that these are not calm, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are calm, or that these are not calm, then they are merely engaging with mental images. If they engage with the notion that physical forms are void, or that these are not void, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are void, or that these are not void, then they are merely engaging with mental images. If they engage with the notion that physical forms are afflicted, or that these are purified, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are afflicted, or that these are purified, then they are merely engaging with mental images. If they engage with the notion that physical forms arise, or that these are non-arising, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness arise, or that these are non-arising, then they are merely engaging with mental images. If they engage with the notion that physical forms cease, or that these are unceasing, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness cease, or that these are unceasing, then they are merely engaging with mental images. If they engage with the notion that entities exist in physical forms, or that entities do not exist therein, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Similarly, if they engage with the notion that entities exist in feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, or that entities do not exist therein, then they are merely engaging with mental images.

12.3 “Venerable Lord, when bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, if they unskillfully engage with the applications of mindfulness, then they are merely engaging with mental images. In the same vein, if they engage in the same manner with [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, then they are merely engaging with mental images. If they engage with the ten powers of the tathāgatas, then they are merely engaging with mental images. In the same vein, if they engage in the same manner with [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, then they are merely engaging with

mental images.

12.4 “Venerable Lord, if great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom think, ‘I am practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom. I should cultivate it,’ then they are merely engaging with mental images. If they think, ‘I am a bodhisattva. This is a bodhisattva,’ then they are merely engaging with mental images. If bodhisattvas think, ‘Those who engage in that manner are cultivating the transcendent perfection of wisdom,’ then they are merely engaging with mental images. One should know this to be the absence of skillful means which great bodhisattva beings might have.”

12.5 Then Senior Subhūti addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, if they abide in, cognize, and are intent on physical forms, and similarly, if they abide in, cognize, and are intent on feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, then, while they are abiding in, cognizing, and intent on physical forms, and similarly, while they are abiding in, cognizing, and intent on feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, then they are engaging in the conditioning of physical forms, and similarly, they are engaging in the conditioning of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. When they engage in the conditioning of physical forms, and so on, up to the conditioning of consciousness, I say they will not be released from subsequent rebirths, they will be agitated by aging, and so on, and they will not be released from suffering, and so forth.”

12.6 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, if bodhisattvas who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom unskillfully abide in, cognize, and are intent on the eyes, and in the same vein, if they abide in, cognize, and are intent on [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, I say they will not be released from suffering and so forth in subsequent rebirths. Similarly, if they abide in, cognize, and are intent on sights, and in the same vein, if they abide in, cognize, and are intent on [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena, I say they will not be released from suffering and so forth in subsequent rebirths. If they abide in, cognize, and are intent on feelings due to sensory contact that is visually compounded, and so on up to feelings due to sensory contact that is mentally compounded, I say they will not be released from suffering and so forth in subsequent rebirths. If they abide in, cognize, and are intent on the applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and likewise, if they abide in, cognize, and are intent on the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, I say they will not be released from suffering and so forth in subsequent rebirths. If they even lack the good fortune to actualize the level of the śrāvakas, or the level of the pratyekabuddhas, how could they possibly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment? That would be impossible! “Senior Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner they are without skill in means and one should know them to be without skill in means.”

12.7 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, how should one know that when they are practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom they do possess skill in means?” Senior Subhūti then replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings [skillfully] practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not engage with physical forms, and they do not engage

with feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. They do not engage with mental images of physical forms, and they do not engage with mental images of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms are permanent, or the notion that these are impermanent. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are permanent, or the notion that these are impermanent. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms are imbued with happiness, or the notion that these are imbued with suffering. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are imbued with happiness, or the notion that these are imbued with suffering. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms are a self, or the notion that these are not a self. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are a self, or the notion that these are not a self. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms are empty, or that these are not empty. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty, or that these are not empty. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms are with signs, or that they are signless. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are with signs, or that these are signless. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms have aspirations, or that they are without aspirations. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness have aspirations, or that they are without aspirations. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms are calm, or that they are not calm. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are calm, or that they are not calm. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms are void, or that they are not void. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are void, or that they are not void. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms are afflicted, or that they are purified. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are afflicted, or that they are purified. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms arise, or that they are non-arising. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness arise, or that they are non-arising. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms cease, or that they are unceasing. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness cease, or that they are unceasing. They do not engage with the notion that physical forms are entities, or that they are non-entities. Similarly, they do not engage with the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are entities, or that they are non-entities.

12.8 “Senior Śāradvatīputra, when bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner one should know that they are endowed with skillful means. If you were to ask why, Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is because the emptiness of physical forms is not physical forms. Emptiness is not other than physical forms, nor are physical forms other than emptiness. The nature of physical forms is indeed emptiness, and emptiness is indeed physical forms. Similarly, the emptiness of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is not consciousness [and the other aggregates]. Emptiness is not other than consciousness, nor is consciousness other than emptiness. Emptiness is indeed consciousness. The nature of consciousness is indeed emptiness. In the same vein, the emptiness of [the meditative experiences], up to and including the applications of mindfulness, is not the applications of mindfulness [and the rest]. Emptiness is not other than the applications of mindfulness, nor are the applica-

tions of mindfulness other than emptiness. The nature of the applications of mindfulness is indeed emptiness. Emptiness is indeed the applications of mindfulness. In the same vein, that which is empty of [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, is not the noble eightfold path [and the rest]. Emptiness is not other than the noble eightfold path, nor is the noble eightfold path other than emptiness. The nature of the noble eightfold path is indeed emptiness. Emptiness is indeed the noble eightfold path. Similarly, [the other attributes], up to and including the ten powers of the tathāgatas, are not one thing and emptiness another. Emptiness is not other than the ten powers of the tathāgatas, nor are the ten powers of the tathāgatas other than emptiness. The nature of the ten powers of the tathāgatas is indeed emptiness. Emptiness is indeed the ten powers of the tathāgatas. In the same vein, the emptiness of the [other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is not the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas [and the rest]. Emptiness is not other than the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, nor are the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas other than emptiness. The nature of the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas is indeed emptiness. Emptiness is indeed the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

12.9 “Senior Śāradvatīputra, if great bodhisattva beings, when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, do not accept that they are practicing, do not accept that they are not practicing, do not accept that they are both practicing and not practicing, and do not accept that they are neither practicing nor not practicing, then great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner will have the good fortune to actualize manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

12.10 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, why is it that great bodhisattva beings, when [skillfully] practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom, do not accept anything at all?” He replied, “Senior Śāradvatīputra, the essential nature of that transcendent perfection of wisdom is non-apprehensible. If you ask why, it is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the essential nature of non-entity. Śāradvatīputra, for this reason, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not accept that they are practicing, and in the same vein, they do not accept that they are neither practicing nor not practicing [and so forth]. If you ask why, it is because they have followed the principle that all things have the essential nature of non-entity, and therefore they have not appropriated them. This is the meditative stability of great bodhisattva beings, non-acquisitive with respect to all things—the spacious, immeasurable, and indefinable method which is not shared in common with all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. Great bodhisattva beings who are not separated from this meditative stability will swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

12.11 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, is it that only great bodhisattva beings who possess and are never separated from this meditative stability will swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment, or else, are there other meditative stabilities through which buddhahood will be attained?” Senior Subhūti replied, “Senior Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who abide in other meditative stabilities will also swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

12.12 “Senior Subhūti,” he continued, “abiding in which meditative stabilities will great bodhisattva beings swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment?” “Senior Śāradvatīputra, (1) there is the meditative stability of great bodhisattva beings named Heroic Valour. Abiding therein, great bodhisattva beings will swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment. In the same vein, (2) there is the meditative stability named Precious Seal. (3) There is the meditative stability named Lion’s Play. (4) There is the meditative stability named Beautiful Moon. (5) There is the meditative stability named Crest of the Victory Banner of the Moon. (6) There is the meditative stability named Surpassing All Phenomena. (7) There is the meditative stability named Unseen Pinnacle. (8) There is the meditative stability named Certainty in the Expanse of Reality. (9) There is the meditative stability named Crest of the Victory Banner of Certainty. (10) There is the meditative stability named Adamantine. (11) There is the meditative stability named Seal of Entry into All Phenomena. (12) There is the meditative stability named Consecrated as a King of Meditative Stability. (13) There is the meditative stability named Seal of the King. (14) There is the meditative stability named Power of Perseverance. (15) There is the meditative stability named Sublimation [of All Things]. (16) There is the meditative stability named Definitive Engagement in Precise Etymology. (17–18) There are the meditative stabilities named Entry into Designations and Observation of Spatial Directions. (19) There is the meditative stability named Seal of Retention. (20) There is the meditative stability named Unimpaired. (21) There is the meditative stability named Oceanic Seal Gathering All Phenomena. (22) There is the meditative stability named Permeation of Space. (23) There is the meditative stability named Indestructible Maṇḍala. (24) There is the meditative stability named [Shoulder Ornament of] the Victory Banner’s Crest. (25) There is the meditative stability named Crest of Power. (26) There is the meditative stability named Pursuit of the Stream. (27) There is the meditative stability named Yawning Lion. (28) There is the meditative stability named Establishment of the Array. (29) There is the meditative stability named Precious Source. (30) There is the meditative stability named Illumination. (31) There is the meditative stability named Unseeking. (32) There is the meditative stability named No Fixed Abode. (33) There is the meditative stability named Free from Mentation. (34) There is the meditative stability named Taintless Lamp. (35) There is the meditative stability named Boundless Light. (36) There is the meditative stability named Illuminator. (37) There is the meditative stability named Pure Sanctuary. (38) There is the meditative stability named Immaculate Light. (39) There is the meditative stability named Bringer of Joy. (40) There is the meditative stability named Lightning Lamp. (41) There is the meditative stability named Unconquerable. (42) There is the meditative stability named Majestic. (43) There is the meditative stability named Free from Extinction. (44) There is the meditative stability named Unvanquished. (45) There is the meditative stability named Subdued. (46) There is the meditative stability named Lamp of the Sun. (47) There is the meditative stability named Lamp of the Moon [or Immaculate Moon]. (48) There is the meditative stability named Pure Appearance. (49) There is the meditative stability named Illuminating. (50) There is the meditative stability named Supreme Source. (51) There is the meditative stability named Crest of Pristine Cognition. (52) There is the meditative stability named Stability of Mind. (53) There is the meditative stability named Total Illumination. (54) There is the meditative stability named Consecrated. (55) There is the meditative stability named Jewel Cusp. (56) There is the meditative stability named Seal of the Sacred Doctrine. (57) There is the meditative stability named Sameness of All Things. (58) There is the meditative stability named Renunciation of Delight. (59) There is the meditative stability named Sublimation of [All] Phenomena. (60) There is the meditative stability named Dispersal. (61) There is the meditative stability named Distinguishing the Terms Associated with All Phenomena. (62) There is the meditative stability named Establishing the Sameness of All Letters. (63) There is the meditative stability named Devoid of Letters. (64) There is

the meditative stability named Eradication of Referents. (65) There is the meditative stability named Unmodified. (66) There is the meditative stability named Ascertainment of Names. (67) There is the meditative stability named Roaming. (68) There is the meditative stability named Devoid of Darkness. (69) There is the meditative stability named Engaging in Conduct. (70) There is the meditative stability named Unwavering. (71) There is the meditative stability named Transcendence of the Range. (72) There is the meditative stability named Accumulation of All Attributes. (73) There is the meditative stability named Abiding Without Mentation. (74) There is the meditative stability named Blossoming and Purity of the Flowers of Virtue. (75) There is the meditative stability named Endowed with the Factors Conducive to Enlightenment. (76) There is the meditative stability named Boundless Inspiration. (77) There is the meditative stability named Equal to the Unequaled. (78) There is the meditative stability named Transcending All Things. (79) There is the meditative stability named Utterly Devoid of Delimitation. (80) There is the meditative stability named Dispelling of Doubt. (81) There is the meditative stability named Without Settled Focus. (82) There is the meditative stability named Single Array. (83) There is the meditative stability named Manifest Attainment of Modalities. (84) There is the meditative stability named Unity of Aspects. (85) There is the meditative stability named Non-dispersion of Aspects. (86) There is the meditative stability named [Comprehension of/] Dispersal of All Bases of Rebirth [through Realization]. (87) There is the meditative stability named Entrance to Symbols and Sounds. (88) There is the meditative stability named Devoid of Vocalic Syllables. (89) There is the meditative stability named Burning Lamp. (90) There is the meditative stability named Purification of Defining Characteristics. (91) There is the meditative stability named Manifestly Imperceptible. (92) There is the meditative stability named Endowed with All Finest Aspects. (93) There is the meditative stability named Absence of Joy with Respect to All Happiness and Suffering. (94) There is the meditative stability named Inexhaustible Cornucopia. (95) There is the meditative stability named Retentive Intelligence. (96) There is the meditative stability named Complete Elimination of Right and Wrong. (97) There is the meditative stability named Imbued with Resonance. (98) There is the meditative stability named Appearing of All Deviations and Obstacles. (99) There is the meditative stability named Taintless Light. (100) There is the meditative stability named Endowed with the Essence. (101) There is the meditative stability named Taintless Light of the Full Moon. (102) There is the meditative stability named Great Array [/Ornament]. (103) There is the meditative stability named Illuminator of All Worlds. (104) There is the meditative stability named Sameness of Meditative Stability. (105) There is the meditative stability named Taintless Modality Devoid of Impurities. (106) There is the meditative stability named Convergence of All Mental Afflictions in Non-affliction. (107) There is the meditative stability named Engaging Without Wavering and Without Settled Focus. (108) There is the meditative stability named Abiding in the Real Nature Without Mentation. (109) There is the meditative stability named Dispelling the Misery of Corporeality. (110) There is the meditative stability named Obliterating Defects of Speech, Transforming Them as if into Space. And, (111) there is the meditative stability named Unattached, Liberated, and Uncovered like Space. “Senior Śāradvatīputra, these are the meditative stabilities of great bodhisattva beings, abiding in which they will swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

12.13 Then, Senior Subhūti said to Senior Śāradvatīputra, “O Senior Śāradvatīputra! The tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the past have foreordained that great bodhisattva beings who abide in these abovementioned meditative stabilities will attain unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment. One should know that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who are presently alive, residing in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, also make prophecies with regard to those great bodhisattva bei-

ngs.

12.14 “Without considering any of those meditative stabilities, these bodhisattvas are absorbed in meditation. They do not make assumptions on account of those meditative stabilities, thinking, ‘I have been absorbed in meditation. I am absorbed in meditation. I will be absorbed in meditation.’ All these conceptual imaginations are absent and do not arise.”

12.15 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra said to Senior Subhūti, “Senior Subhūti, should one then know that great bodhisattva beings who abide in these meditative stabilities have been foreordained by the tathāgatas of the past and are being foreordained by the tathāgatas who are alive at present, residing in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges?” “Senior Śāradvatīputra, that is not the case! If you ask why, it is because, Senior Śāradvatīputra, the transcendent perfection of wisdom, the meditative stabilities, and great bodhisattva beings are not distinct from one another. Rather, the bodhisattvas themselves are the meditative stabilities, and the meditative stabilities are themselves the bodhisattvas. The bodhisattvas, the meditative stabilities, and this transcendent perfection of wisdom are without duality, and they are inseparable.”

12.16 “Senior Subhūti, if the meditative stabilities and the bodhisattvas are not distinct from one another, and if the meditative stabilities are themselves the bodhisattvas, and the bodhisattvas are themselves the meditative stabilities, and if both the meditative stabilities and the bodhisattvas are the transcendent perfection of wisdom, then they will not know through their meditative stabilities that all things are sameness, nor will they have any cognition.”

12.17 “Senior Śāradvatīputra, for these reasons great bodhisattva beings do not know through their meditative stability that all things are sameness, nor do they have any cognition. If you ask why,” he continued, “it is owing to the non-existence of that bodhisattva, that meditative stability, and that transcendent perfection of wisdom that they do not know, and indeed that they have no cognition.”

12.18 Then the Venerable Lord congratulated Senior Subhūti, saying, “Well said, Subhūti! Well said! You whom I have declared to be supreme among śrāvakas abiding free from afflicted mental states, you have spoken these words well! In conformity with your approach, great bodhisattva beings should indeed train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they should train accordingly in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and in the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, they should train in the applications of mindfulness, and [in the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and in the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, in [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.”

12.19 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, when great bodhisattva beings train accordingly, do they train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” The Venerable Lord replied, “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings train accordingly, they do train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom. In doing so, they train without apprehending anything. It is in the same manner that they train in the [other transcendent

perfections], from the transcendent perfection of generosity onwards. In the same vein, when they train accordingly, they also train in the [causal attributes], from the applications of mindfulness onwards, and when they train accordingly, they also train in the [fruitful attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. In doing so, they train without apprehending anything.”

12.20 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Venerable Lord, “Venerable Lord, so is it the case that when great bodhisattva beings train accordingly, they train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and in doing so, that they train without apprehending anything?” The Venerable Lord replied, “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings train accordingly, they do indeed train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, without apprehending anything.”

12.21 Then he asked, “Venerable Lord, what is it that they do not apprehend?” The Venerable Lord replied, “Owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend a self. They do not apprehend sentient beings, and so on. They do not apprehend knowers and viewers. Similarly, owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend the psycho-physical aggregates. They do not apprehend the sensory elements. They do not apprehend the sense fields. Owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend fundamental ignorance, and they do not apprehend [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death. Similarly, owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend [the truth of] suffering. Nor do they apprehend [the truths of] the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path that leads to it. Similarly, owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend the world system of desire; nor do they apprehend the world system of form and nor do they apprehend the world system of formlessness. Similarly, owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend the applications of mindfulness, and they do not apprehend [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and they do not apprehend [the other fruitful attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend the six transcendent perfections. Owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend those entering the stream. Owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who will not be reborn, and those who have attained arhatship. Owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend pratyekabuddhas. Owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend bodhisattvas. Owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend tathāgatas.”

12.22 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Venerable Lord, “Venerable Lord, what is that purity?” The Blessed One replied, “Purity indicates that all things are non-arising. Similarly, they are unceasing. They are neither afflicted nor are they purified. They do not arise, and they are without apprehension—all things are unconditioned.”

12.23 “Venerable Lord, when great bodhisattva beings train accordingly, in what things do they train?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings train accordingly, they do not train in anything at all. If you ask why, Śāradvatīputra, it is because these things are non-existent in the ways that ordinary people are fixated on them.”

12.24 “Venerable Lord, how is it that these things are non-existent in the ways that ordinary people are fixated on

them?” The Blessed One replied, “They exist to the extent that they do not exist, and accordingly, since they do not exist, [their posited existence] is called fundamental ignorance.”

12.25 “Venerable Lord,” he asked, “why are these things that do not exist called fundamental ignorance?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, it is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena, and to the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that physical forms are non-existent. Similarly, it is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena, and to the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-existent. Similarly, it is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena, and to the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that the applications of mindfulness are non-existent, and non-apprehensible. In the same vein, it is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena, and to the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are non-existent. However, ordinary people, through their fixations due to fundamental ignorance and craving, become fixated and impute that which is non-existent as existent. Through their adherence to the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism, without knowing and without seeing, they imagine those things that are non-existent, and after imputing them, they become fixated on the [psycho-physical aggregates that constitute] name and form. In the same vein, they become fixated on [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Since, owing to their fixation on these things, they imagine things that are non-existent, they do not know and they do not see. If you ask what they do not know and do not see, they neither know nor see physical forms. Similarly, they neither know nor see feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; in the same vein, they neither know nor see [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. It is precisely because they neither know nor see that they come to be styled ‘ordinary people.’

12.26 “These people will not attain emancipation, and if you ask what it is that they will not be emancipated from, they will not be emancipated from the world system of desire. Similarly, they will not be emancipated from the world system of form or the world system of formlessness. They will not be emancipated into the doctrines of the śrāvākas or the pratyekabuddhas. They will not be emancipated into the doctrines of the bodhisattvas. They will not be emancipated into the doctrines of the genuinely perfect buddhas. They lack convictions. They lack the conviction that physical forms are emptiness. Similarly, they lack the convictions that feelings are emptiness, that perceptions are emptiness, that formative predispositions are emptiness, that consciousness is emptiness, and so on, up to and including the fruitional attributes. Also, they are not stable. If you ask what it is in which they are not stable, they are not stable in the transcendent perfection of generosity. They are not stable in the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They are not stable in the irreversible [sublime] levels, and they are not stable in [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. For that reason, they are called ‘ordinary people,’ and they are said to be ‘fixated.’ If you ask what is their fixation, and on what they are fixated, they are fixated on physical forms, and they are fixated on [the other aggregates], including consciousness. Similarly, they are fixated on the eyes, and in the same manner they are fixated on [the other sense organs], including the mental faculty. They are fixated on sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles,

and mental phenomena. Similarly, they are fixated on the sensory elements. They are fixated on desire, hatred, and delusion. They are fixated on opinions. They are fixated on the applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein they are fixated on [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.”

12.27 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Venerable Lord, “Venerable Lord, when bodhisattvas train accordingly, is it then the case that they do not train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and that they will not attain emancipation in omniscience?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, the bodhisattvas who train accordingly do not train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they will not attain emancipation in omniscience.”

12.28 “Venerable Lord, how is that so?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who are unskillful conceive of and become fixated on the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, they conceive of and become fixated on the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity. In the same vein, they conceive of and become fixated on [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Having become fixated, they conceive of the understanding of all things, and of omniscience, and it is after imagining these that they become fixated on omniscience. Śāradvatīputra, for these reasons bodhisattvas do not train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they will not attain emancipation in the state of omniscience.”

12.29 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, so is it the case that when bodhisattvas train accordingly, they do not train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they do not attain emancipation in omniscience?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas who train accordingly do not train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they do not attain emancipation in omniscience.”

12.30 “Venerable Lord,” he asked, “how should great bodhisattva beings then train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and how do great bodhisattva beings, on training accordingly, attain emancipation in omniscience?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not consider the nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and, Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner, they train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom without apprehending anything and attain emancipation in omniscience. If you ask what is this non-apprehension, when they practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, they do not apprehend this transcendent perfection of generosity. In the same vein, when they practice the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not apprehend the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and so forth. They do not apprehend [the causal attributes], up to and including enlightenment. They do not apprehend [the fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience. Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner, it is owing to their non-apprehension that they train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and will attain emancipation in omniscience.”

12.31 “Venerable Lord,” he asked, “with respect to what will they attain emancipation owing to their non-appre-

hension?” The Blessed One replied, “They will attain emancipation owing to their non-apprehension of the emptiness of internal phenomena, and in the same vein, owing to their non-apprehension of the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of all things.”

12.32 Then, Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! From what will emancipation be attained by means of this vehicle, and where will this vehicle come to rest?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, emancipation will be attained from the three world systems, and consequently emancipation will be attained in omniscience. It will come to rest therein, and it will do so owing to non-duality. If you ask why, it is because the doctrine of the Great Vehicle and the doctrine which is omniscience are neither conjoined, nor disjointed. They share a single defining characteristic in that they are immaterial, unrevealed, unimpeded, and without defining characteristics. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because things that are without defining characteristics do not attain emancipation, will not attain emancipation, and have not attained emancipation.

12.33 “If you ask why, it is because one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the expanse of reality. Similarly, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the real nature, and merely wishes to attain emancipation in the finality of existence. Similarly, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the inconceivable expanse. One who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in spiritual attainment and [consequent] happiness. One who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the element of exertion. In the same vein, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the element of dispassion, the element of cessation, and the emptiness of physical forms, and similarly, merely wishes to attain emancipation in the emptiness of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the emptiness of physical forms will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and it will not come to rest in omniscience. Similarly, the emptiness of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and it will not come to rest in omniscience. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because physical forms are empty of physical forms. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of consciousness, [and so forth].

12.34 “Subhūti, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the emptiness of the eyes, and in the same vein, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the emptiness of feelings due to sensory contact that is visually compounded, and so on, up to and including feelings due to sensory contact that is mentally compounded. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the emptiness of the eyes will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. Similarly, the emptiness of [the other sensory attributes], up to and including feelings due to sensory contact that is mentally compounded, will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the eyes are empty of the eyes, and in the same vein, [the other sensory attributes] are empty of feelings due to sensory contact that is visually compounded, and so forth; similarly, feelings due to sensory contact that is mentally

compounded, and so forth, are empty of feelings due to sensory contact that is mentally compounded.

12.35 “Subhūti, in the same way, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in dreams. Similarly, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in magical displays, mirages, echoes, optical aberrations, and in phantom emanations of the tathāgatas. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the essential nature of dreams will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. Similarly, the essential nature of magical displays, and the essential nature of mirages, echoes, optical aberrations, and phantom emanations of the tathāgatas will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the essential nature of dreams is empty of the essential nature of dreams, and in the same vein, the essential nature of magical displays, and the essential nature of mirages, echoes, optical aberrations, and phantom emanations of the tathāgatas are empty of phantom emanations of the tathāgatas, and so forth.

12.36 “Subhūti, in the same way, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, Subhūti, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and in the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the essential nature of the transcendent perfection of generosity will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. Similarly, Subhūti, the essential nature of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the essential nature of the transcendent perfection of generosity is empty of the essential nature of the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly, Subhūti, the essential nature of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the essential nature of the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom are empty of the essential nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and so forth.

12.37 “Subhūti, in the same way, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the emptiness of internal phenomena, and in the same vein, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the essential nature of the emptiness of internal phenomena will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. In the same vein, the essential nature of the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the emptiness of internal phenomena is empty of the essential nature of internal phenomena, and in the

same vein, the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are empty of the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, and so forth.

12.38 “In the same way, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the applications of mindfulness. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the essential nature of the applications of mindfulness will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the essential nature of the applications of mindfulness is empty of the essential nature of the applications of mindfulness. Similarly, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things that are without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path. If you ask why, it is because, in the same vein, the essential nature of [these causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. If you ask why, it is because, in the same vein, the essential nature of [these causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, is empty of the essential nature of the noble eightfold path, and so forth. This same refrain should also be extensively applied to [the fruitional attributes], including the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, and the four modes of analytical knowledge, and so on, up to the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, just as has been indicated in the context of the noble eightfold path.

12.39 “Subhūti, in the same way, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to be born as an arhat whose contaminants have ceased. In the same vein, Subhūti, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to be born as a pratyekabuddha, or as a tathāgata, arhat, and genuinely perfect buddha. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the essential nature of a tathāgata, and so forth, will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the essential nature of an arhat whose contaminants have ceased is empty of the essential nature of an arhat, and similarly, the essential nature of a pratyekabuddha is empty of the essential nature of a pratyekabuddha, and the essential nature of a tathāgata is empty of the essential nature of a tathāgata.

12.40 “Subhūti, in the same way, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the fruit of entering the stream. Similarly, Subhūti, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, in the fruit of not returning [to cyclic existence], in arhatship, in individual enlightenment, and in omniscience. If you ask why, the same refrain should be extensively applied to [all these fruits], just as has been indicated in the context of the noble eightfold path.

12.41 “Subhūti, in the same way, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in names. Similarly, Subhūti, one wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in symbols, conventional expressions, and designations. If you ask why, Subhūti, the emptiness of names will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and will not come to rest in omniscience. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the emptiness of names is empty of

the emptiness of names, and in the same vein, the emptiness of [those other terms], up to and including designations, is empty of the emptiness of designated phenomena, and so forth.

12.42 “Subhūti, in the same way, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in that which is non-arising; in the same vein, Subhūti, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in that which is unceasing, and in signlessness, non-affliction, non-purification, and non-conditioning. The same refrain should be extensively applied to [these states], just as has been indicated in the context of names. Subhūti, it is for these reasons that the Great Vehicle does attain emancipation from the three world systems, and consequently comes to rest in omniscience, and it does so in an unwavering manner.”

12.43 *This completes the twelfth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Meditative Stability.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWELVE:
MEDITATIVE STABILITY

12.A If, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they engage unskillfully with physical forms ... {or} with feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, then they are merely engaging with mental images. Also, if they engage with the notion that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are permanent, or ... impermanent ... imbued with happiness, or ... imbued with suffering ... that the self exists {therein} ... or ... does not exist therein ... are empty, or ... not empty ... that signs exist {therein} ... or ... do not exist therein ... that aspirations exist {therein} ... or ... do not exist therein ... are calm, or ... not calm ... are void, or ... not void ... are afflicted, or ... purified ... arise, or ... are non-arising ... cease, or ... are unceasing ... that entities exist {therein} ... or ... do not exist therein, then they are merely engaging with mental images ... If they unskillfully engage with the applications of mindfulness ... {or} with [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... {or} with the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {or} with [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, then they are merely engaging with mental images ... {If they} think, ‘I am practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom. I should cultivate it,’ ... ‘I am a bodhisattva. This is a bodhisattva,’ ... {or} ‘Those who engage in that manner are cultivating the transcendent perfection of wisdom,’ then they are merely engaging with mental images. One should know this to be the absence of skillful means which great bodhisattva beings might have.

12.B When bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, if they abide in, cognize, and are intent on physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {the eyes ... up to and including the mental faculty, ... sights ... up to and including mental phenomena ... feelings due to sensory contact that is visually compounded ... up to ... mentally compounded ... the applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas} ... then, while they are abiding in, cognizing, and intent on physical forms {up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas}, ... then they are engaging in the conditioning of physical forms {and so on} ... When they engage in the conditioning of physical

forms, and so on, {up to the conditioning of the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas} ... I say they will not be released from subsequent rebirths, they will be agitated by aging, and so on, and they will not be released from suffering, and so forth ... If they even lack the good fortune to actualize the level of the śrāvakas, or the level of the pratyekabuddhas, how could they possibly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment? That would be impossible! ... When bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner they are without skill in means.

12.C When great bodhisattva beings [skillfully] practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not engage with physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {as well as the applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, as if they were actually existent}. They do not engage with mental images of {these phenomena} ... {or} with the notion that {these phenomena} ... are permanent, or ... impermanent ... imbued with happiness, or ... imbued with suffering ... are a self, or ... not a self ... are empty, or ... not empty ... are with signs, or ... signless ... have aspirations, or ... are without aspirations ... are calm, or ... not calm ... are void, or ... not void ... are afflicted, or ... purified ... arise, or ... are non-arising ... cease, or ... are unceasing ... are entities, or ... are non-entities ... When bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner one should know that they are endowed with skillful means ... {This} is because the emptiness of physical forms {and the rest} is not physical forms {and the rest}. Emptiness is not other than physical forms {and the rest}, nor are physical forms {and the rest} other than emptiness. The nature of physical forms {and the rest} is indeed emptiness, and emptiness is indeed {the nature of} physical forms {and the rest}.

12.D If great bodhisattva beings, when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, {1} do not accept {from the perspective of ultimate reality} that they **are practicing**, {2} do not accept {from the perspective of relative reality} that they **are not practicing**, {3} do not accept {from the perspective of ultimate reality} that they **are both practicing {in relative reality} and not practicing {in ultimate reality}**, and {4} do not accept {from the perspective of relative reality} that they **are neither practicing {in relative reality} nor not practicing {in ultimate reality}**, then great bodhisattva beings who practice ... in that manner will have the good fortune to actualize manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.

12.E Why is it that great bodhisattva beings, when [skillfully] practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom, do not accept anything at all {as real}? ... {This is because} the essential nature of that transcendent perfection of wisdom is non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} ... {and this} is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the essential nature of non-entity ... For this reason, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not accept {from the perspective of ultimate reality} that they are practicing ... {up to and including} they do not accept {from the perspective of relative reality} that they are neither practicing {in relative reality} nor not practicing {in ultimate reality}. If you ask why, it is because they have followed the principle that all things have the essential nature of non-entity, and therefore they have not appropriated them {as if they were actually existent}. This is the meditative stability of great bodhisattva beings, non-acquisitive with respect to all things—the spacious, immeasurable, and indefinable method which is not shared in common with all the śrāvakas and pratyekabu-

ddhas. Great bodhisattva beings who are not separated from this meditative stability will swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.

12.F Great bodhisattva beings who abide in other meditative stabilities will also swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment ... {There are the meditative stabilities named} (1) ... Heroic Valour ... (2) ... Precious Seal. (3) ... Lion's Play. (4) ... Beautiful Moon. (5) ... Crest of the Victory Banner of the Moon. (6) ... Surpassing All Phenomena. (7) ... Unseen Pinnacle. (8) ... Certainty in the Expanse of {Relative} Reality. (9) ... Crest of the Victory Banner of Certainty. (10) ... Adamantine. (11) ... Seal of Entry into All Phenomena. (12) ... Consecrated as a King of Meditative Stability. (13) ... Seal of the King. (14) ... Power of Perseverance. (15) ... Sublimation [of All Things]. (16) ... Definitive Engagement in Precise Etymology. (17–18) ... Entry into Designations and Observation of Spatial Directions. (19) ... Seal of Retention. (20) ... Unimpaired. (21) ... Oceanic Seal Gathering All Phenomena. (22) ... Permeation of Space. (23) ... Indestructible Maṇḍala. (24) ... [Shoulder Ornament of] the Victory Banner's Crest. (25) ... Crest of Power. (26) ... Pursuit of the Stream. (27) ... Yawning Lion. (28) ... Establishment of the Array. (29) ... Precious Source. (30) ... Illumination. (31) ... Unseeking. (32) ... No Fixed Abode. (33) ... Free from Mentation. (34) ... Taintless Lamp. (35) ... Boundless Light. (36) ... Illuminator. (37) ... Pure Sanctuary. (38) ... Immaculate Light. (39) ... Bringer of Joy. (40) ... Lightning Lamp. (41) ... Unconquerable. (42) ... Majestic. (43) ... Free from Extinction. (44) ... Unvanquished. (45) ... Subdued. (46) ... Lamp of the Sun. (47) ... Lamp of the Moon [or Immaculate Moon]. (48) ... Pure Appearance. (49) ... Illuminating. (50) ... Supreme Source. (51) ... Crest of Pristine Cognition. (52) ... Stability of Mind. (53) ... Total Illumination. (54) ... Consecrated. (55) ... Jewel Cusp. (56) ... Seal of the Sacred Doctrine. (57) ... Sameness of All Things. (58) ... Renunciation of Delight. (59) ... Sublimation of [All] Phenomena. (60) ... Dispersal. (61) ... Distinguishing the Terms Associated with All Phenomena. (62) ... Establishing the Sameness of All Letters. (63) ... Devoid of Letters. (64) ... Eradication of Referents. (65) ... Unmodified. (66) ... Ascertainment of Names. (67) ... Roaming. (68) ... Devoid of Darkness. (69) ... Engaging in Conduct. (70) ... Unwavering. (71) ... Transcendence of the Range. (72) ... Accumulation of All Attributes. (73) ... Abiding Without Mentation. (74) ... Blossoming and Purity of the Flowers of Virtue. (75) ... Endowed with the Factors Conducive to Enlightenment. (76) ... Boundless Inspiration. (77) ... Equal to the Unequaled. (78) ... Transcending All Things. (79) ... Utterly Devoid of Delimitation. (80) ... Dispelling of Doubt. (81) ... Without Settled Focus. (82) ... Single Array. (83) ... Manifest Attainment of Modalities. (84) ... Unity of Aspects. (85) ... Non-dispersion of Aspects. (86) ... [Comprehension of/] Dispersal of All Bases of Rebirth [through Realization]. (87) ... Entrance to Symbols and Sounds. (88) ... Devoid of Vocalic Syllables. (89) ... Burning Lamp. (90) ... Purification of Defining Characteristics. (91) ... Manifestly Imperceptible. (92) ... Endowed with All Finest Aspects. (93) ... Absence of Joy with Respect to All Happiness and Suffering. (94) ... Inexhaustible Cornucopia. (95) ... Retentive Intelligence. (96) ... Complete Elimination of Right and Wrong. (97) ... Imbued with Resonance. (98) ... Appeasing of All Deviations and Obstacles. (99) ... Taintless Light. (100) ... Endowed with the Essence. (101) ... Taintless Light of the Full Moon. (102) ... Great Array [/Ornament]. (103) ... Illuminator of All Worlds. (104) ... Sameness of Meditative Stability. (105) ... Taintless Modality Devoid of Impurities. (106) ... Convergence of All Mental Afflictions in Non-affliction. (107) ... Engaging Without Wavering and Without Settled Focus. (108) ... Abiding in the Real Nature {of Phenomena} Without Mentation. (109) ... Dispelling the Misery of Corporeality. (110) ... Obliterating Defects of Speech, Transforming Them as if into Space. And, (111) ... Unattached, Liberated, and Uncovered like Space.

12.G Without considering any of those {aforementioned} meditative stabilities, these bodhisattvas are absorbed in

meditation. They do not make assumptions on account of those meditative stabilities, thinking, ‘I have been absorbed in meditation. I am absorbed in meditation. I will be absorbed in meditation.’ All these conceptual imaginations are absent and do not arise ... {One should not} know that great bodhisattva beings who abide in these meditative stabilities have been foreordained {to attain unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment} by the tathāgatas of the past and are being foreordained by the tathāgatas who are alive at present ... because ... the transcendent perfection of wisdom, the meditative stabilities, and great bodhisattva beings are not distinct from one another. Rather, the bodhisattvas themselves are the meditative stabilities, and the meditative stabilities are themselves the bodhisattvas. The bodhisattvas, the meditative stabilities, and this transcendent perfection of wisdom are without duality, and they are inseparable ... If the meditative stabilities and the bodhisattvas are not distinct from one another, and if the meditative stabilities are themselves the bodhisattvas, and the bodhisattvas are themselves the meditative stabilities, and if both the meditative stabilities and the bodhisattvas are the transcendent perfection of wisdom, then they will not know through their meditative stabilities that all things are sameness, nor will they have any {dualistic} cognition ... {It is} for these reasons great bodhisattva beings do not know through their meditative stability that all things are sameness, nor do they have any {dualistic} cognition. If you ask why ... it is owing to the non-existence of that bodhisattva, that meditative stability, and that transcendent perfection of wisdom {in ultimate reality} that they do not know, and indeed that they have no {dualistic} cognition ... Then the Venerable Lord congratulated Senior Subhūti, saying, “Well said, Subhūti! Well said! ... In conformity with your approach, great bodhisattva beings should indeed train in the transcendent perfection{s} ... in the applications of mindfulness, and [in the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and in the ten powers of the tathāgatas and ... in [the other fruititional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.”

12.H When great bodhisattva beings train accordingly, they do train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... without apprehending anything {as actually existent}. It is in the same manner that they train in the [other transcendent perfections] ... in the [causal attributes], from the applications of mindfulness onwards, and ... in the [fruititional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... Owing to the utter purity of all things, they do not apprehend {as actually existent} ... {an individuated} self, and so on ... sentient beings ... knowers and viewers ... the psycho-physical aggregates ... the sensory elements ... the sense fields ... fundamental ignorance, and ... [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death ... [the truth of] suffering ... the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path that leads to it ... the world system{s} of desire ... form and ... formlessness ... the applications of mindfulness, and ... [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and ... [the other fruititional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the six transcendent perfections ... those entering the stream ... those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who will not be reborn ... those who have attained arhatship ... pratyekabuddhas ... bodhisattvas ... {and} tathāgatas ... Purity indicates that all things are non-arising ... {and} unceasing. They are neither afflicted nor are they purified. They do not arise, and they are {subsequently} without apprehension—{for this reason} all {such non-existent} things are unconditioned ... When great bodhisattva beings train accordingly, they do not train in anything at all ... because these things are non-existent in the ways that ordinary people are fixated on them ... {which} exist to the extent that they do not exist, and accordingly, since they do not exist, [their posited existence] is called fundamental ignorance.

12.I It is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena, and to the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are non-existent {and non-apprehensible as actually existent}. However, ordinary people, through their fixations due to fundamental ignorance and craving, become fixated and impute that which is non-existent as existent. Through their adherence to the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism, without knowing and without seeing, they imagine those things that are non-existent {as existent}, and after imputing them {as existent}, they become fixated on the [psycho-physical aggregates that constitute] name and form ... {and} on [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Since, owing to their fixation on these things, they imagine things that are non-existent {as existent}, they do not know and they do not see. If you ask what they do not know and do not see, they neither know nor see {the ultimate reality of} physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {as well as} [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. It is precisely because they neither know nor see {the ultimate reality of phenomena} that they come to be styled 'ordinary people.'

12.J These {'ordinary people'} people will not attain emancipation ... from the world system{s} of desire ... form or ... formlessness. They will not be emancipated into the doctrines of the śrāvakas or the pratyekabuddhas ... the bodhisattvas ... {or} the genuinely perfect buddhas. They lack convictions. They lack the conviction that physical forms {up to and including the fruitional attributes} are emptiness ... Also, they are not stable ... in the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... in the irreversible [sublime] levels, and ... in [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. For that reason, they are called 'ordinary people,' and they are said to be 'fixated.' If you ask what is their fixation, and on what they are fixated, they are fixated on physical forms, and ... [the other aggregates], including consciousness ... on the eyes, and ... on [the other sense organs], including the mental faculty ... on sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... on the sensory elements ... on desire, hatred, and delusion ... on opinions ... on the applications of mindfulness, and ... on [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... Great bodhisattva beings who are unskillful conceive of and become fixated on the transcendent perfection of wisdom {and on the other transcendent perfections} ... {and} on [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Having become fixated, they conceive of the understanding of all things, and of omniscience, and it is after imagining these that they become fixated on omniscience ... For these reasons bodhisattvas do not train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they will not attain emancipation in the state of omniscience.

12.K When great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not consider {as ultimately real} the nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... they train ... without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} and attain emancipation in omniscience. If you ask what is this non-apprehension, when they practice the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not apprehend {as ultimately real} the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and so forth. They do not apprehend {as ultimately real} [the causal attributes], up to and including enlightenment. They do not apprehend {as ultimately re-

al) [the fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience ... They will attain emancipation owing to their non-apprehension {as ultimately real} of the emptiness of internal phenomena, and ... owing to their non-apprehension {as ultimately real} of the other aspects of emptiness.

12.L Emancipation {in omniscience} will be attained from the three world systems {of desire, form and formlessness} ... It will come to rest therein, and it will do so owing to non-duality ... Because the doctrine of the Great Vehicle and the doctrine which is omniscience are neither conjoined, nor disjointed {as two separate parts}. They share a single defining characteristic in that they are immaterial, unrevealed, unimpeded, and without defining characteristics ... {And this is} because things that are without defining characteristics do not attain emancipation, will not attain emancipation, and have not attained emancipation ... Because one who wishes {unskillfully} to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the expanse of {relative} reality ... in the real nature {of phenomena} ... in the finality of {relative} existence ... in the inconceivable expanse {of relative existence} ... in spiritual attainment and [consequent] happiness ... in the element{s} of exertion ... dispassion ... cessation, and the emptiness of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... || {as well as} the emptiness of the {sense organs of the} eyes ... {up to} feelings due to sensory contact that is visually compounded, and so on, up to ... mentally compounded ... in magical displays, mirages, echoes, optical aberrations, and in phantom emanations of the tathāgatas ... in the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... in the emptiness of internal phenomena, and ... in the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... in the applications of mindfulness ... in the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path ... {and in} the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, and the four modes of analytical knowledge, and so on, up to the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... In the same way, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to be born as an arhat whose contaminants have ceased ... {or} to be born as a pratyekabuddha, or as a tathāgata, arhat, and genuinely perfect buddha ... In the same way, one who wishes to attain emancipation in things without defining characteristics merely wishes to attain emancipation in the fruit of entering the stream ... in the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, in the fruit of not returning [to cyclic existence], in arhatship, in individual enlightenment, and in omniscience ... in names ... in symbols, conventional expressions, and designations ... in that which is non-arising ... {and} unceasing, and in signlessness, non-affliction, non-purification, and non-conditioning || ... If you ask why ... it is because the emptiness of physical forms {up to and including that which is non-arising and unceasing and so forth} will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and it will not come to rest in omniscience ... because {the essential nature of} physical forms {up to and including the essential nature of that which is non-arising and unceasing and so forth} are empty of {the essential nature of} physical forms {up to and including the essential nature of that which is non-arising and unceasing and so forth} ... It is for these reasons that the Great Vehicle does attain emancipation from the three world systems, and consequently comes to rest in omniscience, and it does so in an unwavering manner.

COMMENTARY

In ultimate reality there is nothing beyond Our singularity in God that exists. **Bodhisattvas who engage (or interact) with any non-existent phenomenon as though it were actually existent are those non-existent bodhisattvas who**

practice the non-existent transcendent perfection of wisdom, without skill in means. Yet in the illusion of ‘relative’ existence, where the great illusionist Vajradhara has conjured the illusion of individuated beings, to establish these beings in the ultimate reality that no phenomena is existent ~ these individuated beings must accept that from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality that they are *not* practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom; that from the perspective of ‘relative’ reality that they *are* practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom; that from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality that they are *not both* practicing and *not* practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom; and that from the perspective of ‘relative’ reality that they *are* practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom but are *not* practicing it either. Here the Buddha states (above): “... *if great bodhisattva beings, when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, do not accept that they are practicing, do not accept that they are not practicing, do not accept that they are both practicing and not practicing, and do not accept that they are neither practicing nor not practicing, then great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner will have the good fortune to actualize manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.*”

*

Within ‘relative’ existence suffering arises due to the twelve links of dependent origination, beginning with fundamental ignorance and ending with aging and death, along with sorrow, lamentation, suffering, mental discomfort, and agitation. Through the cessation of fundamental ignorance, the twelve links of dependent origination are reversed in sequential order ~ so understanding "What *is* this fundamental ignorance?" is key to their reversal. Thus the Buddha reveals (above): “*{Phenomena} exist to the extent that they do not exist {as ultimately real}, and accordingly, since they do not exist, **[their posited existence] is called fundamental ignorance.***” Here phenomena are understood ‘intellectually’ not to exist as ultimately real, where the individual must then relate ‘experientially’ to all phenomena as mere things of no real existence.

*

A ‘fixation’ is an obsessive attachment, causing desire, hatred and delusion. These are the three poisons indicative of a mind fixated on any phenomena as ‘ultimately’ real. **Only through ‘non-attachment’ to every phenomena will the mind become free of the three poisons ~ but all obsession must be totally given up to free the mind from ‘relative’ existence.**

*

Any bodhisattva seeking to attain emancipation in any non-existent phenomena, including omniscience, as indicated by the Buddha (above), “... *merely wishes to attain emancipation in the expanse of {relative} reality ... in the real nature {of phenomena} ... in the finality of {relative} existence ... in the inconceivable expanse {of relative existence} ... in spiritual attainment and [consequent] happiness ... in the {dualistic} element{s} of exertion ... dispassion ... cessation, and the emptiness of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {And this is impossible!} because the emptiness of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {or any phenomena with defining characteristics} will not attain emancipation from the three world systems, and it will not come to rest in omniscience*”. **Only the natural luminosity of mind, imprisoned in the mind of every conjured individuated being, will be liberated from the mind of individuality.**

13.1 The Blessed One addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, you asked where this vehicle will come to rest. In this regard, Subhūti, the vehicle will not come to rest anywhere. If you ask why, it is because resting is non-apprehensible, and so all things do not come to rest. On the other hand, the vehicle will come to rest by way of its non-resting. Subhūti, just as the expanse of reality neither comes to rest, nor does it not come to rest, similarly, Subhūti, the vehicle does not come to rest, nor does it not come to rest. The same refrain should be extensively applied here, just as has been indicated in the context of the previous chapter.

13.2 “Subhūti, just as non-arising neither comes to rest, nor does it not come to rest, similarly, this vehicle does not come to rest, nor does it not come to rest; in the same vein, just as non-cessation, non-signlessness, non-affliction, non-purification and non-conditioning neither come to rest, nor do they not come to rest, similarly, Subhūti, this vehicle does not come to rest, nor does it not come to rest. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the essential nature of the expanse of reality neither comes to rest, nor does it not come to rest. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the essential nature of the expanse of reality is empty of the essential nature of the expanse of reality. In the same vein, the essential nature of those other unconditioned phenomena, up to and including non-conditioning, is empty of non-conditioning, [and so forth]. Subhūti, for these reasons this [Great] Vehicle will not come to rest anywhere, but nor will it not do so. This is owing to its non-resting.

13.3 “Also, Subhūti, you asked who will attain emancipation by means of this vehicle. In this regard, Subhūti, no one will attain emancipation by means of this vehicle. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because all those things associated with this vehicle, and with those who would attain emancipation, and that in which emancipation is attained, are non-existent and they are non-apprehensible. Since all things are accordingly non-existent and non-apprehensible, who could attain emancipation by means of anything? In what could emancipation possibly be attained? If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the self and other [posited subjects], up to and including the knower and the viewer, are non-apprehensible. This being the case, the ‘self’ is never apprehensible. Similarly, [other posited subjects], from sentient beings and living creatures to knowers and viewers, are all non-apprehensible.

13.4 “Similarly, the expanse of reality is non-apprehensible, owing to its utter purity. The real nature is non-apprehensible, owing to its utter purity. The finality of existence is non-apprehensible, [owing to its utter purity]. The inconceivable expanse is non-apprehensible, owing to its utter purity. The psycho-physical aggregates and sensory elements are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity. The sensory elements and sense fields are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of generosity is non-apprehensible, owing to its utter purity. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity. Similarly, the emptiness of internal phenomena is non-apprehensible, owing to its utter purity, and in the same vein, the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity.

13.5 “Similarly, the applications of mindfulness are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity, and in the same

vein, [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity. Those who have entered the stream are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity. Similarly, those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, arhats, pratyekabuddhas, and those who have become tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity. Similarly, the fruit of having entered the stream is non-apprehensible, owing to its utter purity. Similarly, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of being no longer subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity. Omniscience is non-apprehensible, owing to its utter purity. Similarly, non-arising, non-cessation, non-affliction, non-purification and non-conditioning are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity. The limit of the past is non-apprehensible, owing to its utter purity. Similarly, the limit of the future and the present are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity. Similarly, motion, non-motion, resting, and arising are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity. Similarly, decrease and increase are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity.”

13.6 “What, you may ask, is it that is non-apprehensible, on account of which all things are not apprehended? Things are not apprehended because the expanse of reality is non-apprehensible. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the expanse of reality, owing to its utter purity, has not been, is not and will not be apprehended by anyone. In the same vein, things are not apprehended because the real nature is non-apprehensible, because the finality of existence is non-apprehensible, because emptiness is non-apprehensible, because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is non-apprehensible, because the emptiness of internal phenomena is non-apprehensible, and because [the other aspects of emptiness] up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are non-apprehensible. Similarly, things are not apprehended because the applications of mindfulness are non-apprehensible. Things are not apprehended because [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas are non-apprehensible. Similarly, things are not apprehended because those who have entered the stream are non-apprehensible, and in the same vein, things are not apprehended because [other realized beings] up to and including genuinely perfect buddhas, are non-apprehensible. Similarly, things are not apprehended because the fruit of having entered the stream is non-apprehensible. In the same vein, things are not apprehended because [the other attainments], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, are non-apprehensible.

13.7 “Similarly, things are not apprehended because non-arising is non-apprehensible. Things are also not apprehended because other unconditioned phenomena, up to and including non-conditioning, are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is the case that things are not apprehended because, owing to its utter purity, non-conditioning [and so forth] is non-apprehensible.

13.8 “Similarly, things are not apprehended because the first level [of realization] is non-apprehensible. Things are not apprehended because [the other levels of realization], up to and including the tenth level, are non-apprehensible, owing to their utter purity.

13.9 “In this regard, if you ask what are the ten levels, they comprise (1) the level of bright insight, (2) the level of buddha nature, (3) the level of eightfold acceptance, (4) the level of insight, (5) the level of attenuated refinement,

(6) the level of dispassion, (7) the level of [an arhat's] spiritual achievement, (8) the level of the pratyekabuddhas, (9) the level of the bodhisattvas, and (10) the actual level of the genuinely perfect buddhas.

13.10 “In the emptiness of internal phenomena, the first level is non-apprehensible, and similarly, the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth levels are non-apprehensible. In the same vein, in the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, due to their utter purity, the first level is non-apprehensible, as are [the other levels], up to and including the tenth level, due to their utter purity. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the first level has not been, is not, and will not be apprehended by anyone, and [the other levels], up to and including the tenth level, owing to their utter purity, have not been, are not, and will not be apprehended by anyone.

13.11 “Similarly, in the emptiness of internal phenomena, the maturation of sentient beings is non-apprehensible due to its utter purity, and [in the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, the maturation of sentient beings is non-apprehensible. Similarly, in the emptiness of internal phenomena, the refinement of the buddhafields is non-apprehensible due to its utter purity, and in the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, the refinement of the buddhafields is non-apprehensible. Similarly, in the emptiness of internal phenomena, the five eyes are non-apprehensible due to their utter purity, and in the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, the five eyes are non-apprehensible.

13.12 “So it is, Subhūti, that when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner, owing to the non-apprehension of all things, they will attain emancipation in omniscience by means of the Great Vehicle.”

13.13 Senior Subhūti then said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This great vehicle, which is called the Great Vehicle, overpowers and attains emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. Venerable Lord! As I understand the words spoken by the Blessed One, this Great Vehicle is equal to space. Just as in space, coming, going, and abiding are not discernible, so in this Great Vehicle, also, coming, going, and abiding are not discernible. Just as in space, the limit of the past is non-apprehensible, and the limit of the future and the intervening [present] are non-apprehensible, so in this Great Vehicle, also, the limit of the past is non-apprehensible, and the limit of the future and the intervening [present] are non-apprehensible. It is because it genuinely transcends the three times that this vehicle is called the Great Vehicle.”

13.14 The Blessed One then replied to Senior Subhūti, “That is so, Subhūti! It is just as you have said! This vehicle is equal to space. That is why it overpowers and attains emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. Subhūti, this vehicle of the bodhisattvas comprises the six transcendent perfections. If you ask what these six are, they are the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Subhūti, these designate the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings.

13.15 “Moreover, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings comprises the emptiness of internal phenomena, and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature with respect to non-entities.

13.16 “Moreover, this Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings comprises all the gateways of mnemonic incantation and all the gateways of meditative stability. The latter include the meditative stability named Heroic Valor and [the other hundred and ten meditative stabilities], up to and including the meditative stability named Unattached, Liberated, and Uncovered like Space.

13.17 “Moreover, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings comprises the four applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. It also comprises the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

13.18 “Also, Subhūti, you said that this vehicle overpowers and attains emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. What, you may ask, is this world, with its gods, humans, and antigods? It comprises the world system of desire, the world system of form, and the world system of formlessness. Subhūti, if the world system of desire were endowed with attributes that are unmistakable, inalienable, incontrovertible, genuine, true, qualitative, permanent, stable, eternal, and unchanging, and it were not a non-entity, then this supreme Great Vehicle would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because this world system of desire is imagined, fabricated, and verbally constructed—its attributes being impermanent, unstable, ephemeral, changeable, and so on—and because it is a non-entity, this supreme Great Vehicle does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.19 “Similarly, Subhūti, if the world system of form and the world system of formlessness were endowed with attributes that are unmistakable, inalienable, incontrovertible, genuine, true, qualitative, permanent, stable, eternal, and unchanging, and they were not non-entities, then this supreme Great Vehicle would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the world system of form and the world system of formlessness are imagined, fabricated, and verbally constructed,—their attributes being impermanent, unstable, ephemeral, changeable, and so on—and because they are non-entities, this supreme Great Vehicle does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.20 “Subhūti, if physical forms were endowed with attributes that are unmistakable, inalienable, incontrovertible, genuine, true, qualitative, entirely permanent, stable, eternal, and unchanging, and they were not non-entities, then this supreme Great Vehicle would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because physical forms are imagined, fabricated, and verbally constructed—their attributes being entirely impermanent, unstable, ephemeral, changeable, and so on—and because they are non-entities, this supreme Great Vehicle does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. The same refrain should be extensively applied to feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, just as it has been applied to physical forms.

13.21 “Similarly, if the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty; and similarly, the sense field of sights, the sense field of sounds, the sense field of odors, the sense field of tastes, the sense field of tangibles, and the sense field of mental phenomena; and similarly, visual consciousness, and so on, up to the mental faculty that arises from visually compounded sensory contact; and similarly, the feelings originating from sensory contact that is visually compounded, and so on, up to the feelings arising from sensory contact that is mentally compounded, were all endowed with attributes that are unmistakable, inalienable, incontrovertible, genuine, true, qualitative, permanent, stable, eternal, and unchanging, and they were not non-entities, then this supreme Great Vehicle would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because all these, up to and including feelings arising from sensory contact that is mentally compounded are imagined, fabricated, and verbally constructed—their attributes being entirely impermanent, unstable, ephemeral, changeable, and so on—and because they are non-entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.22 “Subhūti, if the expanse of reality were an entity and not a non-entity, then this supreme Great Vehicle would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the expanse of reality is not an entity, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. In the same vein, Subhūti, if the real nature were an entity and not a non-entity, and similarly if the finality of existence and the inconceivable expanse were entities and not non-entities, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the real nature, the finality of existence, and the inconceivable expanse are not entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.23 “Subhūti, if the transcendent perfection of generosity were an entity and not a non-entity, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the transcendent perfection of generosity is not an entity, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.24 “Similarly, Subhūti, if the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom were entities and not non-entities, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the transcendent perfections of ethical discipline, and so on, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, are not entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.25 “Subhūti, if the emptiness of internal phenomena and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, were entities and not non-entities, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the emptiness of internal phenomena and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and in-

cluding the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are not entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.26 “Subhūti, if the applications of mindfulness were entities and not non-entities, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the applications of mindfulness are not entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.27 “Subhūti, if the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path, and in the same vein, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, were entities and not non-entities, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because [all these attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are not entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.28 “Subhūti, if the attributes of the level of buddha nature were entities and not non-entities, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the attributes of the level of buddha nature are not entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.29 “Similarly, Subhūti, if the attributes of the level of eightfold acceptance, the attributes of those who enter the stream, the attributes of those who are tied to one more rebirth, the attributes of those who are no longer subject to rebirth, the attributes of arhats, the attributes of pratyekabuddhas, the attributes of bodhisattvas, and the attributes of genuinely perfect buddhas were entities and not non-entities, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the attributes of genuinely perfect buddhas, and so forth, are not entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world, with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.30 “Subhūti, if individuals who have attained the level of buddha nature were entities and not non-entities, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because individuals who have attained the level of buddha nature are not entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.31 “Similarly, Subhūti, if individuals who have attained the level of eightfold acceptance, and individuals who have entered the stream, who are tied to one more rebirth, who are no longer subject to rebirth, who are arhats, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and genuinely perfect buddhas were entities and not non-entities, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because individuals who have attained the level of eightfold acceptance, and so on,

up to those individuals who are tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, are not entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.32 “Subhūti, if the world with its gods, humans, and antigods were an entity and not a non-entity, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the world with its gods, humans, and antigods is not an entity, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.33 “Subhūti, if the [altruistic] thoughts cultivated by great bodhisattva beings from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, up to the time when they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, were entities and not non-entities, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the [altruistic] thoughts cultivated by great bodhisattva beings from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, up to the time when they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, are not entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.34 “Subhūti, if the adamantine pristine cognition of great bodhisattva beings were an entity and not a non-entity, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However, Subhūti, because the adamantine pristine cognition of bodhisattvas is not an entity, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.35 “Subhūti, if the adamantine pristine cognition of great bodhisattva beings were an entity and not a non-entity, then great bodhisattva beings, after realizing that all involuntary reincarnation through propensities and afflicted mental states are not entities, would not have to acquire omniscience. However, Subhūti, because the adamantine pristine cognition of great bodhisattva beings is not an entity, great bodhisattva beings, after realizing that all involuntary reincarnation through propensities and afflicted mental states are not entities, do acquire omniscience. They do overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.36 “Subhūti, if the thirty-two major marks of a superior man that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas possess were entities and not non-entities, then the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas would not overpower and grace the world, with its gods, humans, and antigods, with their magnificence and glory. However, Subhūti, because the thirty-two major marks of a superior man that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas possess are not entities, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas do overpower and outshine the world, with its gods, humans, and antigods, with their magnificence and glory.

13.37 “Subhūti, if the luminosity of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas were an entity and not a non-entity, then the luminosity of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas would not pervade the world, with its gods, humans, and antigods, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. However, Subhūti, because the lumi-

nosity of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas is not an entity, the luminosity of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas does pervade the world, with its gods, humans, and antigods, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges.

13.38 “Subhūti, if the voice of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, endowed with its sixty aspects, were an entity and not a non-entity, then the voice of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, endowed with its sixty aspects, would not envelop the countless, innumerable worlds of the ten directions. However, Subhūti, because the voice of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, endowed with its sixty aspects, is not an entity, the voice of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, endowed with its sixty aspects, does envelop the countless, innumerable worlds of the ten directions.

13.39 “Subhūti, if the doctrinal wheel of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas were an entity and not a non-entity, then the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas would not promulgate in the world that which has not previously been turned in conformity with the sacred doctrine by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else. However, Subhūti, because the doctrinal wheel of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas is not an entity, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas do turn the doctrinal wheel which has not previously been turned by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else.

13.40 “Subhūti, if all the sentient beings for whom the tathāgatas turn the doctrinal wheel were entities and not non-entities, then the tathāgatas would not bring all those sentient beings to attain final nirvāṇa, in the expanse of nirvāṇa where no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates is left behind. However, Subhūti, because all the sentient beings for whom the tathāgatas turn the doctrinal wheel are not entities, the tathāgatas have indeed brought, are bringing, and will bring all those sentient beings to attain final nirvāṇa, in the expanse of nirvāṇa where no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates is left behind.

13.41 “Subhūti, you have said that this vehicle is equal to space. So it is, Subhūti! It is as you have spoken. This vehicle is equal to space. For example, Subhūti, in space the eastern direction is not discernible. The southern direction, the western direction, and the northern direction are not discernible. The zenith, the nadir, and the four intermediate directions are also not discernible. Similarly, Subhūti, in this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, the eastern direction is also not discernible. The southern direction, the western direction, and the northern direction are not discernible. The zenith and the nadir are not discernible, and the intermediate directions are not discernible.

13.42 “Just as, Subhūti, space is neither long, nor short, nor square, nor round, similarly, Subhūti, the supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, is also neither long, nor short, nor square, nor round.

13.43 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither blue, nor yellow, nor red, nor white, nor crimson, nor pale yellow, nor golden, nor multicolored. Similarly, Subhūti, this vehicle is also neither blue, nor yellow, nor red, nor white, nor crimson, nor pale yellow, nor golden, nor multicolored. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.44 “For example, Subhūti, space is not the past, the future, or the present. Similarly, Subhūti, this supreme vehi-

cle, the Great Vehicle, is also not the past, the future, or the present. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.45 “For example, Subhūti, space has neither decrease nor increase, and diminutions are non-apprehensible. Similarly, Subhūti, this supreme vehicle has also neither decrease nor increase, and diminutions are non-apprehensible. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.46 “For example, Subhūti, space neither arises, nor does it cease, nor is it stable, and alterations are non-apprehensible. Similarly, Subhūti, this vehicle also neither arises, nor does it cease, nor is it stable, and alterations are non-apprehensible. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.47 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither virtuous nor non-virtuous, and it is neither determinate nor indeterminate. Similarly, Subhūti, this vehicle is also neither virtuous nor non-virtuous, and it is neither determinate nor indeterminate. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.”

13.48 “For example, Subhūti, space is not something that is seen, nor is it heard, remembered, or cognized. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle is also not something that is seen, nor is it heard, remembered, or cognized. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.49 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither an object of knowledge, nor is it an object of understanding, nor is it an object of comprehension, nor is it an object to be renounced, nor is it an object to be actualized, nor is it an object to be cultivated. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle is also neither an object of knowledge, nor is it an object of understanding, nor is it an object of comprehension, nor is it an object to be renounced, nor is it an object to be actualized, nor is it an object to be cultivated. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.50 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither the maturation of past actions, nor does it possess the attributes of maturation. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle, too, is neither the maturation of past actions, nor does it possess the attributes of maturation. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.51 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither included within the world system of desire, nor is it included within the world system of form, nor is it included within the world system of formlessness. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle is also neither included within the world system of desire, nor is it included within the world system of form, nor is it included within the world system of formlessness. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.52 “For example, Subhūti, space comprises neither the attributes of desire, nor the attributes of freedom from desire, and in the same vein, it does not comprise the attributes of [the other aspects of the three poisons], up to and including the attributes free from delusion. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle, too, comprises neither the attributes of desire, nor the attributes free from desire, and in the same vein, it does not comprise the attributes of [the other aspects of the three poisons], up to and including the attributes free from delusion. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.53 “For example, Subhūti, space makes reference neither to the first setting of the mind on enlightenment, nor does it make reference to the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh, the eighth, the ninth, or the tenth setting of the mind on enlightenment. Similarly, Subhūti, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, too, makes no reference to any setting of the mind on enlightenment, from the first to the tenth. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.54 “For example, Subhūti, space is endowed neither with the level of bright insight, nor with the level of buddha nature, nor with the level of eightfold acceptance, nor with the level of insight, nor with the level of attenuated refinement, nor with the level of dispassion, nor with the level of [an arhat’s] spiritual realization, nor with the level of the pratyekabuddhas. Similarly, Subhūti, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, too, is endowed neither with the level of bright insight, nor with [any of the other levels], up to and including the level of the pratyekabuddhas. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.55 “For example, Subhūti, space is endowed neither with the fruit of having entered the stream, nor with [any of the other fruits], up to and including that of the level of the pratyekabuddhas. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle, too, is endowed neither with the fruit of having entered the stream, nor with [any of the other fruits], up to and including that of the level of the pratyekabuddhas. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.56 “For example, Subhūti, space is endowed neither with the level of the śrāvakas, nor with the level of the pratyekabuddhas, nor with the level of the genuinely perfect buddhas. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle, too, is endowed with neither the level of the śrāvakas, nor with the level of the pratyekabuddhas, nor with the level of the genuinely perfect buddhas. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.57 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither material, nor is it immaterial; neither is it revealed, nor is it unrevealed; neither is it obstructed, nor is it unobstructed; and neither is it associated with anything, nor is it disassociated from anything. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle, too, is neither material, nor is it immaterial; neither is it revealed, nor is it unrevealed; neither is it obstructed, nor is it unobstructed; and neither is it associated with anything, nor is it disassociated from anything. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.58 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither permanent, nor is it impermanent; neither is it imbued with happiness, nor is it imbued with suffering; and neither is it a self, nor is it not a self. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle, too, is neither permanent, nor is it impermanent; neither is it imbued with happiness, nor is it imbued with suffering; and neither is it a self, nor is it not a self. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.59 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither empty, nor is it not empty; neither is it with signs, nor is it signless; and neither does it have aspirations, nor is it without aspirations. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle, too, is neither empty, nor is it not empty; neither is it with signs, nor is it signless; and neither does it have aspirations, nor is it without aspirations. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.60 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither calm, nor is it not calm, and neither is it void, nor is it not void. Simila-

ly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle, too, is neither calm, nor is it not calm, and neither is it void, nor is it not void. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.61 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither darkness nor light. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle, too, is neither darkness nor light. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.62 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither apprehensible, [nor is it not apprehensible]. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle, too, is neither apprehensible, nor is it not apprehensible. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space.

13.63 “For example, Subhūti, space is neither expressible, nor is it inexpressible. Similarly, Subhūti, this Great Vehicle, too, is neither expressible, nor is it inexpressible. So it is that this vehicle is said to be equal to space. “For these reasons, Subhūti, this vehicle which is called the ‘Great Vehicle’ is said to be equal to space.

13.64 “Again, Subhūti, you have said before that just as space accommodates countless, innumerable sentient beings, similarly this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, also accommodates countless, innumerable sentient beings. That is so, Subhūti! That is so! You have spoken correctly. Just as, Subhūti, space accommodates countless, innumerable sentient beings, similarly, Subhūti, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, too, accommodates countless, innumerable sentient beings. One should know, Subhūti, that space is non-existent because sentient beings are non-existent. One should know that the Great Vehicle is non-existent because space is non-existent. Subhūti, for these reasons this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, too, accommodates countless, innumerable sentient beings. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because sentient beings, the Great Vehicle, and space are all non-apprehensible.

13.65 “Moreover, Subhūti, one should know that space is limitless because sentient beings are limitless. Also, one should know that the Great Vehicle is limitless because space is limitless. “For these reasons, Subhūti, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, also accommodates countless, innumerable sentient beings. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because sentient beings, the Great Vehicle, and space are all non-apprehensible.

13.66 “In the same vein, Subhūti, just as [all phenomena, attributes and attainments], up to and including the expanse of nirvāṇa, accommodate countless, innumerable sentient beings, in the same way, Subhūti, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, too, accommodates countless, innumerable, and limitless sentient beings. It is for these reasons, Subhūti, that this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, accommodates countless, innumerable, and limitless sentient beings.”

13.67 *This completes the thirteenth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Like Space.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTEEN:

LIKE SPACE

13.A The {Great} vehicle will not come to rest anywhere ... because resting is non-apprehensible {as ultimately rea-

l}, and so all things do not come to rest {from the perspective of ultimate reality}. On the other hand, the vehicle will come to rest {in relative reality} by way of its {being understood to be non-existent and therefore} non-resting {in ultimate reality} ... Just as the expanse of {relative} reality neither comes to rest {in ultimate reality}, nor does it not come to rest {in relative reality}, similarly ... the {Great} vehicle does not {either} come to rest {in ultimate reality}, nor does it not come to rest {in relative reality} ... Just as non-arising ... non-cessation, non-signlessness, non-affliction, non-purification and non-conditioning neither come to rest {in ultimate reality}, nor do they not come to rest {in relative reality}, similarly ... this {Great} vehicle does not come to rest {in ultimate reality}, nor does it not come to rest {in relative reality}. If you ask why ... it is because the essential nature of the expanse of {relative} reality neither comes to rest {in ultimate reality}, nor does it not come to rest {in relative reality} ... because the essential nature of the expanse of {relative} reality is empty of the essential nature of the expanse of {relative} reality. In the same vein, the essential nature of those other unconditioned phenomena, up to and including non-conditioning, is empty of non-conditioning, [and so forth].

13.B No one will attain emancipation by means of this {Great} vehicle ... because all those things associated with this vehicle, and with those who would attain emancipation, and that in which emancipation is attained, are non-existent {from the perspective of ultimate reality} and they are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}. Since all things are accordingly non-existent and non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}, who could attain emancipation by means of anything? In what could emancipation possibly be attained? If you ask why ... it is because the {individuated} self and other [posited subjects], up to and including the knower and the viewer, are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}. This being the case, the 'self' is never apprehensible. Similarly, [other posited subjects], from sentient beings and living creatures to knowers and viewers, are all non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} ... Similarly, the expanse of {relative} reality ... the real nature {of phenomena} ... the finality of {relative} existence ... the inconceivable expanse {of relative existence} ... the psycho-physical aggregates and sensory elements ... {the} sense fields ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {and} the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... those who have entered the stream ... those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, arhats, pratyekabuddhas, and those who have become ta-thāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas ... the fruit of having entered the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of being no longer subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... omniscience ... non-arising, non-cessation, non-affliction, non-purification and non-conditioning ... the limit of the past ... future and the present ... motion, non-motion, resting, and arising ... {and} decrease and increase are {all} non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}, owing to their **utter purity** {which is indicative that all things are non-arising and unceasing, neither afflicted nor purified and are without apprehension—where all such non-existent things are unconditioned}.

13.C Things are not apprehended {as ultimately real} because the expanse of {relative} reality is non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} ... because the expanse of {relative} reality, owing to its utter purity, has not been, is not and will not be apprehended by anyone. In the same vein, things are not apprehended {as ultimately real} because the real nature {of phenomena} ... the finality of {relative} existence ... emptiness ... the transcendent perfection of wisdom

... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {and} [the other aspects of emptiness] up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... those who have entered the stream ... up to and including genuinely perfect buddhas ... the fruit of having entered the stream ... up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... other unconditioned phenomena, up to and including non-conditioning ... {and} the first level [of realization] ... up to and including the tenth level {of realization} are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}, owing to their utter purity {which have not been, are not, and will not be apprehended by anyone} ... The ten levels {of realization} ... comprise (1) the level of bright insight, (2) the level of buddha nature, (3) the level of eightfold acceptance, (4) the level of insight, (5) the level of attenuated refinement, (6) the level of dispassion, (7) the level of [an arhat's] spiritual achievement, (8) the level of the pratyekabuddhas, (9) the level of the bodhisattvas, and (10) the actual level of the genuinely perfect buddhas. In the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, due to their utter purity, the first level is non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}, as are [the other levels], up to and including the tenth level ... because the first level ... up to and including the tenth level, owing to their utter purity, have not been, are not, and will not be apprehended by anyone. Similarly, in the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, the maturation of sentient beings ... the refinement of the buddhafi elds ... {and} the five eyes are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} due to their utter purity ... When great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner, owing to the non-apprehension of all things {as ultimately real}, they will attain emancipation in omniscience by means of the Great Vehicle.

13.D This great vehicle, which is called the Great Vehicle, overpowers and attains emancipation from the {karmic rebirth of the} world with its gods, humans, and antigods ... {and} is equal to space. Just as in space, coming, going, and abiding are not discernible {in relative reality}, so in this Great Vehicle, also, coming, going, and abiding are not discernible {in ultimate reality}. Just as in space, the limit of the past ... the limit of the future and the intervening [present] are non-apprehensible {in relative reality}, so in this Great Vehicle, also, the limit of the past ... the limit of the future and the intervening [present] are non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}. It is because it genuinely transcends the three times that this vehicle is called the Great Vehicle.

13.E This {Great} vehicle of the bodhisattvas comprises ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature with respect to non-entities ... all the gateways of mnemonic incantation and all the {one hundred and eleven} gateways of meditative stability ... {including} Heroic Valor ... up to and including the meditative stability named Unattached, Liberated, and Uncovered like Space ... the four applications of mindfulness, and ... [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

13.F This world, with its gods, humans, and antigods ... comprises the world system{s} of desire ... form, and ... formlessness ... If the world system{s} of desire ... form and ... formlessness ... {as well as} physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty

... the sense field{s} of sights ... sounds ... odors ... tastes ... tangibles, and ... mental phenomena ... visual consciousness, and so on, up to the mental faculty that arises from visually compounded sensory contact ... feelings originating from sensory contact that is visually compounded ... up to ... mentally compounded, were all endowed with attributes that are unmistaken, inalienable, incontrovertible, genuine, true, qualitative, permanent, stable, eternal, and unchanging, and they were not non-entities, then this supreme Great Vehicle would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However ... because all these, up to and including feelings arising from sensory contact that is mentally compounded are imagined, fabricated, and verbally constructed—their attributes being entirely impermanent, unstable, ephemeral, changeable, and so on—and because they are non-entities, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the {karmic rebirth of the} world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.G If the expanse of {relative} reality were an entity {in ultimate reality} and not a non-entity, then this supreme Great Vehicle would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods ... In the same vein ... if the real nature {of phenomena} ... the finality of {relative} existence and the inconceivable expanse {of relative existence} ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the attributes {and individuals} of the level of buddha nature ... of eightfold acceptance ... of those who enter the stream ... of those who are tied to one more rebirth ... of those who are no longer subject to rebirth ... of arhats ... of pratyekabuddhas ... of bodhisattvas, and ... of genuinely perfect buddhas ... the world with its gods, humans, and antigods ... {as well as} the [altruistic] thoughts cultivated by great bodhisattva beings from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, up to the time when they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, were entities and not non-entities {in ultimate reality}, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the {karmic rebirth of the} world with its gods, humans, and antigods. However ... because the [altruistic] thoughts cultivated by great bodhisattva beings from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, up to the time when they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment {and the rest}, are not entities {in ultimate reality}, this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, does overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.H If the adamantine pristine cognition of great bodhisattva beings were an entity {in ultimate reality} and not a non-entity, then this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, would not overpower and attain emancipation from the world with its gods, humans, and antigods ... {and} great bodhisattva beings, after realizing that all involuntary reincarnation through propensities and afflicted mental states are not entities, would not have to acquire {the non-dual state of} omniscience. However ... because the adamantine pristine cognition of great bodhisattva beings is not an entity {in ultimate reality}, great bodhisattva beings, after realizing that all involuntary reincarnation through propensities and afflicted mental states are not entities, do acquire {the non-dual state of} omniscience. They do overpower and attain emancipation from the {karmic rebirth of the} world with its gods, humans, and antigods.

13.I If the thirty-two major marks of a superior man that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas possess were entities {in ultimate reality} and not non-entities, then the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas would not overpower and grace the world, with its gods, humans, and antigods, with their magnificence and glory ... If the luminosity of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas were an entity {in ultimate reality} and not a non-entity, then the luminosity of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas would not pervade the world, with its gods, humans, and antigods, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges ... If the voice of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, endowed with its sixty aspects, were an entity {in ultimate reality} and not a non-entity, then the voice of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, endowed with its sixty aspects, would not envelop the countless, innumerable worlds of the ten directions ... If the doctrinal wheel of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas were an entity {in ultimate reality} and not a non-entity, then the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas would not promulgate in the world that which has not previously been turned in conformity with the sacred doctrine by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā {deity}, or anyone else ... If all the sentient beings for whom the tathāgatas turn the doctrinal wheel were entities {in ultimate reality} and not non-entities, then the tathāgatas would not bring all those sentient beings to attain final nirvāṇa, in the expanse of nirvāṇa where no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates is left behind. However because ... || the thirty-two major marks ... the luminosity of the tathāgatas ... the voice of the tathāgatas ... the doctrinal wheel of the tathāgatas ... {and} || all the sentient beings for whom the tathāgatas turn the doctrinal wheel are not entities {in ultimate reality} ... {they do overpower and outshine the world ... up to} the tathāgatas have indeed brought, are bringing, and will bring all those sentient beings to attain final nirvāṇa, in the expanse of nirvāṇa where no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates is left behind.

13.J This {Great} vehicle is equal to space ... {Just as} in space the eastern ... southern ... western ... and ... northern direction{s} ... the zenith, the nadir, and the four intermediate directions are ... not discernible ... {so too} in this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, the eastern direction {and the rest} ... are not discernible ... Just as ... space is neither long, nor short, nor square, nor round ... neither blue, nor yellow, nor red, nor white, nor crimson, nor pale yellow, nor golden, nor multicolored ... not the past, the future, or the present ... has neither decrease nor increase, and diminutions are non-apprehensible ... neither arises, nor ... cease{s}, nor is it stable, and alterations are non-apprehensible ... is neither virtuous nor non-virtuous ... neither determinate nor indeterminate ... not something that is seen, nor ... heard, remembered, or cognized ... neither an object of knowledge, nor ... an object of understanding, nor ... an object of comprehension, nor ... an object to be renounced, nor ... an object to be actualized, nor ... an object to be cultivated ... neither an object of knowledge, nor ... an object of understanding, nor ... an object of comprehension, nor ... an object to be renounced, nor ... an object to be actualized, nor ... an object to be cultivated ... neither the maturation of past actions, nor ... {with} attributes of maturation ... neither ... {of} the world system of desire, nor {of} the world system{s} of form ... {or} formlessness ... neither {comprised of} the attributes of desire {hatred and delusion}, nor {of} the attributes of freedom from desire {hatred and delusion} ... neither {makes reference} to the first setting of the mind on enlightenment, nor {up to and including} ... the tenth setting of the mind on enlightenment ... neither {is endowed} with the level of bright insight, nor with the level of buddha nature, nor with the level of eightfold acceptance, nor with the level of insight, nor with the level of attenuated refinement, nor with the level of dispassion, nor with the level of [an arhat's] spiritual realization, nor with the level of the pratyekabuddhas ... neither {is endowed} with the fruit of having entered the stream, nor with {the fruit} ... up to ... the level of

the pratyekabuddhas ... neither {is endowed} with the level of the śrāvakas, nor with the level of the pratyekabuddhas, nor with the level of the genuinely perfect buddhas ... is neither material, nor ... immaterial ... revealed {to anyone}, nor ... unrevealed {to anyone} ... obstructed {by phenomena}, nor ... unobstructed {by phenomena} ... associated with anything, nor ... disassociated from anything ... is neither permanent {phenomena}, nor ... impermanent {phenomena} ... imbued with happiness, nor ... imbued with suffering ... a {non-existent} self, nor ... not a {non-existent} self ... empty {of anything}, nor ... not empty {of anything} ... with {non-existent} signs, nor ... {without non-existent} sign{s} ... {with non-existent} aspirations, nor ... without {non-existent} aspirations ... neither calm {in non-existent motion}, nor ... not calm {in non-existent motion} ... void {of anything}, nor ... not void {of anything} ... darkness nor light {in the 'conception' of darkness and light} ... apprehensible {as a secondary 'thing'}, [nor not apprehensible {as a secondary 'thing'}] ... expressible {in non-existent motion}, nor ... inexpressible {in non-existent motion}. Similarly ... this Great Vehicle, too, is neither {long, nor short, nor square, nor round ... up to and including is neither} expressible, nor ... inexpressible {in non-existent motion} ... {It is} for these reasons ... this vehicle which is called the 'Great Vehicle' is said to be equal to space.

13.K Just as space accommodates countless, innumerable sentient beings, similarly this ... Great Vehicle, also accommodates countless, innumerable sentient beings ... One should know ... that space is non-existent because sentient beings are non-existent. One should know that the Great Vehicle is non-existent because space is non-existent. Moreover ... one should know that space is limitless because sentient beings are limitless. Also, one should know that the Great Vehicle is limitless because space is limitless. In the same vein ... just as [all phenomena, attributes and attainments], up to and including the expanse of nirvāṇa, accommodate countless, innumerable sentient beings, in the same way ... this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, too, accommodates countless, innumerable, and limitless sentient beings. It is for these reasons ... that this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, accommodates countless, innumerable, and limitless sentient beings ... because sentient beings, the Great Vehicle, and space are all non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}.

COMMENTARY

The path of awakening from a listener (śrāvaka) to a fully awakened buddha is actualized in 'relative' reality by way of the three vehicles (of the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas and bodhisattvas) and consists of ten levels, comprising (1) the **level of bright insight**, where it is said listeners get their first insight into the pure bright dharmas, (2) the **level of buddha nature**, where the listener receives the seed of the buddha nature, (3) the **level of eightfold acceptance** where the listener accepts the 'knowledge of phenomena' and 'subsequent knowledge' pertaining to each of the four noble truths, (4) the **level of insight**, where the listener has entered the stream to nirvāṇa (being the extinguishment of the three fires and cessation of the individual self) and experiences greater insight into all the dharmas, (5) the **level of attenuated refinement**, where the listener has eliminated two or three desire realm cankers and is now tied to one more rebirth, (6) the **level of dispassion**, where the listener has eliminated all attachment to the desire realm and is no longer subject to rebirth, (7) the **level of spiritual achievement**, where the listener has accomplished all work needed to be done and is now classified as an arhat, (8) the **level of the pratyekabuddhas**, where an arhat achieves individual enlightenment without entering into the maturity of the level of the bodhisattvas, (9) the **level of the bodhisattvas**, where an arhat takes birth after developing the great compassion to enlighten all sentient beings, and (10) the actual **level of the genuinely perfect buddhas**, where a bodhisattva has achieved 'unsurpassed' enlight-

enment.

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The Great Vehicle in 'relative' existence is the doctrine of non-duality ~ that teaches the unawakened mind of the conjured individuated being that all phenomena are without defining characteristics, and are thus non-existent as uniquely defined phenomena. Thus the Great Vehicle, like all phenomena in 'relative' existence, can be likened to space, that is without any individual defining characteristics, and beyond the three times of past, present and future. **Here the Great Vehicle is the path of perfecting the omniscient mind** ~ the threshold mind between 'ultimate' reality and 'relative' reality ~ which sees all phenomena as ultimately non-existent through the singular eye of non-duality, that without coming or going, abiding or resting, and transcending all limits of the three times, can be said in this manner to be 'equal to space'. **Here it is understood Our luminous mind is definitively without defining characteristics**, and is neither long, nor short, nor square, nor round ... neither blue, nor yellow, nor red, nor white, nor crimson, nor pale yellow, nor golden, nor multicolored ... neither past, nor future, nor the intervening present ... neither decreasing, nor increasing, nor diminishing, nor arising, nor ceasing, nor stabilizing, nor in any way altering ... neither virtuous nor non-virtuous, nor determinate nor indeterminate ... neither seen, nor heard, nor remembered, nor cognized ... neither an object of knowledge, nor an object of understanding, nor an object of comprehension, nor an object to be renounced, nor an object to be actualized, nor an object to be cultivated ... neither the maturing of past actions, nor possessing maturation ... neither in the world system of desire, nor in the world system of form, nor in the world system of formlessness ... neither comprised of desire, hatred, or delusion, nor of the attributes of freedom pertaining to these three poisons ... neither with the 'first' setting of the mind on enlightenment, nor up to the 'tenth' setting of the mind on enlightenment ... neither with the level of bright insight, nor the level of buddha nature, nor the level of eightfold acceptance, nor the level of insight, nor the level of attenuated refinement, nor the level of dispassion, nor the level of spiritual realization, nor the level of the pratyekabuddhas ... neither with the fruit of having entered the stream, nor with the fruit, up to the level of the pratyekabuddhas ... neither with the vehicle of the śrāvakas, nor the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, nor the vehicle of the genuinely perfect buddhas ... neither material, nor immaterial ... neither revealed, nor unrevealed ... neither obstructed by phenomena, nor unobstructed by phenomena ... neither associated with any thing, nor disassociated from any thing ... neither permanent, nor impermanent ... neither imbued with happiness, nor imbued with suffering ... neither a non-existent 'self', nor not a non-existent 'self' ... neither empty of any thing, nor not empty of any thing ... neither with non-existent signs, nor without non-existent signs ... neither with non-existent aspirations, nor without non-existent aspirations ... neither calm in non-existent motion, nor not calm in non-existent motion ... neither void of any thing, nor not void of any thing ... neither darkness nor light in the 'conception' of darkness and light ... neither apprehensible as a secondary 'thing', nor not apprehensible as a secondary 'thing' ... neither expressible in non-existent motion, nor not expressible in non-existent motion. For expression and calmness are actions of motion, which can only exist in the duality of motion ~ and not within the 'singularity' of Our non-dual mind, where there is no point A and no point B. It is here the great bodhisattva being abiding on the Great Vehicle overpowers and attains emancipation from the karmic rebirth of the world with its gods, humans, and antigods ... to free the luminous mind of the conjured individuated being.

14.1 The Blessed One then addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, you have said that this Great Vehicle neither comes nor goes, and nor does it stay. Subhūti, that is so! You have spoken correctly. Subhūti, in this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, no coming is indeed discernible, nor are going and abiding discernible. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because all things are unmoving; for that reason, they do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, and they do not even abide anywhere. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because physical forms do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, and they do not abide anywhere. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness also do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, and they do not abide anywhere.

14.2 “Subhūti, the nature of physical forms does not come from anywhere, it does not go anywhere, and it does not abide anywhere. Similarly, the real nature of physical forms, the essential nature of physical forms, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of physical forms do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, and they do not even abide anywhere.

14.3 “Similarly, Subhūti, the nature of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness does not come from anywhere, does not go anywhere, and does not even abide anywhere. Subhūti, the real nature of feelings, the essential nature of feelings, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of feelings, and similarly, the real nature of perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; the essential nature of consciousness, [and so forth]; and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of consciousness [and so forth] do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, and they do not even abide anywhere.

14.4 “Subhūti, the eyes, the nature of the eyes, the real nature of the eyes, the essential nature of the eyes, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of the eyes do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, and they do not even abide anywhere. Similarly, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, the mental faculty, the nature of the mental faculty [and so forth], the real nature of the mental faculty [and so forth], the essential nature of the mental faculty [and so forth], and the defining characteristics of the mental faculty [and so forth] do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, and they do not even abide anywhere.

14.5 “Subhūti, the earth element, the nature of the earth element, the real nature of the earth element, the essential nature of the earth element, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of the earth element do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, and they do not even abide anywhere. Similarly, the water element, the fire element, the wind element, the space element, and the consciousness element, along with the nature of the consciousness element [and so forth], the real nature of the consciousness element [and so forth], the essential nature of the consciousness element [and so forth], and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of the consciousness element [and so forth] do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, and they do not even abide anywhere.

14.6 “Subhūti, the real nature does not come from anywhere, does not go anywhere, and does not even abide anywhere. Subhūti, the nature of the real nature, the real nature of the real nature, the essential nature of the real

nature, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of the real nature do not come from anywhere, do not go anywhere, and do not even abide anywhere.

14.7 “Subhūti, the finality of existence, the nature of the finality of existence, the real nature of the finality of existence, the essential nature of the finality of existence, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of the finality of existence do not come from anywhere, do not go anywhere, and do not even abide anywhere.

14.8 “Subhūti, the inconceivable expanse, the nature of the inconceivable expanse, the real nature of the inconceivable expanse, the essential nature of the inconceivable expanse, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of the inconceivable expanse do not come from anywhere, do not go anywhere, and do not even abide anywhere.

14.9 “Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of generosity, the nature of the transcendent perfection of generosity, the real nature of the transcendent perfection of generosity, the essential nature of the transcendent perfection of generosity, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of the transcendent perfection of generosity do not come from anywhere, do not go anywhere, and do not even abide anywhere. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom, along with the nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and so forth], the real nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and so forth], the essential nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and so forth], and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and so forth] do not come from anywhere, do not go anywhere, and do not even abide anywhere.

14.10 “Subhūti, in the same vein, the applications of mindfulness, the nature of the applications of mindfulness, the real nature of the applications of mindfulness, the essential nature of the applications of mindfulness, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of the applications of mindfulness do not come from anywhere, do not go anywhere, and do not even abide anywhere. The same refrain as before should also be extensively applied [to the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

14.11 “Subhūti, enlightenment, the nature of enlightenment, the real nature of enlightenment, the essential nature of enlightenment, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of enlightenment do not come from anywhere, do not go anywhere, and do not even abide anywhere.

14.12 “Subhūti, the buddhas, the nature of the buddhas, the real nature of the buddhas, the essential nature of the buddhas, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of the buddhas do not come from anywhere, do not go anywhere, and do not even abide anywhere.

14.13 “Subhūti, conditioned elements, the nature of conditioned elements, the real nature of conditioned elements, the essential nature of conditioned elements, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of conditioned elements do not come from anywhere, do not go anywhere, and do not even abide anywhere.

14.14 “Subhūti, you have said that this vehicle apprehends neither the limit of past time, nor does it apprehend the limit of future time or the intervening [present], and that this vehicle is styled the Great Vehicle because it remains identical throughout the three times. That is so, Subhūti! That is so! It is just as you have spoken. This Great Vehicle apprehends neither the limit of past time, nor does it apprehend the limit of future time or the intervening [present]. Indeed, this vehicle is called the Great Vehicle because it remains identical throughout the three times. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because past time is empty of the past, future time is empty of the future, and the present time is empty of the present. The sameness of the three times is empty of the sameness of the three times. The Great Vehicle is empty of the Great Vehicle. The bodhisattva is empty of the bodhisattva.

14.15 “Subhūti, emptiness is not one, not two, not three, not four, not five, but nor is it anything else. Subhūti, this is the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, which maintains sameness throughout the three times. It does not apprehend [concepts of] ‘same’ and ‘not same.’ It does not apprehend desire and dispassion. It does not apprehend hatred and the absence of hatred. It does not apprehend delusion and the absence of delusion, or pride [and its absence]. In the same vein, it does not apprehend virtuous actions and non-virtuous actions, or even determinate and indeterminate [actions]. It does not apprehend permanence and impermanence. It does not apprehend happiness and suffering, or even the absence of suffering and the absence of happiness. It does not apprehend a self and a non-self. It does not apprehend the world system of desire. It does not apprehend the world system of form and the world system of formlessness. It does not apprehend the transcendence of the world system of desire. It does not apprehend the transcendence of the world system of form or the transcendence of the world system of formlessness. If you ask why, it is because non-entities are non-apprehensible.

14.16 “Subhūti, past physical forms are empty of past physical forms. Future physical forms are empty of future physical forms. Present physical forms are empty of present physical forms. Similarly, past feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of past consciousness, [and so forth]. Future consciousness is empty of future consciousness. Present consciousness is empty of present consciousness.

14.17 “Subhūti, in emptiness, past physical forms are non-apprehensible. The past itself is emptiness and this is non-apprehensible because emptiness is indeed emptiness. So how could past physical forms be apprehended in emptiness? In emptiness, future and present physical forms are non-apprehensible. They are non-apprehensible because emptiness is indeed emptiness. So how could future and present physical forms be apprehended in emptiness?

14.18 “In emptiness, past feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-apprehensible. They are non-apprehensible because emptiness is indeed emptiness. So how could past feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness be apprehended in emptiness? In emptiness, future and present feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-apprehensible. They are non-apprehensible because emptiness is indeed emptiness. So how could future and present feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions and consciousness be apprehended in emptiness?

14.19 “Similarly, Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of generosity does not apprehend the limit of past time. Like-

wise, the transcendent perfection of generosity does not apprehend the limit of future time, nor the present. Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of generosity does not apprehend the sameness of the three times. Subhūti, in the sameness of things, past time is non-apprehensible, nor are the future and the present apprehensible. Subhūti, sameness does not apprehend sameness, even provisionally. So how could past time be apprehended in sameness! Similarly, how could future and present time be apprehended?

14.20 “Subhūti, the same refrain should be extensively applied also to the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom, just as in the case of the transcendent perfection of generosity.

14.21 “Moreover, Subhūti, the applications of mindfulness do not apprehend the limit of past time. Similarly, the applications of mindfulness do not apprehend the limit of future time, nor the present. The applications of mindfulness do not apprehend the sameness of the three times. In the same vein, [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, do not apprehend the limit of past time. Similarly, the noble eightfold path [and so forth] do not apprehend the limit of future time, nor the present. The noble eightfold path [and so forth] do not apprehend the sameness of the three times. Similarly, Subhūti, the ten powers of the tathāgatas do not apprehend the limit of past time. Similarly, the ten powers of the tathāgatas do not apprehend the limit of future time, nor the present. In the same vein, [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, do not apprehend the limit of past time. Similarly, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas [and so forth] do not apprehend the limit of future time, nor the present. The eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas [and so forth] do not apprehend the sameness of the three times.

14.22 “Moreover, Subhūti, ordinary people do not apprehend the limit of past time. Similarly, ordinary people do not apprehend the limit of future time, or the present. Ordinary people do not apprehend the sameness of the three times. If you ask why, it is owing to the non-apprehension of sentient beings. In the same vein, śrāvakas do not apprehend the limit of past time. Śrāvakas do not apprehend the limit of future time. Śrāvakas do not apprehend the present. Similarly, śrāvakas do not apprehend the sameness of the three times. If you ask why, it is owing to the non-apprehension of sentient beings. Similarly, the pratyekabuddhas, and likewise the bodhisattvas and the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas do not apprehend the limit of past time. The tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas [and so forth] do not apprehend the limit of future time, nor the present time. Similarly, the tathāgatas, and so forth, do not apprehend the sameness of the three times. If you ask why, it is owing to the non-apprehension of sentient beings.

14.23 “So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, having trained accordingly with respect to the three times, should perfect omniscience. Subhūti, this is the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings, designated as the sameness of the three times. Abiding therein, great bodhisattva beings overpower the world with its gods, humans, and antigods, and they attain emancipation in omniscience.”

14.24 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Well indeed has the Lord taught the Great Ve-

hicle of great bodhisattva beings! Venerable Lord! Great bodhisattva beings of the past, who have trained in this supreme vehicle, have attained omniscience. Venerable Lord! Great bodhisattva beings of the future, also, having trained in this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, will acquire omniscience. Venerable Lord! Great bodhisattva beings of the present who are limitless in number, [residing] in the innumerable, countless, and limitless world systems of the ten directions, having trained in this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, currently acquire omniscience. Venerable Lord! That is why this is the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings.”

14.25 The Blessed One then replied to Senior Subhūti, “Subhūti, that is so! Subhūti, that is so! It is as you have said. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings of the past who have trained in this Great Vehicle have attained omniscience. The tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who will appear in the future, also, having trained in this Great Vehicle, will acquire omniscience. The innumerable tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who are alive at present, residing in the innumerable, countless, and limitless worlds of the ten directions, also, having trained in this Great Vehicle, now acquire omniscience.”

14.26 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, how do they investigate these phenomena? Senior Subhūti, what is a great bodhisattva being? What is the transcendent perfection of wisdom? What is their investigation?” Senior Subhūti replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, you ask what is a bodhisattva. The term ‘bodhisattva’ designates one who is simply an enlightened being. On the basis of enlightenment, such beings know the modalities of all things, but they are not at all fixated on those phenomena.”

14.27 “What are the modalities of all things that they know—the phenomena on which they are not fixated?” “They know the modality of physical forms, and yet they are without fixation in that respect. Similarly, they know the modalities of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and yet they are without fixation on them. In the same vein, as before, they know the modalities of [other phenomena], up to and including the sense fields, and yet they are without fixation on them. Similarly, they know the modalities of the sensory elements, and yet they are without fixation on them. Similarly, they know the modalities of the applications of mindfulness, and yet they are without fixation on them. In the same vein, they know the modalities of [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and likewise, of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, of all [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and yet they are without fixation on them.”

14.28 “Senior Subhūti, what constitutes the modalities of all things that great bodhisattva beings know—the things on which they are not fixated?” “Senior Śāradvatīputra, the modalities, indications, and signs whereby phenomena are grasped—that is to say the sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, mental phenomena, external and internal attributes, and so forth, through which conditioned and unconditioned things are grasped—constitute the modalities that they definitively know. “Senior Śāradvatīputra, you also asked what is the transcendent perfection of wisdom. It is the intelligence that is far removed. This is why it is called the ‘transcendent perfection of wisdom.’”

14.29 “From what is it far removed?” “Śāradvatīputra, it is far removed from the psycho-physical aggregates, the

sensory elements, and the sense fields. It is far removed from all afflicted mental states and opinions. It is far removed from the six classes of living beings. This is why it is called the ‘transcendent perfection of wisdom.’ It is far removed from the transcendent perfection of generosity, and from the transcendent perfections of ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, and meditative concentration. It is far removed from the transcendent perfection of wisdom. This is why it is called the ‘transcendent perfection of wisdom.’

14.30 “Similarly, it is far removed from the emptiness of internal phenomena, and it is far removed from the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. This is why it is called the ‘transcendent perfection of wisdom.’

14.31 “It is far removed from the applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and from the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. This is why it is called the ‘transcendent perfection of wisdom.’

14.32 “It is far removed from the understanding of all phenomena, from the understanding of the aspects of the path, and from omniscience. This is why it is called the ‘transcendent perfection of wisdom.’ “Senior Śāradvatīputra, for these reasons it is far removed. This is why it is called the ‘transcendent perfection of wisdom.’

14.33 “Senior Śāradvatīputra, you also asked what constitutes investigation. Senior Śāradvatīputra, in this context, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not investigate the notion that physical forms are imbued with happiness. Nor do they investigate the notions that physical forms are imbued with suffering, or that they are not imbued with suffering, or indeed that they are not imbued with happiness, or that they are permanent or impermanent. In the same vein, as mentioned previously, they do not investigate the notions that physical forms are a self or not a self, empty or not empty, with signs or signless, having aspirations or lacking aspirations, calm or not calm, void or not void, and so on. Similarly, they do not investigate the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are a self; in the same vein they do not investigate [those other notions], including the notions that these are void or not void.

14.34 “The same refrain should be applied to the transcendent perfection of generosity, and also it should be applied to the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, it should be applied to the emptiness of internal phenomena and to the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Similarly, it should be applied to the applications of mindfulness and to [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and to the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, it should be applied to all phenomena, and in the same way it should be applied to all the gateways of meditative stability and to all the gateways of mnemonic incantation.

14.35 “Similarly, they do not investigate the notions that omniscience is permanent or impermanent, and similarly, the notions that it is imbued with happiness or suffering, that it is not imbued with suffering or happiness, that it is a

self or not a self, that it is empty or not empty, that it is with signs or signless, that it is having aspirations or lacking aspirations, that it is calm or not calm, and that it is void or not void. Senior Śāradvatīputra, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they investigate all things in that manner.”

14.36 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, why do you say that the non-arising of physical forms is not physical form, and that the non-arising of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are not consciousness [and so forth]? Similarly, why do you say that the non-arising of [all things], up to and including omniscience, is not omniscience [and so forth]?” Senior Subhūti then replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, physical forms are empty of physical forms. Senior Śāradvatīputra, the emptiness of physical forms is not physical forms, and nor is there arising of physical forms. For these reasons, Senior Śāradvatīputra, the non-arising of physical forms is not physical forms. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of consciousness [and the other aggregates]. Senior Śāradvatīputra, the emptiness [of these aggregates] is not consciousness [and so forth], and nor is there arising of consciousness [and so forth]. For these reasons, Senior Śāradvatīputra, the non-arising of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is not consciousness [and the other aggregates].

14.37 “Senior Śāradvatīputra, the transcendent perfection of generosity is empty of the transcendent perfection of generosity. Emptiness is not the transcendent perfection of generosity—there is no arising. In the same vein, as before, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom are empty of the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and so forth]. Emptiness is not the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and so forth]—there is no arising. For these reasons, Senior Śāradvatīputra, the non-arising of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is not the transcendent perfection of wisdom. The same refrain should be also extensively applied, as before, to the emptiness of internal phenomena [and so forth].

14.38 “For these reasons, Senior Śāradvatīputra, the non-arising of physical forms is not physical forms—indeed there is no arising. Similarly, the non-arising of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is not consciousness [and the other aggregates]—indeed there is no arising. Similarly, the non-arising of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, is not omniscience [and the rest]—indeed there is no arising.”

14.39 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, why do you say that the imperishability of physical forms is not physical forms. Similarly, why do you say that the imperishability of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is not consciousness [and the other aggregates]? In the same vein, why do you say that the imperishability of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, is not omniscience [and the rest]?” Senior Subhūti then replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, all things that are imperishable, that constitute physical forms, and that are without duality are neither conjoined nor disjoined, and they share a single defining characteristic in that they are all immaterial, unrevealed, unimpeded, and without defining characteristics. Similarly, all those things that are imperishable, that constitute feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and that are without duality are neither

conjoined nor disjoined, and they share a single defining characteristic in that they are all immaterial, unrevealed, unimpeded, and without defining characteristics. The same refrain should also be applied to the sensory elements and sense fields, exactly as indicated here in the context of the psycho-physical aggregates. Similarly, it should be extensively applied to [all the other attributes and attainments] as well, up to and including omniscience.

14.40 “For these reasons, Senior Śāradvatīputra, the imperishability of physical forms is not physical forms. Similarly, the imperishability of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is not consciousness [and the other aggregates]. Similarly, the imperishability of [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, is not omniscience [and the rest].”

14.41 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, why do you say that that which is termed ‘physical forms’ is to be counted as imperishable? In the same vein, why do you say that [all attributes and attainments], up to and including that which is termed ‘omniscience,’ are to be counted as imperishable?”

14.42 Senior Subhūti replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra, “Physical forms are not one thing, and non-arising another. The nature of non-arising is indeed physical forms. The nature of physical forms is indeed non-arising. Similarly, feelings, too, are not one thing, perceptions are not one thing, formative predispositions are not one thing, consciousness is not one thing, and non-arising another, [distinct from these]. The nature of consciousness is indeed non-arising. The nature of non-arising is indeed consciousness. For these reasons, Senior Śāradvatīputra, that which is termed ‘physical forms’ is to be counted as imperishable. Similarly, that which is termed ‘feelings,’ ‘perceptions,’ and ‘formative predispositions,’ and that which is termed ‘consciousness’ are to be counted as imperishable.

14.43 “In the same vein, as before, Senior Śāradvatīputra, omniscience is not one thing, and non-arising another. The nature of non-arising is indeed omniscience. The nature of omniscience is indeed non-arising. For these reasons, Senior Śāradvatīputra, that which is termed ‘omniscience’ is to be counted as imperishable.”

14.44 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Furthermore, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom are engaged in the investigation of these phenomena, owing to their utter purity they do consider the non-arising of physical forms. Similarly, owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. Similarly, owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of a self. In the same vein, owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of [other postulated subjects], up to and including knowers and viewers. Similarly, owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of [the transcendent perfections], from the transcendent perfection of generosity up to the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of the applications of mindfulness. Similarly, owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of [the other fruitional attributes, up to and including] the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of all the meditative stabilities and all the gateways of mnemonic incantation. Owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of [the

other fruitional states], up to and including omniscience. Similarly, owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of the attributes of ordinary people. Owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of ordinary people themselves. Similarly, owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of the attributes of those who have entered the stream, as well as those individuals who have entered the stream, the attributes of those tied to one further rebirth, those individuals who are tied to one further rebirth, the attributes of those who are no longer subject to rebirth, those individuals who are no longer subject to rebirth, the attributes of the arhats, the arhats themselves, the attributes of the pratyekabuddhas, the pratyekabuddhas themselves, the attributes of the bodhisattvas, the bodhisattvas themselves, the attributes of the buddhas, and the buddhas themselves. Owing to their utter purity, they do consider the non-arising of the genuinely perfect buddhas.”

14.45 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, as I understand the meaning of your words, physical forms are non-arising. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-arising. In the same vein, [all attributes], up to and including enlightenment, are non-arising. Even the attributes of the buddhas are non-arising. If that were so, those who enter the stream would already have attained the fruit of entering the stream, and also arhats would have already attained arhatship. Similarly, those who follow the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas would have already attained their individual enlightenment. Also, great bodhisattva beings would have absolutely attained omniscience. The five classes of living beings would not even be differentiated. Great bodhisattva beings would have absolutely attained the five degrees of enlightenment, even though they are without insight.

14.46 “Senior Subhūti, if all things were non-arising, why should those who seek the fruit of having entered the stream cultivate the path in order to abandon the three fetters? Why should those who seek the fruit of being tied to only one more rebirth cultivate the path in order to abandon desire, hatred, and delusion? Why should those who seek the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth cultivate the path in order to abandon the five fetters associated with the lower realms? Why should those who seek the fruit of arhatship cultivate the path in order to abandon the five fetters associated with the higher realms? Why should [pratyekabuddhas] cultivate the path of individual enlightenment, according to which all formative predispositions are dependently originated? Again, why should great bodhisattva beings practice austerity and undergo myriad sufferings for the sake of sentient beings? Why should the tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment? Why should the tathāgatas turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine?” Senior Subhūti then replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, I do not hold that [attainments] are designated with respect to things that are non-arising. I do not hold that stream-entry and the fruit of stream-entry are found in non-arising. Similarly, I do not hold that arhatship and the fruit of arhatship are found in non-arising. I do not hold that [the status of] a pratyekabuddha and [the fruit of] individual enlightenment are found in non-arising.

14.47 “Senior Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas do not engage in the practice of austerity with the perception of hardship. If you ask why, Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is because when the perception of hardship is developed, it will not be possible to act for the benefit of innumerable, countless sentient beings. On the contrary, Senior Śāradvatīputra once great bodhisattva beings have developed, without apprehending anything, the perception of sentient beings as their father, the perception [of sentient beings] as their mother, the perception [of sentient beings] as their child,

and the perception [of sentient beings] as themselves, they should develop the mind of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Just as the notion of individual selves is entirely non-existent in all respects and is non-apprehensible, in that same manner they should develop this perception with regard to all inner and outer phenomena. If they develop their perceptions in that manner, the notion of hardship will not arise. If you ask why, it is because, in all respects, in each and every way, they neither acquire nor do they apprehend all these phenomena.

14.48 “Senior Śāradvatīputra, I do not hold that the tathāgatas are found in non-arising. I do not hold that the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect buddhas are found in non-arising, nor do I hold that the tathāgatas turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine [therein]. There is nothing at all that will be attained on the basis of things that are non-arising.”

14.49 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, do you hold that attainment will ensue on the basis of things that are non-arising, or else do you hold that something will be attained on the basis of things that are arising?” “Senior Śāradvatīputra, I do not hold that attainment will ensue on the basis of things that are non-arising nor do I hold that anything will be attained on the basis of things that are arising.”

14.50 “Senior Subhūti, is there no attainment? Is there no clear realization?” “Senior Śāradvatīputra, there is attainment and there is clear realization, but not in terms of duality. Yet, Senior Śāradvatīputra, attainment and clear realization refer to worldly conventions. Similarly, those who enter the stream are also designated according to worldly convention. Similarly, [the other realized beings], including arhats, pratyekabuddhas, and the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect buddhas, too, are designated on the basis of worldly convention. But, ultimately, there is no attainment. There is no clear realization either, and there are no [realized beings], up to and including genuinely perfect buddhas.”

14.51 “Senior Subhūti, as attainment and clear realization are exclusively designated according to worldly convention, is it the case that the five classes of living beings are also differentiated owing to worldly convention but not in ultimate reality?” “Senior Śāradvatīputra, that is so! Just as attainment and clear realization are exclusively designated according to worldly convention, it is the case that the five classes of living beings also are differentiated owing to worldly convention but not in ultimate reality. If you ask why, Senior Śāradvatīputra, in ultimate reality there are no past actions, no ripening, no affliction, and no purification.”

14.52 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, do non-arising things arise; or else, does arising itself arise?” “Senior Śāradvatīputra, I do not hold that non-arising things arise.”

14.53 “Senior Subhūti, what non-arising things do you not hold to arise?” “Senior Śāradvatīputra, I do not hold the emptiness of the essential nature with respect to non-arising physical forms to arise. Similarly, I do not hold the emptiness of the essential nature with respect to unarisen feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness to arise. Senior Śāradvatīputra, in the same vein, I do not hold the emptiness of the essential nature with respect to [any other] non-arising [attributes], up to and including enlightenment, to arise.”

14.54 “Senior Subhūti, does arising arise; or else, does non-arising arise?” “Senior Śāradvatīputra, arising does not

arise, nor does non-arising arise. If you ask why, Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is because both things that arise and things that are non-arising are neither conjoined nor disjoined, and they share a single defining characteristic in that they are all immaterial, unrevealed, unimpeded, and without defining characteristics. For these reasons, Senior Śāradvatīputra, arising does not arise, nor does non-arising arise.”

14.55 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, are you inspired to say that things are non-arising, that things are indeed non-arising? Senior Subhūti, are you inspired to say that the statement ‘things are non-arising, things are indeed non-arising’ is itself non-arising?” Senior Subhūti then replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, I am inspired to say that things are non-arising, that things are indeed non-arising. Senior Śāradvatīputra, I am also inspired to say that the statement ‘things are non-arising, things are indeed non-arising’ is itself non-arising. If you ask why, Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is because the non-arising [of these statements], the act of inspiration, the statements that are expressed, and the things that do not arise are all neither conjoined nor disjoined, and they share a single defining characteristic in that they are all immaterial, unrevealed, unimpeded, and without defining characteristics.”

14.56 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, is it then the case that those things are indeed non-arising, that the act of inspiration is also non-arising, that those statements are also non-arising, and that those comments of yours, commencing therefrom, are also non-arising?” “Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is so! It is just as you have spoken! These things are indeed non-arising. The act of inspiration too is non-arising. Those statements too are non-arising, and the things that I was inspired to say, commencing therefrom, are also non-arising! If you ask why, Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is because physical forms are non-arising. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-arising. Similarly, the eyes are non-arising, and [all other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, are non-arising. Similarly, the earth element is non-arising, and [all other elements], up to and including the element of consciousness, are non-arising. The formative predispositions of the body are non-arising. Similarly, the formative predispositions of speech and the formative predispositions of mind are non-arising. In the same vein, [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are non-arising. Senior Śāradvatīputra, for these reasons, these [aforementioned] statements are indeed non-arising. The one who is inspired too is non-arising, and those things that I was inspired to say, commencing therefrom, are also non-arising!”

14.57 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, you should be established as supreme among those who teach the sacred doctrine! If you ask why, Senior Subhūti, it is because however you are questioned, you elaborate precisely, in the correct manner!” “It is as you have spoken because all things are without support!”

14.58 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra again addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, what are all the things that are without support?” Senior Subhūti replied, “Senior Śāradvatīputra, physical forms, being empty of inherent existence, are internally without support, and also they are externally without support, and nor do they have any support in between those two. Similarly, Senior Śāradvatīputra, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, being empty of inherent existence, are internally without support, and also they are externally with-

out support, and nor do they have any support in between those two. In the same vein, as before, the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty, being empty of inherent existence, are internally without support, and also they are externally without support, and nor do they have any support in between those two. Similarly, sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena, being empty of inherent existence, are internally without support, and also they are externally without support, and nor do they have any support in between those two.

14.59 “Senior Śāradvatīputra, likewise the transcendent perfection of generosity, being empty of inherent existence, is internally without support, and also it is externally without support, and nor does it have any support in between those two. Similarly, the transcendent perfections of ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and likewise, wisdom, being empty of inherent existence, are internally without support, and also they are externally without support, and nor do they have any support in between those two.

14.60 “Similarly, [the eighteen aspects of emptiness], from the emptiness of internal phenomena, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, being empty of inherent existence, are internally without support, and also they are externally without support, nor do they have any support in between those two.

14.61 “Similarly, the applications of mindfulness, being empty of inherent existence, are internally without support and they are also externally without support, nor do they have any support in between those two. Similarly [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, being empty of inherent existence, are internally without support, and also they are externally without support, nor do they have any support in between those two.

14.62 “Senior Śāradvatīputra, for these reasons all things are without support because they are empty of inherent existence. Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is in this way that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should refine physical forms, and similarly, refine feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. In the same vein, [it is in this way that] they should refine [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

14.63 *This completes the fourteenth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Neither Coming Nor Going.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOURTEEN:
NEITHER COMING NOR GOING

14.A In this supreme vehicle, the Great Vehicle, no coming is indeed discernible, nor are going and abiding discernible ... because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} all things are unmoving; for that reason, they do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, and they do not even abide anywhere. If you ask why ... it is because physical forms do not come from anywhere, they do not go anywhere, and they do not abide anywhere. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, the mental faculty ... the earth ... the water ... the fire ... the wind ... the space ... and the consciousness eleme-

nt{s} ... the real nature {of phenomena} ... the finality of {relative} existence ... the inconceivable expanse {of relative existence} ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and the other causal and fruitional attributes}, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... enlightenment ... the buddhas ... conditioned elements, {as well as} the {abiding} nature of {physical forms up to and including} conditioned elements, the real nature of {physical forms up to and including} conditioned elements, the essential nature of {physical forms up to and including} conditioned elements, and the defining characteristics of the essential nature of {physical forms up to and including} conditioned elements do not come from anywhere, do not go anywhere, and do not even abide anywhere.

14.B This Great Vehicle apprehends neither the limit of past time ... future time or the intervening [present]. Indeed, this vehicle is called the Great Vehicle because it remains identical throughout the three times ... because past time is empty of the past, future time is empty of the future, and the present time is empty of the present. The sameness of the three times is empty of the sameness of the three times. The Great Vehicle is empty of the Great Vehicle. The bodhisattva is empty of the bodhisattva ... Emptiness is not one, not two, not three, not four, not five, but nor is it anything else ... This is the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, which maintains sameness throughout the three times. It does not apprehend [concepts of] ‘same’ and ‘not same’ ... desire and dispassion ... hatred and the absence of hatred ... delusion and the absence of delusion, or pride [and its absence] ... virtuous actions and non-virtuous actions, or even determinate and indeterminate [actions] ... permanence and impermanence ... happiness and suffering, or even the absence of suffering and ... happiness ... a self and a non-self ... the world system{s} of desire ... form and ... formlessness ... {and} the transcendence of the world system{s} of desire ... form or ... formlessness ... because non-entities are non-apprehensible.

14.C Past physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of past {physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and} consciousness {and likewise future and present physical forms, and so forth, are empty of future and present physical forms, and so forth} ... In emptiness, past {future and present} physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-apprehensible ... because emptiness is indeed emptiness. So how could {these} ... be apprehended in emptiness? ... Similarly, ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity || ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {and} [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... || {do} not apprehend the limit of past time ... the limit of future time, nor the present ... {and do} not apprehend the sameness of the three times {from the perspective of non-duality} ... In the sameness of {all} things, past time is non-apprehensible, nor are the future and the present apprehensible ... Sameness does not apprehend sameness, even provisionally {within the illusory interval of “relative” reality}. So how could past time be apprehended in sameness! Similarly, how could future and present time be apprehended? ... Moreover ... ordinary people ... śrāvakas ... pratyekabuddhas ... bodhisattvas and the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas do not apprehend the limit of past time ... the limit of future time, nor the present time ... {and} do not apprehend the sameness of the three times ... owing to the non-apprehension of sentient beings. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, having

trained accordingly with respect to the three times, should perfect omniscience ... This is the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings, designated as the sameness of the three times. Abiding therein, great bodhisattva beings overpower the world with its gods, humans, and antigods, and they attain emancipation in omniscience.

14.D Great bodhisattva beings of the past who have trained in this Great Vehicle have attained omniscience. The tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who will appear in the future, also, having trained in this Great Vehicle, will acquire omniscience. The innumerable tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who are alive at present, residing in the innumerable, countless, and limitless worlds of the ten directions, also, having trained in this Great Vehicle, now acquire omniscience. || That is why this is the Great Vehicle of great bodhisattva beings {which remains identical throughout the three times.} ||

14.E The term ‘bodhisattva’ designates one who is simply an enlightened being. On the basis of enlightenment, such beings know the modalities of all things, but they are not at all fixated on those phenomena ... They know the modality of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and ... [other phenomena], up to and including the sense fields ... the sensory elements ... the applications of mindfulness, and ... [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and ... all [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and yet they are without fixation on them ... The modalities, indications, and signs whereby phenomena are grasped—that is to say the sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, mental phenomena, external and internal attributes, and so forth, through which conditioned and unconditioned things are grasped—constitute the modalities that they definitively know.

14.F The transcendent perfection of wisdom ... is the intelligence that is far removed. This is why it is called the ‘transcendent perfection of wisdom.’ ... It is {the non-dual intelligence which is} far removed from {the dualistic entities of} the psycho-physical aggregates, the sensory elements, and the sense fields ... all afflicted mental states and opinions ... the six classes of living beings ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance ... meditative concentration ... {and} wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the understanding of all phenomena ... the understanding of the aspects of the path {of omniscience}, and from omniscience. This is why it is called the ‘transcendent perfection of wisdom.’ ... For these reasons it is far removed.

14.G What constitutes investigation {?} ... In this context, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not investigate the notion that physical forms || ... {as well as} feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... all phenomena, and ... all the gateways of meditative stability and ... mnemonic incantation ... {up to and including} omniscience ... || are imbued {or not} with happiness ... {or} suffering ... are permanent or impermanent ... are a self or

not a self, {are} empty or not empty, {are} with signs or signless ... {have} aspirations or {are} lacking aspirations, {are} calm or not calm, {are} void or not void, and so on.

14.H The emptiness of physical forms is not physical forms, and nor is there arising of physical forms. For these reasons ... the non-arising of physical forms is not physical forms ... The transcendent perfection of generosity ... {up to and including} the transcendent perfection of wisdom are empty of the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and so forth]. Emptiness is not the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and so forth]—there is no arising. For these reasons ... the non-arising of the transcendent perfection of wisdom {and so forth} is not the transcendent perfection of wisdom {and so forth} ... For these reasons ... the non-arising of physical forms is not physical forms—indeed there is no arising. Similarly, the non-arising of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is not consciousness [and the other aggregates]—indeed there is no arising. Similarly, the non-arising of [all other attributes and attainments] {including the emptinesses}, up to and including omniscience, is not omniscience [and the rest]—indeed there is no arising.

14.I All things that are imperishable, that constitute physical forms {in relative reality}, and that are without duality {from the perspective of ultimate reality} are neither conjoined nor disjoined, and they share a single defining characteristic in that they are all immaterial, unrevealed, unimpeded, and without defining characteristics. Similarly, all those things that are imperishable, that constitute feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {and all other attributes and attainments ... up to and including omniscience (in relative reality)}, and that are without duality {from the perspective of ultimate reality} are neither conjoined nor disjoined, and they share a single defining characteristic in that they are all immaterial, unrevealed, unimpeded, and without defining characteristics. For these reasons ... the imperishability of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is not consciousness {and the rest} ... the imperishability of [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, is not omniscience [and the rest] ... Physical forms ... {up to and including} omniscience is not one thing, and non-arising another. The nature of non-arising is indeed omniscience {and the rest}. The nature of omniscience {and the rest} is indeed non-arising. For these reasons ... that which is termed 'omniscience' {and the rest} is to be counted as imperishable.

14.J When great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom are engaged in the investigation of these phenomena, owing to their utter purity {which is indicative that all things are non-arising and unceasing, neither afflicted nor purified and are without apprehension—where all such non-existent things are unconditioned} they do consider the non-arising of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... a self ... up to and including knowers and viewers ... the transcendent perfection of generosity up to the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {and} [the other fruitional attributes, up to and including] the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the meditative stabilities and all the gateways of mnemonic incantation ... [the other fruitional states], up to and including omniscience ... the attributes of ordinary people ... ordinary people themselves ... the attributes of those who have entered the stream ... those individuals who have entered the stream, the attributes of those tied to one further rebirth, those individuals who are tied to one further rebirth, the attributes of those who are no longer subject to rebirth, those individuals who

are no longer subject to rebirth, the attributes of the arhats, the arhats themselves, the attributes of the pratyekabuddhas, the pratyekabuddhas themselves, the attributes of the bodhisattvas, the bodhisattvas themselves, the attributes of the buddhas, and the buddhas themselves.

14.K “If all things were non-arising, why should those who seek the fruit of having entered the stream cultivate the path in order to abandon the three fetters? ... {up to} Why should great bodhisattva beings practice austerity and undergo myriad sufferings for the sake of sentient beings? Why should the tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment?” ... “Senior Śāradvatīputra, I do not hold that [attainments] are designated with respect to things that are non-arising. I do not hold that stream-entry and the fruit of stream-entry are found in non-arising. Similarly, I do not hold that arhatship ... and [the fruit of] individual enlightenment are found in non-arising ... Bodhisattvas do not engage in the practice of austerity with the perception of hardship. If you ask why ... it is because when the perception of hardship is developed, it will not be possible to act for the benefit of innumerable, countless sentient beings. On the contrary ... once great bodhisattva beings have developed, without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, the perception of sentient beings as their father, the perception [of sentient beings] as their mother, the perception [of sentient beings] as their child, and the perception [of sentient beings] as themselves, they should develop the {non-dual} mind of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Just as the notion of individual selves is entirely non-existent in all respects and is non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}, in that same manner they should develop this perception with regard to all inner and outer phenomena. If they develop their perceptions in that manner, the notion of hardship will not arise ... because, in all respects, in each and every way, they neither acquire nor do they apprehend {as ultimately real} all these phenomena ... {Moreover} I do not hold that the tathāgatas ... the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect buddhas are found in non-arising, nor do I hold that the tathāgatas turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine [therein]. There is nothing at all that will be attained on the basis of things that are non-arising.”

14.L {From the perspective of ultimate reality} I do not hold that attainment will ensue on the basis of things that are non-arising nor do I hold that anything will be attained on the basis of things that are arising ... {However} there is attainment and there is clear realization {in relative reality}, but not in terms of duality {perception}. Yet ... attainment and clear realization refer to {dualistic} worldly conventions. Similarly, those who enter the stream ... including arhats, pratyekabuddhas, and the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect buddhas, too, are designated on the basis of {dualistic} worldly convention. But, ultimately, there is no attainment. There is no clear realization either, and there are no [realized beings], up to and including genuinely perfect buddhas ... Just as attainment and clear realization are exclusively designated according to {dualistic} worldly convention, it is the case that the five classes of living beings also are differentiated owing to {dualistic} worldly convention but not in ultimate reality. If you ask why ... in ultimate reality there are no past actions, no ripening, no affliction, and no purification.

14.M I do not hold that non-arising things arise ... I do not hold the emptiness of the essential nature with respect to non-arising physical forms to arise. Similarly ... I do not hold the emptiness of the essential nature with respect to [any other] non-arising [attributes], up to and including enlightenment, to arise ... Arising does not arise, nor does non-arising arise ... because both things that arise and things that are non-arising are neither conjoined nor disjoined {with anything else}, and they share a single defining characteristic in that they are all immaterial, unrevealed, unim-

peded, and without defining characteristics ... I am inspired to say that things are non-arising, that things are indeed non-arising ... I am also inspired to say that the statement ‘things are non-arising, things are indeed non-arising’ is itself non-arising ... because the non-arising [of these statements], the act of inspiration, the statements that are expressed, and the things that do not arise are all neither conjoined nor disjoined {with anything else}, and they share a single defining characteristic in that they are all immaterial, unrevealed, unimpeded, and without defining characteristics ... These things are indeed non-arising. The act of inspiration too is non-arising. Those statements too are non-arising, and the things that I was inspired to say, commencing therefrom, are also non-arising! If you ask why ... it is because physical forms are non-arising. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... and [all other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty ... the earth element ... and [all other elements], up to and including the element of consciousness ... the formative predispositions of the body ... speech and ... mind ... {and} [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are non-arising.

14.N All things are without support! ... Physical forms, being empty of inherent existence, are internally without support, and ... externally without support, and nor do they have any support in between those two. Similarly ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty ... sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... [the eighteen aspects of emptiness], from the emptiness of internal phenomena, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, being empty of inherent existence, are internally without support, and ... externally without support, {and} nor do they have any support in between those two ... For these reasons all things are without support because they are empty of inherent existence ... It is in this way that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should refine physical forms, and similarly, refine feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {and} [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.

COMMENTARY

The ‘**real nature**’, the ‘**incontrovertible real nature**’, the ‘**inalienable real nature**’ of phenomena is empty of inherent existence and is subsequently empty of any ‘**essential nature**’, originating from combinations of causes and conditions. This denotes the ‘**true nature**’ of all unconditioned and conditioned phenomena, which is the ‘**abiding nature**’ of phenomena within the realm of ‘relative’ existence. This ‘abiding nature’ of phenomena is defined by the Buddha as (a) the ‘absolute purity’ of all phenomena (which is indicative that all things are non-arising and unceasing, neither afflicted nor purified and are without apprehension—where all such non-existent things are unconditioned), (b) the same as the expanse of ‘relative’ reality, and (c) that all phenomena, from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality, are non-abiding and are not to be engaged in as ultimately real. Thus does the Buddha expound in chapter eighteen of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: “*The transcendent perfection of wisdom neither helps nor hinders omniscience due to absolute purity ... because {this absolute purity} ... is the abiding nature of phenomena.*”; in chapter nineteen: “*... the expanse of {relative} reality is [this same] abiding nature.*”; and in chapter thirty: “*... great bodhisattva beings ... see that all things are not to be engaged in and are non-abiding. This is the abiding na-*

ture of all things.” Thus does the Buddha declare in chapter eleven: *“The real nature {of phenomena} is non-existent and non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} ... The reality of phenomena, the abiding nature of phenomena, the maturity of {understanding with respect to} all things and {other unconditioned phenomena}, up to and including the finality of {relative} existence, are non-existent and non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}.”*

*

The natural luminosity of Our non-dual mind remains the same in ultimate reality and relative reality. **Just as a pane of glass can be carried through time and both smeared and wiped of a multitude of colors, so too in ‘relative’ reality is Our natural luminosity of mind both smeared and wiped of all defining characteristics**, while remaining identical throughout the three periods of time.

*

In ultimate reality We exist as a singularity in God. Here there is no coming nor going, no doing nor moving, nor relating to anything at all. For in ‘ultimate’ reality there is no presence of relativity, merely the presence of the ‘one’ of Our singularity. How can a singularity move from point A to point B, when a singularity is merely the ‘one’? ~ this would be impossible! ~ and thus without any phenomena beyond Our singularity, all conceptions of ‘other’ are undone. Only by accepting We *are* the singularity and *not* the duality will all notions of ‘other’ be undone. For the natural luminosity of mind with which everyone is endowed is the non-dual mind of Our singularity. **Here in ‘relative’ existence we must come to understand that *everyone* is the offspring of this singularity ~ and this ‘singularity’ is the father and mother of every conjured individuated being ~ and this singularity of mind of every conjured individuated being is Our singularity in God.** Thus does the Buddha reveal in the chapter (above): *“ ... once {and only after} great bodhisattva beings have developed, without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, the perception of sentient beings as their father, the perception [of sentient beings] as their mother, the perception [of sentient beings] as their child, and the perception [of sentient beings] as themselves, they should develop the {non-dual} mind of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.”*

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE TRANSCENDENT PERFECTION OF TOLERANCE

15.1 Then Śakra, mighty lord of the gods [of Trayastriṃśa], and as many gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm as there are throughout the world systems of the great trichiliocosm, all congregated there, in that same assembly, along with their divine princes—ten million, one hundred billion, many hundred thousands in number. The divine princes of the Yāma realm, the divine princes of the Tuṣita realm, the divine princes of the Nirmānarata realm, and the divine princes of the Paranirmitavaśavartin realm throughout the world systems of the great trichiliocosm also congregated there, in that same assembly, as did all the gods presiding over the twelve Brahmā realms, as many as there are in the world systems of the great trichiliocosm, along with the [lesser gods of] the Brahmā realms—ten million, one hundred billion, many hundred thousands in number. All the gods presiding over the Pure Abodes, as many as there are throughout the world systems of the great trichiliocosm also congregated there, in that same assembly, along with the [lesser] gods of the Pure Abodes—ten million, one hundred billion, many hundred thousands in number. Yet the radiance of their bodies, originating through the ripening of the past actions of the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm, and similarly, the radiance of their bodies originating through the ripening of the past actions of the gods of the Trayastriṃśa, Yāma, Tuṣita, Nirmānarata, and Paranirmitavaśavartin realms, and likewise that of the

[other] gods, from those of the Brahmākāyika realm up to the Pure Abodes, did not approach even one hundredth part of the natural radiance of the Tathāgata. They did not approach even a thousandth part of it. They did not approach one hundred thousandth part, nor one thousand billionth part of it. Nor did they approach it in any number, fraction, synonym, comparison, or quality. The effulgence of the Tathāgata’s body was manifestly supreme alongside those radiances. It was manifestly perfect, supreme, abundant, unsurpassed, and unexcelled. Just as a burning tree stump neither shines, nor gleams, nor sparkles alongside the gold of the Jambu River, so the radiance of all the gods, originating through the ripening of their past actions, neither shone, nor gleamed, nor sparkled alongside the natural effulgence of the Tathāgata’s body. Indeed, alongside those radiances, the natural effulgence of the Tathāgata’s body was best. It was perfect, supreme, abundant, unsurpassed, and unexcelled.

15.2 Then Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Venerable Subhūti, we, as many gods as we are in these world systems of the great trichilocosm, extending from the Caturmahārājakāyika realm as far as the Pure Abodes, have congregated here, in this assembly, to hear the sacred doctrine in the presence of Senior Subhūti. Inasmuch as we also wish to hear this very teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, how should great bodhisattva beings train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom? What is the transcendent perfection of wisdom with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed? How should great bodhisattva beings train?” Senior Subhūti then replied to Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, “Kauśika, you should listen carefully and keep this in mind! Through the power of the buddhas, and through the blessings of the buddhas, I shall explain to you the transcendent perfection of wisdom with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed; as well as how they should train, and how they should practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Those divine princes who have not yet cultivated their thoughts in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should do so now! However, those who have already arrived at the maturity of the finality of existence will not be able to set their minds upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because they will have put an end to cyclic existence. However, if they do set their minds upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, I will not impede their virtuous approach. Indeed, I will rejoice in it. They should nonetheless focus on the most distinguished doctrines among the most distinguished doctrines.

15.3 “Kauśika, in this regard, what, one might ask, is this transcendent perfection of wisdom? Kauśika, great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience should be attentive to the notion that [physical forms] are impermanent. Similarly, they should be attentive to the notion that [physical forms] are imbued with suffering, without a self, prone to ill health, prone to pustules, prone to sharp pains, prone to harm, prone to decay, alien, disturbed, brittle, fearful, prone to contagion, empty, unreliable, and calamitous. However, they should do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they should be attentive to the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are impermanent, and so on, up to calamitous. Likewise they should be attentive to the notions that the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty are impermanent, and they should also be attentive to the [other notions], up to and including the notion that these are calamitous. Similarly, they should be attentive to the notions that the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the wind element, the space element, and the consciousness element are impermanent, and they should also be attentive to [the other notions], up to and including the notion that these are extremely calamitous. However, they should do so without apprehending anything.

15.4 “Similarly, they should be attentive to the notions that physical forms are calm and void. However, they should do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they should be attentive to the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are calm and void. However, they should do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they should be attentive to the notions that the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, the mental faculty, and likewise, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the wind element, the space element, and the consciousness element are calm and void. However, they should do so without apprehending anything.

15.5 “Similarly, those [bodhisattvas] who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience should be attentive to the formative predispositions that are conditioned by fundamental ignorance. However, they should do so without apprehending anything. Thereafter, [through the unfolding of the links of dependent origination], they should be attentive to the origination of the entire great mass of suffering. However, they should do so without apprehending anything. Then, [through the reversal of dependent origination], they should be attentive to the cessation of the entire great mass of suffering. However, they should do so without apprehending anything.

15.6 “Moreover, Kauśika, those great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience should meditate on the applications of mindfulness. However, they should do so without apprehending anything. In the same vein, they should meditate on [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and similarly on the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. However, they should do so without apprehending anything.”

15.7 “Moreover, Kauśika, those great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience should practice the transcendent perfection of generosity. However, they should do so without apprehending anything. Similarly, they should practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and likewise the transcendent perfection of wisdom. However, they should do so without apprehending anything.

15.8 “Moreover, Kauśika, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they purify, master, perfect, augment, and construe phenomena simply on the basis of phenomena. They discern that the concepts of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ are utterly non-existent. Thoughts of dedication, possessed by great bodhisattva beings, are not associated with the enlightened mind. The mind set on enlightenment is not associated with thoughts of dedication. Kauśika, thoughts of dedication are not discerned and are non-apprehensible in the mind that is set on enlightenment. The mind set on enlightenment is not discerned and is non-apprehensible in thoughts of dedication. Indeed, Kauśika, all the attributes of great bodhisattva beings should be correctly discerned in that manner, just as they are. This is the transcendent perfection of wisdom, which does not objectify anything.”

15.9 Then Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, said to Senior Subhūti, “Venerable Subhūti, in what way are thoughts of dedication not associated with the mind set on enlightenment? In what way is the mind set on enlightenment not associated with thoughts of dedication? In what way are thoughts of dedication indiscernible and non-apprehensible

in the mind that is set on enlightenment? In what way is the mind set on enlightenment indiscernible and non-apprehensible in thoughts of dedication?” Senior Subhūti then replied to Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, “Kauśika, thoughts of dedication are non-mind. The mind set on enlightenment is non-mind. Non-mind does not dedicate merits to non-mind. Nor does inconceivability dedicate merits to the inconceivable. If you ask why, it is because the nature of mind is itself non-mind, and inconceivability is non-mind. Kauśika, this is the transcendent perfection of wisdom with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed.”

15.10 Then the Blessed One positively encouraged Senior Subhūti, saying, “It is so! It is so! Subhūti, you are teaching the transcendent perfection of wisdom to great bodhisattva beings and you are elating great bodhisattva beings!” Senior Subhūti then replied to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! I am grateful and thankful that the tathāgatas, arhats and genuinely perfect buddhas of the past, along with their disciples, delighted, induced, aroused, and incited the Tathāgata, Arhat, and Genuinely Perfect Buddha, establishing him in the six transcendent perfections when he was formerly a bodhisattva. Consequently, the Venerable Lord, when he was formerly a bodhisattva, trained in the six transcendent perfections and attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment. Venerable Lord! In that same way we too should cause great bodhisattva beings to delight in the six transcendent perfections. We should arouse them! We should incite them and establish them therein! We should cause them to delight in the six transcendent perfections. Delighted, induced, aroused, incited, and established by us in the six transcendent perfections, they in turn will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

15.11 Senior Subhūti then said to Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, “Kauśika, you should listen carefully and keep this in mind! I will explain how great bodhisattva beings should abide in and how they should practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Kauśika, physical forms are empty of physical forms. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of consciousness [and the other aggregates]. The bodhisattvas are empty of the bodhisattvas. Kauśika, in this regard, the emptiness of physical forms is indivisible with this emptiness of the bodhisattvas and they cannot be bisected. Similarly, the emptiness of feelings, the emptiness of perceptions, the emptiness of formative predispositions, and the emptiness of consciousness are indivisible with this emptiness of the bodhisattvas and they cannot be bisected. Kauśika, great bodhisattva beings should train accordingly in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

15.12 “Moreover, Kauśika, the eyes are empty of the eyes, and in the same vein, [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, are empty of the mental faculty [and so forth]. The bodhisattvas are empty of the bodhisattvas. Thus, the emptiness of the eyes and the emptiness of [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty, are indivisible with this emptiness of the bodhisattvas and they cannot be bisected. In the same vein, as before, the earth element is empty of the earth element. Similarly the earth element, the fire element, the wind element, the space element, and the consciousness element are empty of the consciousness element [and the rest]. Thus the emptiness of the earth element and the emptiness [of the other elements], up to and including the consciousness element, are indivisible with this emptiness of the bodhisattvas and they cannot be bisected. Kauśika, great bodhisattva beings should train accordingly in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

15.13 “Moreover, Kauśika, fundamental ignorance is empty of fundamental ignorance. Similarly, [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, are empty of aging and death [and the rest]. Similarly, the cessation of fundamental ignorance is empty of the cessation of fundamental ignorance and the cessation of [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, is empty of the cessation of aging and death [and the rest]. Thus, the emptiness of the cessation of fundamental ignorance, and the emptiness of the cessation [of the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, are indivisible with this emptiness of the bodhisattvas and they cannot be bisected. Kauśika, great bodhisattva beings should train accordingly in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

15.14 “Similarly, in the same vein as before, this refrain should be applied also to the transcendent perfection of generosity, and it should also be applied to the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, this refrain should also be applied to [the eighteen aspects of emptiness], starting from the emptiness of internal phenomena and continuing up to the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Similarly, this refrain should be applied to the [causal attributes], starting from the applications of mindfulness and continuing up to the noble eightfold path. Similarly, too, this refrain [should be applied to the fruitional attributes], starting from the ten powers of the tathāgatas and continuing up to the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, it should be applied to all the meditative stabilities and to all the gateways of mnemonic incantation. Similarly, it should also be applied to the vehicle of the śrāvakas. It should also be applied to the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, and, indeed, it should be applied to the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, and to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas.

15.15 “Moreover, Kauśika, omniscience is empty of omniscience. The bodhisattvas are empty of the bodhisattvas. Thus, the emptiness of omniscience is indivisible with this emptiness of the bodhisattvas and they cannot be bisected. Kauśika, great bodhisattva beings should abide accordingly in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

15.16 Then Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, in what way do great bodhisattva beings dwell in the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” Senior Subhūti replied to Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, “Kauśika, in this regard, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not dwell on physical forms. Similarly, they should not dwell on feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. Similarly, they should not dwell on the eyes, and they should not dwell on [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty. They should not dwell on feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded, and they should not dwell on [the other aspects of feelings], up to and including feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded. Similarly, they should not dwell on the earth element, and they should not dwell on [the other elements], up to and including the consciousness element. Similarly, they should not dwell on the applications of mindfulness, and they should not dwell on [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience. Similarly, they should not dwell on the fruit of entering the stream, and they should not dwell on [the other fruits of spiritual attainment], up to and including arhatship. They should not dwell on the individual enlightenment [of the pratyekabuddhas], and they should not dwell [on the other levels of attainment], up to and including genuinely perfect enlightenment. So it is that they should not dwell on physical forms, and they should not dwell [on anything at all], up to and including genuinely perfect buddhahood.

15.17 “Moreover, Kauśika, they should not dwell on the notion that physical forms are permanent. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms are impermanent. In the same vein, they should not dwell on the notion that physical forms are imbued with happiness. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms are imbued with suffering. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms are a self, nor should they dwell on the notion that these are not a self. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms are empty, nor should they dwell on the notion that they are not empty. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms are with signs, nor should they dwell on the notion that they are signless. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms have aspirations, nor should they dwell on the notion that they are without aspirations. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms are calm, nor should they dwell on the notion that they are not calm. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms are void, nor should they dwell on the notion that they are not void. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms are afflicted, nor should they dwell on the notion that they are purified. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms arise. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms cease. They should not dwell on the notion that physical forms are entities, nor should they dwell on the notion that they are not entities.

15.18 “Similarly, they should not dwell on the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are permanent, nor should they dwell on the notions that they are impermanent. In the same vein, they should not dwell on [all those other notions], up to and including the notion that these [aggregates] are entities, or that they are non-entities.

15.19 “Similarly, they should not dwell on the notion that the fruit of entering the stream is well distinguished by conditioned phenomena, nor should they dwell on the notion that this [fruit] is well distinguished by unconditioned phenomena. Similarly, they should not dwell on the notions that the fruit of being tied to one further rebirth, the fruit of being no longer subject to rebirth, and the fruit of arhatship are well distinguished by conditioned phenomena, nor should they dwell on the notions that these [fruits] are well distinguished by unconditioned phenomena. Similarly, they should not dwell on the notions that the individual enlightenment [of the pratyekabuddhas] and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are well distinguished by conditioned phenomena, nor should they dwell on the notions that these are well distinguished by unconditioned phenomena.

15.20 “Moreover, Kauśika, they should not dwell on the notion that those who have entered the stream are worthy of gifts. Similarly, they should not dwell on the notions that those who are tied to one further rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, or those who are arhats, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and tathāgatas are worthy of gifts. So it is, Kauśika. Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not dwell in that manner.

15.21 “Moreover, Kauśika, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not dwell on the first bodhisattva level. In the same vein, they should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on [the other bodhisattva levels], up to and including the tenth level. If you ask why, it is because if they were to dwell thereon, they would vacillate.

15.22 “Moreover, they should not dwell on the notion that ‘I, having first begun to set my mind on enlightenment, should perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity.’ Similarly, they should not dwell on the notion that ‘I... should perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, or the transcendent perfection of wisdom.’

15.23 “Similarly, they should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion that ‘I, having first begun to set my mind on enlightenment, should cultivate the applications of mindfulness.’ In the same vein, they should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the [other notions pertaining to the causal attributes], up to and including the notion that ‘I... should cultivate the noble eightfold path.’

15.24 “Similarly, they should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion that ‘I... should cultivate the ten powers of the tathāgatas.’ They should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the [other notions pertaining to the fruitional attributes], up to and including the notion that ‘I... should cultivate the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.’

15.25 “They should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion that ‘I should enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.’ They should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion that ‘I, as a great bodhisattva being, should subsequently reach the irreversible level.’ Similarly, they should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion that ‘I, as a great bodhisattva being, should perfect the five extrasensory powers of a bodhisattva.’

15.26 “They should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion that ‘I, as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in these five extrasensory powers of a bodhisattva, should proceed to the innumerable, countless buddhafi elds in order to pay homage to, make offerings to, venerate, and listen to the sacred doctrine in the presence of the lord buddhas,’ or that ‘I, as a great bodhisattva being, having indeed heard this sacred doctrine, should emanate similar fi elds to those fi elds of the buddhas.’ So it is that they should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

15.27 “Similarly, they should not even dwell on the notion that ‘I, having travelled through innumerable countless world systems, should venerate the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas with flowers, garlands, perfume, unguents, parasols, victory banners, and cotton robes, thousands of billions in number. I should esteem them, worship them, and make offerings to them.’ Nor should they dwell on the notion that ‘I, having travelled there, should establish innumerable, countless sentient beings in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.’

15.28 “Similarly, they should not dwell on the notion that, ‘I should cultivate the five eyes, which, you may ask, comprise the eye of flesh, the eye of divine clairvoyance, the eye of the sacred doctrine, the eye of wisdom, and the eye of the buddhas.’

15.29 “Similarly, they should not dwell on the notion that ‘I should persevere in whichever meditative stabilities are desired.’ They should not dwell on the notion that ‘I should attain all the gateways of mnemonic incantation.’ Simil-

arly, they should not dwell on the notion that 'I should attain the ten powers of the tathāgatas.' Similarly, they should not dwell on the notion that 'I should attain the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.'

15.30 "Similarly, they should not dwell on the notion that 'I should attain the body of a superior man, endowed with the thirty-two major marks.' They should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion that 'I should attain a body endowed with the eighty minor marks.'

15.31 "Similarly, they should not dwell [on the status] of one who ranks among the eight kinds of realized individuals. That is to say, they should not dwell on the notion that 'I am a follower on account of faith,' or 'I am a follower on account of the doctrine.' They should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion that 'As I maintain [the level of] one who has entered the stream, I will become one who will be reborn only seven more times.' They should not dwell on the notion that 'I will be reborn within an identical class of gods or humans over successive lives, or as one with only a single further intervening rebirth.' They should not dwell on the notion that 'I am an individual on a par with those whose series of lives has ended, and whose afflicted mental states have ended.' They should not dwell on the notion that 'I am one who has entered the stream, possessing the attributes of non-regression.'

15.32 "They should not dwell on the notion that 'I, having entered this world for the last time as one tied to one more rebirth, will bring suffering to an end.' They should not dwell on the notion that 'I, as one who is no longer subject to rebirth, will attain final nirvāṇa in this life.' They should not dwell on the notion that 'I, being an arhat whose contaminants have ceased, am one who will not be reborn, and I will attain final nirvāṇa in the expanse of nirvāṇa where no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates is left behind.'

15.33 "They should not dwell on the notion that 'I am a pratyekabuddha.' They should not dwell on the notion that 'I am a genuinely perfect buddha.' They should not dwell on the notion that 'I should transcend the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas, and abide on the levels of the bodhisattvas.'

15.34 "Similarly, they should not dwell on the pristine cognition which is the understanding of the aspects of the path. They should not, in an apprehending manner, dwell on the notion that 'I, having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all things and in all ways, should renounce all afflicted mental states and involuntary reincarnation through propensities.' They should not dwell on the notion that 'I, having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and become a tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha, should turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine.'

15.35 "Similarly, they should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion that 'I, having enacted the deeds of the buddhas, should bring innumerable, countless sentient beings to attain final nirvāṇa in the expanse of nirvāṇa where no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates is left behind.'

15.36 "Similarly, they should not dwell on the notion that 'I, abiding utterly in the meditation of the four supports for miraculous ability when entering meditative stability, should be absorbed in such meditative stabilities that wou-

ld enable me to remain for eons as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges.’ They should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion that ‘The limit of my lifespan is inestimable.’

15.37 “Similarly, they should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion that ‘I should possess the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, and consummate each of these marks of a superior man with one hundred merits.’ They should not dwell on the notion that ‘My buddhafield should equal in its extent the world systems, as many as the sands of the River Ganges, throughout the cardinal directions—east, south, west and north.’ They should not dwell on the notion ‘May the world systems of this, my great trichiliocosm, be fashioned of indestructible reality.’ They should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on the notion ‘May the desire, hatred, and delusion of those sentient beings who have scented the fragrance of my Tree of Enlightenment be eliminated, and without cultivating the mindsets of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, may those sentient beings, by scenting that fragrance, exclusively ascertain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment; may they experience such fragrances that give rise neither to physical ailments, nor to imbalances of wind.’

15.38 “They should not even dwell on the notion ‘In this, my buddhafield, may the term “physical forms” not exist; and similarly may the terms “feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness” not exist.’ They should not even dwell on the notion ‘[In this, my buddhafield], may the term “transcendent perfection of generosity” exist and similarly may the terms [indicative of the other transcendent perfections], starting from the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, exclusively exist.’

15.39 “Similarly, they should not even dwell on the notion ‘[In this, my buddhafield], may the term “applications of mindfulness” exist.’ Similarly, they should not dwell on the notion ‘[In this, my buddhafield], may the terms [indicative of the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, ever exist.’ They should not dwell on the notion ‘In this, my buddhafield, may the terms indicative of those who enter the stream never exist, and may the terms indicative of arhats and pratyekabuddhas never exist.’ They should not even dwell on the notion ‘[In this, my buddhafield], may the term “bodhisattva” and the term “buddha” exclusively exist.’ At this point the full refrain should be extensively applied, exactly as indicated [above], in the middle of this chapter.”

15.40 “If you ask why this is so, it is because once the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, all things are unapprehended. Kaśīka, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner should not dwell on anything at all.”

15.41 Then Senior Subhūti, knowing in his own mind the thoughts of Senior Śāradvatīputra, addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, on what do you think the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas dwell?” Senior Śāradvatīputra replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, the tathāgatas do not dwell on anything at all. Even the mind of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas does not dwell on anything at all. It does not dwell on physical forms. It does not dwell on feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. It does not dwell on conditioned elements. It does not dwell on [the causal and fruitional attributes],

from the applications of mindfulness up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. It does not dwell on omniscience.”

15.42 Senior Subhūti then addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, just as the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, the lords and teachers, neither dwell, nor do they not dwell, so great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should dwell with respect to all things.”

15.43 Then there were some divine princes among the assembly who thought, “We can understand the words and speech of the yakṣas, the expressions of the yakṣas, the language of the yakṣas, and the meanings of the yakṣas when uttered by the yakṣas, and yet we do not understand these explanations, statements, teachings, interpretations, elucidations, instructions, and expressions of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, which Senior Subhūti has just given.”

15.44 Then Senior Subhūti, knowing in his own mind the thoughts of these divine princes, addressed them as follows: “Divine princes! Can you not understand the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” They replied, “Indeed, Venerable Subhūti, we cannot understand the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

15.45 Then Senior Subhūti addressed these divine princes as follows: “O divine princes! Not a single syllable has been uttered or disclosed for you to hear. If you ask why, divine princes, it is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not consist of syllables, and there is no listener who would hear it. If you ask why, divine princes, it is because there are no syllables in the enlightenment of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas. Divine princes! If, for example, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas were to emanate a buddha and that [buddha] too were to conjure forth emanations—emanating an assembly of fully ordained monks, an assembly of fully ordained nuns, an assembly of laymen, and an assembly of laywomen—and if, having emanated these, he were to teach the sacred doctrine to these four assemblies, what do you think, divine princes, would any doctrine be revealed by any sentient being to those assemblies? Would any doctrine be heard or cognized by any sentient beings?” “They would not, Venerable Subhūti!” they answered.

15.46 Subhūti then said, “Divine princes, it is so! All doctrines are like phantoms. They are not explained by anyone. They are not heard by any sentient being, and indeed they are not known by anyone at all. “Divine princes, if, for example, one were to see in a dream a tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha teaching the sacred doctrine, what do you think, divine princes, would anything be explained, heard, or cognized by anyone?” “It would not, Venerable Subhūti!” they answered.

15.47 “Divine princes,” Subhūti continued, “it is so! All doctrines are like dreams. They are not explained, heard or cognized by anyone at all. “Divine princes, if, for example, two people standing in the defile of a ravine were to praise the Buddha, and likewise praise the Dharma and the Saṅgha, and if two echoes were to reverberate from the sound of the words of those two people, what do you think, divine princes, would the first echo hear or cognize the second echo?” “It would not, Venerable Subhūti!” they answered. The full refrain should be applied, exactly as before [in the case of phantoms and dreams].

15.48 “Divine princes, if, for example, an illusionist or the apprentice of an illusionist, standing at a major crossroads, were to conjure a tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha, and this very phantom of the tathāgata were to teach the sacred doctrine to four phantom assemblies, what do you think, divine princes, would any doctrine be revealed by any sentient being? Indeed, would anything be heard or cognized by any sentient being?” “It would not, Venerable Subhūti!” they answered. Here again, the same refrain should be applied, exactly as before.

15.49 Then these divine princes thought, “May this elder Subhūti elucidate this transcendent perfection of wisdom. May he explain the transcendent perfection of wisdom most profoundly! May he demonstrate it most subtly!” Senior Subhūti, discerning with his own mind the thoughts of these divine princes, then addressed them as follows: “Divine princes! Physical forms are neither profound nor subtle. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither profound nor subtle. The essential nature of physical forms is neither profound nor subtle. Similarly, the essential natures of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither profound nor subtle.

15.50 “In the same vein, as before, the full refrain should also be applied to the eyes, exactly as indicated in the context of the psycho-physical aggregates, and it should also be applied to [to the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty. Similarly, it should be applied to visual consciousness, and it should also be applied to [the other modes of sensory consciousness], up to and including mental consciousness. Similarly, it should be applied to the transcendent perfection of generosity, and it should also be applied to the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, it should be applied to the emptiness of internal phenomena, and it should also be applied to the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Similarly, it should be applied to the applications of mindfulness, and it should also be applied to [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. It should be applied to the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and it should also be applied to [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, it should be applied to all the meditative stabilities, and also to all the gateways of mnemonic incantation. Similarly, omniscience is neither profound nor subtle. Similarly, the essential nature of omniscience is neither profound nor subtle.”

15.51 Then these divine princes thought, “In this teaching of the sacred doctrine, is there no imputation of physical forms? Is there no imputation of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness? Is there no imputation of the transcendent perfection of generosity, and of the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom? Is there no imputation of the emptiness of internal phenomena, and is there no imputation of the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities?

15.52 “In this sacred doctrine, is there no imputation of the applications of mindfulness, and is there no imputation of [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path? Is there no imputation of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and is there no imputation of [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas?

15.53 “In this sacred doctrine, is there no imputation of entering the stream, and is there no imputation of the fruit of entering the stream? Indeed, is there no imputation of being tied to one more rebirth, of the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, of being no longer subject to rebirth, of the fruit of being no longer subject to rebirth, of arhatship, of the fruit of arhatship, of [the status of] a pratyekabuddha, of the individual enlightenment [of a pratyekabuddha], of a bodhisattva, of the bodhisattva levels, of genuinely perfect enlightenment, and of the genuinely perfect buddhas? Is there no imputation of syllables?”

15.54 Then Senior Subhūti addressed these divine princes, as follows: “O divine princes! It is so! It is just as you have spoken [in your thoughts]! Divine princes! The enlightenment of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas is inexpressible and it cannot be explained. It is neither known nor cognized by anyone. Divine princes! So it is that those who seek to abide in the fruit of entering the stream, or who seek to actualize the fruit of entering the stream, cannot abide in it or actualize it without relying on this tolerance or receptivity. Similarly, those who seek to abide in arhatship, or who seek to actualize arhatship, and likewise those who seek to abide in individual enlightenment, or who seek to actualize individual enlightenment, and likewise those who seek to abide in genuinely perfect enlightenment, or who seek to actualize genuinely perfect enlightenment, cannot abide in it or actualize [these fruits] without relying on this tolerance or receptivity. In this way, divine princes, great bodhisattva beings, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, should abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom because it cannot be heard and it cannot be expressed.”

15.55 *This completes the fifteenth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “The Transcendent Perfection of Tolerance.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIFTEEN:
THE TRANSCENDENT PERFECTION OF TOLERANCE

15.A Śakra, mighty lord of the gods [of Trayastriṃśa], and as many gods {along with their divine princes} of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm ... the Yāma realm ... the Tuṣita realm ... the Nirmāṇarata realm ... {and} the Paranimitavaśavartin realm ... congregated there, in that same assembly, as did all the gods presiding over the twelve Brahmā realms, as many as there are in the world systems of the great trichiliocosm, along with the [lesser gods of] the Brahmā realms ... {and} the gods presiding over the Pure Abodes ... along with the [lesser] gods of the Pure Abodes ... Yet the radiance of their bodies, originating through the ripening of the{ir} past actions ... did not ... approach it in any number, fraction, synonym, comparison, or quality. The effulgence of the Tathāgata’s body was manifestly supreme alongside those radiances. It was manifestly perfect, supreme, abundant, unsurpassed, and unexcelled.

15.B Those divine princes who have not yet cultivated their thoughts in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should do so now! However, those who have already arrived at the maturity of the finality of {relative} existence {within their own minds} will not be able to set their minds upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... because they will have put an end {prematurely} to cyclic existence. However, if they do set their minds upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, I will not impede their virtuous approach. Indeed, I will rejoice in it. They should nonetheless focus on the most distinguished doctrines among the most distinguished doctrines.

15.C Great bodhisattva beings who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience should be attentive to the notion that [physical forms] are impermanent ... imbued with suffering, || ... calm and void ... || without a self, prone to ill health, prone to pustules, prone to sharp pains, prone to harm, prone to decay, alien, disturbed, brittle, fearful, prone to contagion, empty, unreliable, and calamitous. However, they should do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. Similarly, they should be attentive to the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty are impermanent ... up to and including the notion that these are calamitous. Similarly, they should be attentive to the notions that the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the wind element, the space element, and the consciousness element are impermanent ... up to and including the notion that these are extremely calamitous. However, they should do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

15.D Similarly, those [bodhisattvas] who have cultivated the mind endowed with omniscience should be attentive to the formative predispositions {of what one intends, arranges, and obsesses about} that are conditioned by fundamental ignorance {which is the posited existence of non-existent things}. However, they should do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. Thereafter, [through the unfolding of the links of dependent origination], they should be attentive to the origination of the entire great mass of suffering ... Then, [through the reversal of dependent origination], they should be attentive to the cessation of the entire great mass of suffering. However, they should do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. Moreover ... {they} should meditate on the applications of mindfulness ... {and} on [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and similarly on the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {as well as} practice the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom. However, they should do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

15.E Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they purify, master, perfect, augment, and construe phenomena simply on the basis of {non-existent} phenomena. They discern that the concepts of 'I' and 'mine' are utterly non-existent. Thoughts of dedication, possessed by great bodhisattva beings, are not associated with the enlightened mind. The mind set on enlightenment is not associated with thoughts of dedication ... Thoughts of dedication are not discerned {as ultimately real} and are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} in the mind that is set on enlightenment. The mind set on enlightenment is not discerned {as ultimately real} and is non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} in thoughts of dedication. Indeed ... all the attributes of great bodhisattva beings should be correctly discerned in that manner, just as they are. This is the transcendent perfection of wisdom, which does not objectify anything ... {This is because} thoughts of dedication are non-mind. The mind set on enlightenment is non-mind. Non-mind does not dedicate merits to non-mind. Nor does inconceivability dedicate merits to the inconceivable. If you ask why, it is because the nature of mind {of inconceivability} is itself non-mind, and inconceivability is non-mind ... This is the transcendent perfection of wisdom with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed. Then the Blessed One positively encouraged Senior Subhūti, saying, "It is so! It is so! Subhūti, you are teaching the transcendent perfection of wisdom to great bodhisattva beings and you are elating great bodhisattva beings!" ... Delighted, induced, aroused, incited, and established by us in the six transcendent perfections, they in turn will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed and genuinely perfect enlightenment.

15.F Physical forms are empty of physical forms ... In this regard, the emptiness of physical forms is indivisible with this emptiness of the bodhisattvas and they cannot be bisected. Similarly ... feelings ... perceptions ... formative predispositions, and ... consciousness ... the eyes ... up to and including the mental faculty ... the earth ... fire ... wind ... space ... {and} consciousness element{s} ... fundamental ignorance ... {and} [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death ... the cessation of fundamental ignorance ... {and} [the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... [the eighteen aspects of emptiness], starting from the emptiness of internal phenomena and continuing up to the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the [causal attributes], starting from the applications of mindfulness and continuing up to the noble eightfold path ... {the fruitional attributes}, starting from the ten powers of the tathāgatas and continuing up to the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the meditative stabilities and ... all the gateways of mnemonic incantation ... the vehicle{s} of the śrāvākas ... pratyekabuddhas, and ... bodhisattvas ... the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas ... {and} omniscience is empty of omniscience {and the rest}. The bodhisattvas are empty of the bodhisattvas. Thus, the emptiness of omniscience {and the rest} is indivisible with this emptiness of the bodhisattvas and they cannot be bisected ... Great bodhisattva beings should abide accordingly in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

15.G Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not dwell on physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... up to and including the mental faculty ... feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded ... up to ... mentally compounded ... the earth element ... up to and including the consciousness element ... the applications of mindfulness, and ... [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience ... the fruit of entering the stream, and ... [the other fruits of spiritual attainment], up to and including arhatship ... the individual enlightenment [of the pratyekabuddhas] ... up to and including genuinely perfect enlightenment || ... Moreover ... they should not dwell on the notion that physical forms {as well as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness} are permanent ... {or} impermanent ... imbued with happiness ... {or} suffering ... are a self ... {or} not a self ... are empty ... {or} not empty ... are with signs ... {or} signless ... have aspirations ... {or} are without aspirations ... are calm ... {or} not calm ... are void ... {or} not void ... are afflicted ... {or} purified ... arise ... {or} cease ... are entities ... {or} not entities ... || So it is that they should not dwell on physical forms, and they should not dwell [on anything at all], up to and including genuinely perfect buddhahood.

15.H Similarly, they should not dwell on the notion that the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one further rebirth, the fruit of being no longer subject to rebirth, and the fruit of arhatship ... {as well as} the individual enlightenment [of the pratyekabuddhas] and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are well distinguished by conditioned ... {or} by unconditioned phenomena. Moreover ... they should not dwell on the notion that those who have entered the stream ... those who are tied to one further rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, or those who are arhats, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and tathāgatas are worthy of gifts ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not dwell on the first bodhisattva level ... {and} they should not dwell, in an apprehending manner, on [the other bodhisattva levels], up to and including the tenth level. If you ask why, it is because if they were to dwell thereon, they would vacillate ... {that is, waver to and fro}.

15.I Moreover, they should not dwell {in an apprehending manner} on the notion that 'I, having first begun to set my mind on enlightenment, should perfect the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, or ... wisdom.' ... that 'I, having first begun to set my mind on enlightenment, should cultivate the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including ... the noble eightfold path ... {or the} ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including ... the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.' ... that 'I should enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.' ... that 'I, as a great bodhisattva being, should subsequently reach the irreversible level.' ... that 'I, as a great bodhisattva being, should perfect the five extrasensory powers of a bodhisattva.' ... that 'I, as a great bodhisattva being, abiding in these five extrasensory powers of a bodhisattva, should proceed to the innumerable, countless buddhafiels in order to pay homage to, make offerings to, venerate, and listen to the sacred doctrine in the presence of the lord buddhas,' ... that 'I, as a great bodhisattva being, having indeed heard this sacred doctrine, should emanate similar fields to those fields of the buddhas.' ... that 'I, having travelled through innumerable countless world systems, should venerate the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas with flowers, garlands, perfume, unguents, parasols, victory banners, and cotton robes, thousands of billions in number.' ... that 'I, having travelled there, should establish innumerable, countless sentient beings in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.' ... that, 'I should cultivate the five eyes ... {comprising} the eye of flesh, the eye of divine clairvoyance, the eye of the sacred doctrine, the eye of wisdom, and the eye of the buddhas.' ... that 'I should persevere in whichever meditative stabilities are desired.' ... that 'I should attain all the gateways of mnemonic incantation.' ... that 'I should attain the ten powers of the tathāgatas.' ... that 'I should attain the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.' ... that 'I should attain the body of a superior man, endowed with the thirty-two major marks.' ... {or similarly} that 'I should attain a body endowed with the eighty minor marks.'

15.J Similarly, they should not dwell [on the status] of one who ranks among the eight kinds of realized individuals. That is to say, they should not dwell on the notion that 'I am a follower on account of faith,' or 'I am a follower on account of the doctrine.' ... that 'As I maintain [the level of] one who has entered the stream, I will become one who will be reborn only seven more times.' ... that 'I will be reborn within an identical class of gods or humans over successive lives, or as one with only a single further intervening rebirth.' ... that 'I am an individual on a par with those whose series of lives has ended, and whose afflicted mental states have ended.' ... that 'I am one who has entered the stream, possessing the attributes of non-regression.' ... that 'I, having entered this world for the last time ... will bring suffering to an end.' ... that 'I, as one who is no longer subject to rebirth, will attain final nirvāṇa in this life.' ... that 'I, being an arhat whose contaminants have ceased, ... will not be reborn, and I will attain final nirvāṇa in the expanse of nirvāṇa where no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates is left behind.' ... that 'I am a pratyekabuddha.' ... that 'I am a genuinely perfect buddha.' ... that 'I should transcend the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas, and abide on the levels of the bodhisattvas.'

15.K Similarly, they should not dwell on the pristine cognition which is the understanding of the aspects of the path ... that 'I, having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all things and in all ways, should renounce all afflicted mental states and involuntary reincarnation through propensities.' ... that 'I, having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and become a tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha, should turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine.' ... that 'I, having enacted the deeds of the buddhas,

should bring innumerable, countless sentient beings to attain final nirvāṇa in the expanse of nirvāṇa where no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates is left behind.’ ... that ‘I, abiding utterly in the meditation of the four supports for miraculous ability when entering meditative stability, should be absorbed in such meditative stabilities that would enable me to remain for eons as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges.’ ... that ‘The limit of my lifespan is inestimable.’ ... that ‘I should possess the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, and consummate each of these marks of a superior man with one hundred merits.’ ... that ‘My buddhafield should equal in its extent the world systems, as many as the sands of the River Ganges, throughout the cardinal directions—east, south, west and north.’ ... {that} ‘May the world systems of this, my great trichiliocosm, be fashioned of indestructible reality.’ ... {that} ‘May the desire, hatred, and delusion of those sentient beings who have scented the fragrance of my Tree of Enlightenment be eliminated, and without cultivating the mindsets of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, may those sentient beings, by scenting that fragrance, exclusively ascertain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment; may they experience such fragrances that give rise neither to physical ailments, nor to imbalances of wind.’ ... {that} ‘In this, my buddhafield, may the term{s} “physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness” not exist.’ ... {that} ‘[In this, my buddhafield], may the term “transcendent perfection of generosity” ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, exclusively exist.’ ... {that} ‘[In this, my buddhafield], may the term “applications of mindfulness” exist.’ ... {that} ‘[In this, my buddhafield], may the terms {of the other causal and fruitional attributes}, up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, ever exist.’ ... {that} ‘In this, my buddhafield, may the terms indicative of those who enter the stream never exist, and may the terms indicative of arhats and pratyekabuddhas never exist.’ ... {that} ‘[In this, my buddhafield], may the term “bodhisattva” and the term “buddha” exclusively exist.’ ... If you ask why ... it is because once the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, all things are unapprehended {as ultimately real} ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner should {subsequently} not dwell on anything at all.

15.L The tathāgatas do not dwell on anything at all. Even the mind of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas does not dwell on anything at all. It does not dwell on physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... on conditioned elements ... on [the causal and fruitional attributes], from the applications of mindfulness up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {and} on omniscience ... Just as the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, the lords and teachers, neither dwell, nor do they not dwell {being non-existent entities}, so great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should dwell with respect to all things.

15.M The transcendent perfection of wisdom does not consist of syllables, and there is no listener who would hear it. If you ask why ... it is because there are no syllables in the enlightenment of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas ... If, for example, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas were to emanate a buddha and that [buddha] too were to conjure forth emanations—emanating an assembly of fully ordained monks ... {and} nuns ... laymen, and ... laywomen—and if, having emanated these, he were to teach the sacred doctrine to these four assemblies ... would any doctrine be revealed ... heard or cognized by any sentient beings? ... It is so {that they would not}! ... All doctrines are like phantoms. They are not explained by anyone. They are not heard by any sentient being, and indeed they are not known by anyone at all ... If, for example, one were to see in a dream a tathāgata, arhat,

genuinely perfect buddha teaching the sacred doctrine ... would anything be explained, heard, or cognized by anyone? ... It is so {that they would not}! ... All doctrines are like dreams. They are not explained, heard or cognized by anyone at all ... If, for example, two people standing in the defile of a ravine were to praise the Buddha ... the Dharma and the Saṅgha, and if two echoes were to reverberate from the sound of the words of those two people ... would the first echo {then} hear or cognize the {sound of the} second echo? ... {or} if, for example, an illusionist or the apprentice of an illusionist, standing at a major crossroads, were to conjure a tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha, and this very phantom of the tathāgata were to teach the sacred doctrine to four phantom assemblies ... would any doctrine be revealed ... heard or cognized by any sentient being? ... {It is so that they would not! ... All praising of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha is like an echo and all tathāgatas, assemblies and doctrines are like phantoms. They are not praised, explained nor heard, nor cognized by anyone at all.}

15.N Physical forms are neither profound nor subtle. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... up to and including the mental faculty ... visual consciousness ... up to and including mental consciousness ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness, and ... [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and ... [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... all the meditative stabilities, and ... all the gateways of mnemonic incantation ... omniscience ... {and} the essential nature of {physical forms up to and including} omniscience is neither profound nor subtle.

15.O In this teaching of the sacred doctrine ... there {is} no imputation {that is, attribution} of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness, and ... [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and ... [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... entering the stream ... the fruit of entering the stream ... being tied to one more rebirth ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth ... being no longer subject to rebirth ... the fruit of being no longer subject to rebirth ... arhatship ... the fruit of arhatship ... a pratyekabuddha ... the individual enlightenment [of a pratyekabuddha] ... a bodhisattva ... the bodhisattva levels ... genuinely perfect enlightenment ... the genuinely perfect buddhas ... {and} syllables ... {For} the enlightenment of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas is inexpressible and it cannot be explained. It is neither known nor cognized by anyone ... So it is that those who seek to abide in the fruit of entering the stream, or ... to actualize the fruit of entering the stream ... who seek to abide in arhatship, or ... to actualize arhatship ... who seek to abide in individual enlightenment, or ... to actualize individual enlightenment ... who seek to abide in genuinely perfect enlightenment, or ... to actualize genuinely perfect enlightenment, cannot abide in it or actualize [these fruits] without relying on this tolerance or receptivity. In this way ... great bodhisattva beings, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, should abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom because it cannot be heard and it cannot be expressed.

COMMENTARY

Within the realm of ‘relative’ existence there are many conjured individuated beings who strive for individual enlightenment ~ who subsequently through the three gateways of liberation of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, actualize within their own minds the ‘perceptual’ finality of relative existence. Here these enlightened individuals—having extinguished the fires of craving, aversion and ignorance—enter a plane beyond ‘perceptual’ relativity, yet are still individuals within the ‘matrix’ of relativity. **This is the trap of the ‘premature’ parinirvāna of the extinguishment of the three fires.** Unable to tolerate the notion of themselves as every conjured individuated being, or unable to tolerate rebirth in cyclic existence to free each and every sentient being, they subsequently fall from the heights of enlightenment, after a long-lived life beyond the ‘reach’ of relativity, and regress to the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas. Here the Buddha states further in chapter twenty-three of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: “... although the path of enlightenment followed by those great bodhisattva beings does possess the [three] gateways to liberation—emptiness, signlessness and aspirationlessness—they are still not favored by wisdom and by skill in means, for which reasons, after they have actualized the finality of {relative} existence, they will become śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas.”

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It is important for the mind of the conjured individuated being—awakening to reality—not to dwell upon anything as ultimately real; for when the mind of an individual dwells upon something it becomes obsessed. When the mind of an individual becomes obsessed about something it becomes possessed. When the mind of an individual becomes possessed of an object, it is bound to the mind of duality thinking, and keeps wavering in its mind from subject to object, in a vacillating ‘splintered’ effect—unbecoming of a great bodhisattva being. This is intolerable for the tolerant bodhisattva, who tolerates the doctrine of ‘no existent thing’ ~ where even enlightenment and the buddhas themselves are ultimately nowhere to be heard, cognized or seen.

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In ultimate reality We exist as a singularity in God. Here there is no other thing beyond Our singularity, including the formation of any conceptual thought ~ for a conceptual thought involves a duality relationship of a subject and object as its singular course. **It is this absence of concepts, this inconceivability, which is the nature of mind of Our singularity** ~ which is by definition non-mind, by its absence of concepts, of subject and object of thought.

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To reverse the great mass of suffering we must understand the *origination* of the great mass of suffering, comprised of **(1) fundamental ignorance**, being the posited existence of non-existent things, resulting in **(2) formative predispositions**, being the biases, conditioning and mental formations of the mind (comprised of what one intends, arranges, and obsesses about), resulting in **(3) consciousness**, being the “dualistic” sensory-consciousness (comprised of visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile and mental consciousness), resulting in **(4) name and form**, being the five psycho-physical aggregates of the mind and body subject to rebirth, (collectively comprised of dualistic feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions and consciousness, as well as the physical corporeal body), resulting in **(5) the six sense fields**, being the ‘six pairs’ of sense bases (comprised of the six ‘inner’ sense fields of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mental faculty ~ and the six ‘outer’ sense fields of sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles and mental

phenomena, resulting in **(6) sensory contact**, being the moment the six sense fields (and their accompanying sensory-consciousness) come into contact with a sensory object, resulting in **(7) sensation**, being the sensory experience or feeling of the sensory-consciousness *'interpreting'* the sensory object as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, resulting in **(8) craving**, being the thirst, longing and aspiration of the sensory-consciousness craving for a sensory experience or feeling via the medium of a sensory object, resulting in **(9) grasping**, being the clinging or attachment of the sensory-consciousness to a sensory experience or feeling via the medium of a sensory object, resulting in **(10) the rebirth process**, being the state of being bound to involuntary reincarnation due to the 'volitional' tendencies to keep re-experiencing a sensory experience or feeling via the medium of a sensory object, resulting in **(11) actual birth**, being the birth of the mindstream of the individuated being within cyclic existence, resulting in **(12) aging and death, along with sorrow, lamentation, suffering, mental discomfort and agitation**, being the great mass of suffering of the decaying of form and the break up of the five psycho-physical aggregates. These are the twelve links of dependent origination that when reversed by the aspirant, and for the sake of awakening all sentient beings, quickly undoes what has been done. As the Buddha reveals in the *Cetana Sutta*: ***"What one intends ... arranges, and ... obsesses about: this is a foundation for the continuance of {duality} consciousness ... Such is the origination of this entire mass of suffering ... But when one does not intend, arrange and obsess, there is no foundation for the continuance of {this duality} consciousness ... Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering."***

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: CONCEPTUAL NOTIONS

16.1 Then the divine princes thought, "How should we uphold the doctrine revealed by the Elder Subhūti?" Senior Subhūti, knowing the thoughts of those divine princes in his own mind, then addressed those divine princes as follows: "Divine princes! You should uphold [the view] that those who teach my sacred doctrine resemble a magical display, and that those who listen to my sacred doctrine also resemble a magical display. They will neither hear the sacred doctrine which I have taught, nor will they actualize it."

16.2 Then, the divine princes addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: "Venerable Subhūti, is it then the case that those sentient beings resemble a magical display, and that those who teach the sacred doctrine to them also resemble a magical display? Similarly, do those sentient beings resemble a phantom, and do those who teach the sacred doctrine to them also resemble a phantom?" Senior Subhūti replied, "Divine princes, it is so! It is as you have said. Sentient beings do resemble a magical display, and those who teach the sacred doctrine to them also resemble a magical display. Sentient beings do resemble a phantom, and those who teach the sacred doctrine to them also resemble a phantom. Divine princes, the self too is like a dream, like a magical display. Divine princes, physical forms too are like a dream, like a magical display. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are like a dream, like a magical display. Similarly, the eyes too are like a dream, like a magical display. Similarly, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty too are like a dream, like a magical display. Divine princes, similarly, sights are like a dream, like a magical display. Similarly, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena are like a dream, like a magical display. Divine princes, the sensory element of the eyes too is like a dream, like a magical display. Similarly, the sensory element of sights, the sensory element of visual consciousness; the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, the sensory element of auditory consciousness; the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, the sensory element of olfactory consciousness; the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, the sensory element of gustatory consciousness; the sensory eleme-

nt of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, the sensory element of tactile consciousness; and the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness all indeed are like a dream, like a magical display. Similarly, feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded, and [the other types of feelings], up to and including feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded, are indeed like a dream, like a magical display.

16.3 “Divine princes, the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all intrinsic defining characteristics, the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of non-apprehension, the emptiness of non-entities, the emptiness of essential nature, and the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities are all indeed like a dream, like a magical display.

16.4 “Divine princes, the applications of mindfulness, too, are like a dream, like a magical display. Similarly, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path are all indeed like a dream, like a magical display. Divine princes, the ten powers of the tathāgatas are also like a dream, like a magical display. Similarly, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas are all indeed like a dream, like a magical display.”

16.5 “Divine princes, the transcendent perfection of generosity, too, is like a dream, like a magical display. Divine princes, similarly, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom are all indeed like a dream, like a magical display.

16.6 “Similarly, the fruit of entering the stream, too, is like a dream, like a magical display. The fruit of being tied to one further rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, and [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship, are all indeed like a dream, like a magical display.

16.7 “Similarly, divine princes, individual enlightenment and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, too, are like a dream, like a magical display.”

16.8 Then the divine princes addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Venerable Subhūti, did you just say that unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is also like a dream, like a magical display? Venerable Subhūti, in that case do you also say that nirvāṇa is like a dream, like a magical display?” Senior Subhūti replied, “Divine princes, I do say that nirvāṇa also is like a dream, like a magical display. Divine princes, if there were anything else more sublime than nirvāṇa, that too, I say, would be like a dream, like a magical display. If you ask why, divine princes, it is because dreams, magical displays, and nirvāṇa are without duality and cannot be bisected.”

16.9 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra, Senior Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Senior Mahākauṣṭhila, Senior Mahākātyāyana, Senior Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra, and Senior Mahākāśyapa, along with many hundreds of thousands of bodhisattvas, addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Venerable Subhūti, who can receive this transcendent perfection of wisdom, which is so profound, so hard to discern, so hard to realize, so subtle, so delicate, so calm, and so abundant?” Then Senior Subhūti replied to Ānanda, the great śrāvakas, and those great bodhisattva beings, “Senior ones! This transcendent perfection of wisdom, which is so profound, which cannot be investigated, which is not within the perceptual range of sophistry; which is subtle, hard to discern, hard to realize, so calm, so abundant, immaculate, and sublime; and which is to be known by the learned and the wise alone will be received by irreversible bodhisattvas. Those who discern the truth—arhats who have realized the depths of the sacred doctrine and fulfilled their intentions, great bodhisattva beings who have carried out their duties toward the conquerors of the past and cultivated the roots of virtuous action under many tens of millions of buddhas, or sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who have been accepted by a spiritual mentor—all of these may receive this transcendent perfection of wisdom, which is so profound, and in the same vein, immaculate, sublime, and to be known by the learned and the wise alone, whenever it is shown to them.

16.10 “They will not construe the notion that physical forms are empty, and that emptiness is physical forms. Similarly, they will not construe the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty, and that emptiness is consciousness [and the other aggregates]. They will not construe the notion that physical forms are signless, and that signlessness is physical forms. Similarly, they will not construe the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are signless, and that signlessness is consciousness [and the rest]. They will not construe the notion that physical forms are aspirationless, and that aspirationlessness is physical forms. Similarly, they will not construe the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are aspirationless, and that aspirationlessness is consciousness [and the rest]. In the same vein as before, they will not construe the notion that physical forms are non-arising, and they will not construe the notions that they are unceasing, that they are void, and so forth. Similarly, they will not construe the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-arising, and they will not construe the notions that they are unceasing, that they are void, and so forth. They will not construe the notion that physical forms are calm. They will not construe the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are calm.

16.11 “In the same vein, this refrain should be applied to other phenomena, up to and including the eyes, and feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded. It should similarly be applied to other phenomena, up to and including the mental faculty, and feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded. It should similarly be applied to the transcendent perfection of generosity, and also [to the other perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. It should be applied to the emptiness of internal phenomena, and also [to the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. It should be applied to the applications of mindfulness, and also [to the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. It should similarly be applied to the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and also [to the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, it should be applied also to all the gateways of meditative stability and to all the gateways of mnemonic incantation. Similarly, it should be applied to the fruit of entering the stream, and also [to the other attainments], up to and including indivi-

dual enlightenment. So it is that these [aforementioned beings] will not construe the notion that omniscience is emptiness, and that emptiness is omniscience. They will not construe the notion that omniscience is signless, and that signlessness is omniscience. They will not construe the notion that omniscience is aspirationless, and that aspirationlessness is omniscience. They will not construe the notion that conditioned elements are emptiness, and that emptiness is the conditioned elements. Similarly, they will not construe the notion that conditioned elements are signless, and that signlessness is the conditioned elements. They will not construe the notion that conditioned elements are aspirationless, and that aspirationlessness is the conditioned elements. Similarly, as far as omniscience is concerned, and as far as the conditioned elements and the unconditioned elements are concerned, they will not construe the notions that these are non-arising, unceasing, calm, or void.”

16.12 Then, addressing the divine princes, Senior Subhūti spoke as follows: “Divine princes, there is no one at all who will receive this transcendent perfection of wisdom, which is so profound, and so forth, up to so immaculate and sublime, and which is to be known by the learned and the wise alone. If you ask why, it is because nothing at all is expressed or revealed therein. Insofar as there is nothing at all that is expressed or revealed therein, there are no sentient beings at all who will receive it.”

16.13 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, have the three vehicles not been taught? That is to say, have the vehicle of the śrāvakas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, and the vehicle of the genuinely perfect buddhas not been extensively taught? Has the acceptance of great bodhisattva beings not been taught, and has the path of the bodhisattvas also not been taught, commencing from the initial setting of the mind on enlightenment and continuing as far as the cultivation of the mind of the ten [bodhisattva] levels? That is to say, have the transcendent perfection of generosity and the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, not been taught? Similarly, have the applications of mindfulness, and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, not been taught? Similarly, have the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, not been taught? Has the emanational display of great bodhisattva beings, owing to their extrasensory power of miraculous ability, also not been taught? Similarly, has it not been taught that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom will take birth miraculously, and that similarly they will be endowed with the attributes of undiminished extrasensory powers, and that, owing to their roots of virtuous action, they will go to the buddhafi elds at will, and that they will master those very roots of virtuous action which venerate, respect, and make offerings to the lord buddhas, and that they will never squander any teachings of the sacred doctrine which they hear from those lord buddhas, until they have attained perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? Has it not been taught that they will always be equipoised [in meditation] without having to assume the guise of equipoise, and that they will be endowed with unimpeded inspiration, uninterrupted inspiration, rational inspiration, well-connected inspiration, purposeful inspiration, and distinguished, supramundane inspiration?”

16.14 Senior Subhūti replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is so! It is just as you have said. In this transcendent perfection of wisdom, the three vehicles have been taught—that is to say, the vehicle of the śrāvakas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, and the vehicle of the genuinely perfect buddhas have been ex-

tensively taught. The acceptance of great bodhisattva beings has been taught, and in the same vein, [all those other attributes you mentioned] have been taught, up to and including how great bodhisattva beings will be endowed with distinguished, supramundane inspiration. But these have all been taught without apprehending anything! The nature of knowers and [other postulated subjects], up to and including viewers, has been taught without apprehending anything. Similarly, physical forms have been taught without apprehending anything. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness have been taught without apprehending anything. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of generosity has been taught without apprehending anything, and the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, have been taught without apprehending anything. The emptiness of internal phenomena has been taught without apprehending anything, and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, have been taught without apprehending anything. [Other phenomena], up to and including the applications of mindfulness, have been taught without apprehending anything, and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, have been taught without apprehending anything. Similarly, the ten powers of the tathāgatas have been taught without apprehending anything, and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, have been taught without apprehending anything. Indeed, [the attainments], up to and including omniscience, have been taught without apprehending anything.”

16.15 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, why in this transcendent perfection of wisdom are the three vehicles taught without apprehending anything? Similarly, why is the acceptance of great bodhisattva beings taught, and why are [all those other attributes I mentioned], up to and including the fact that great bodhisattva beings will be endowed with distinguished, supramundane inspiration, taught without apprehending anything?” Senior Subhūti replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena that the three vehicles have been extensively taught without apprehending anything. Similarly, it is owing to the emptiness of external phenomena and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that the three vehicles have been extensively taught without apprehending anything. Similarly, it is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena that the acceptance of great bodhisattva beings has been taught, and in the same vein, that [all the aforementioned attributes], up to and including the fact that great bodhisattva beings will be endowed with distinguished, supramundane inspiration, have been taught without apprehending anything. Similarly, it is owing to the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that the acceptance of great bodhisattva beings has been taught, and in the same vein, that [all the aforementioned attributes], up to and including the fact that great bodhisattva beings will be endowed with distinguished, supramundane inspiration, have been taught without apprehending anything.”

16.16 Then the gods and goddesses in the entourage of Indra, those in the entourage of Brahmā, those in the entourage of Prajāpati, and those of the Trayastrīṃśa realm, who were all present in that assembly, three times uttered the following meaningful expression: “Ah! This sacred doctrine which the Elder [Subhūti] has explained, described, and taught through the power of the tathāgatas, through the blessing of the tathāgatas, through the potent force of the tathāgatas, has indeed been eloquently explained. Ah! This sacred doctrine has been eloquently explained. Ah! This sacred doctrine has been eloquently explained! We should accept as the tathāgatas those great bodhi-

sattva beings who are not separated from this transcendent perfection of wisdom. For, although physical forms, or feelings, or perceptions, or formative predispositions, or consciousness—or, in the same vein, anything else, up to and including omniscience—are non-apprehensible, the three vehicles are nonetheless established. That is to say, the three vehicles are indeed designated as the vehicle of the śrāvakas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, and the vehicle of the genuinely perfect buddhas.”

16.17 Then the Blessed One said to those gods in the entourage of Indra, “Divine princes, it is so! It is just as you have spoken. Although physical forms, or feelings, or perceptions, or formative predispositions, or consciousness—or, in the same vein, anything else, up to and including omniscience—are non-apprehensible, the three vehicles are nonetheless established. That is to say, the three vehicles are indeed designated as the vehicle of the śrāvakas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, and the vehicle of the genuinely perfect buddhas. Divine princes, you should accept as if they were tathāgatas those bodhisattvas who are, without apprehending anything, not separated from this transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, divine princes, it is because in this transcendent perfection of wisdom the three vehicles, namely, the vehicle of the śrāvakas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, and the vehicle of the genuinely perfect buddhas, are extensively taught, and yet, divine princes, apart from engaging in the transcendent perfection of generosity, the tathāgatas do not apprehend anything, and apart from engaging in the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, the tathāgatas do not apprehend anything. Similarly, apart from engaging in the emptiness of internal phenomena, and apart from engaging in the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, the tathāgatas do not apprehend anything. Nor do the tathāgatas apprehend anything apart from engaging in the applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, the tathāgatas do not apprehend anything apart from engaging in the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitational attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Nor indeed do the tathāgatas apprehend anything apart from engaging in omniscience. Divine princes, bodhisattvas should indeed train in all these. That is to say, they should train in the transcendent perfection of generosity, and in the same vein, [in all other aforementioned attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.

16.18 “Divine princes, it is for that reason that you should know great bodhisattva beings who practice this transcendent perfection of wisdom, inseparably, to be like the tathāgatas. Divine princes, when I scattered five lotus flowers [as an offering] to the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha Dīpaṃkara in the Padmavatī royal court, and while standing in the middle of the market, I was, without apprehending anything, not separated from the transcendent perfection of generosity. Likewise I was not separated from the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Likewise I was not separated from the emptiness of internal phenomena and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Likewise I was not separated from the applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Likewise I was not separated from the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, all the meditative stabilities of the bodhisattvas, all the gateways of mnemonic incantation, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. At that time, the Tathāgata,

Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha Dīpaṃkara foreordained that I would attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, saying, “O my child of enlightened heritage, in the future, after countless eons in this world system, during the Auspicious Eon, you will become the Lord Buddha Śākyamuni, a tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha endowed with knowledge and virtuous conduct, a sugata who knows the world, a conductor of living creatures who are to be trained, and an unsurpassed teacher of gods and humans.”

16.19 Then the divine princes said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord, it is wonderful how much this transcendent perfection of wisdom benefits great bodhisattva beings, without relinquishing omniscience.” Then the Blessed One comprehended that all four assemblies were gathered and present—that is to say, the fully ordained monks, the fully ordained nuns, laymen, and laywomen—along with great bodhisattva beings, the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm, and in the same vein, the assembled gods of all the other realms, up to and including Akaniṣṭha. Establishing them all as witnesses, he addressed Śakra, mighty lord of the gods: “Kauśika, when those great bodhisattva beings or fully ordained monks, fully ordained nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, divine princes, or divine princesses have heard this Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom, and are never separated from the mind endowed with omniscience, there are malign demonic forces and their acolytes who would seek an opportunity to harm them, but will find no such opportunity or occasion to do so. If you ask why, it is because these sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage will have been totally consecrated in [the understanding] that physical forms are emptiness, and similarly they will have been totally consecrated in [the understanding] that feelings are emptiness, perceptions are emptiness, formative predispositions are emptiness, and consciousness is emptiness. If you ask why, it is because there is no opportunity for emptiness to impinge upon emptiness. There is no opportunity for signlessness to impinge upon signlessness. There is no opportunity for aspirationlessness to impinge upon aspirationlessness. In the same vein, as before, these sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage will have been totally consecrated in [the understanding] that [all things], up to and including omniscience, are emptiness. If you ask why, it is because there is no opportunity for emptiness to impinge upon emptiness. There is no opportunity for signlessness to impinge upon signlessness. There is no opportunity for aspirationlessness to impinge upon aspirationlessness. If you ask why, it is because both the things whereby they would find an opportunity to impinge upon them, and the things upon which they would find an opportunity to impinge, are without inherent existence.

16.20 “Kauśika, the humans or non-humans who seek an opportunity to impinge upon those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage will find no such opportunity. If you ask why, Kauśika, it is because these sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage totally cultivate thoughts of loving kindness toward all sentient beings, and similarly they totally cultivate thoughts of compassion, thoughts of empathetic joy, and thoughts of equanimity, and they do so without apprehending anything. Kauśika, those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage will not die in unfavorable circumstances. If you ask why, the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who practice the transcendent perfection of generosity will be respected because they furnish all sentient beings with genuine happiness.

16.21 “Those gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm, situated throughout the world systems of the great trichilocosm, along with those gods of the Trayastriṃśa realm, those of the Yāma realm, those of the Tuṣita realm, those of the Nirmāṇarata realm, those of the Paranirmitavaśavartin realm, those of the [Mahā]brahma realms, those of the

Ābhāsvara realms, those of the Śubhakarṣna realms, and those of the Bṛhatphala realms, who have embarked upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment but have not yet heard, accepted, maintained, and comprehended this transcendent perfection of wisdom, should always listen to, accept, maintain, and comprehend this transcendent perfection of wisdom, attending to it in the correct manner, and they should never be separated from the mind endowed with omniscience.

16.22 “Moreover, Kauśika, if these sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage accept, maintain, recite, comprehend, and attend in the correct manner to this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and if they are never separated from the mind endowed with omniscience, they will never be terrified, afraid, or experience their body hairs stiff due to fear, whether they are staying in an empty hut, whether they are staying in an exposed place, or whether they are staying in an open hall or pavilion. If you ask why, Kauśika, it is because these sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage totally cultivate the emptiness of internal phenomena, but always without apprehending anything. Similarly, they totally cultivate the emptiness of external phenomena, but always without apprehending anything. Similarly, they totally cultivate the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, but always without apprehending anything.”

16.23 Then the gods situated throughout this world system of the great trichilocosm, that is to say, the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm, along with the gods of the Trayastriṃśa realm, those of the Yāma realm, those of the Tuṣita realm, those of the Nirmāṇarata realm, those of the Paranirmitavaśavartin realm, and those [of the other realms], up to and including the Pure Abodes, said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! We shall always guard and shelter those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who accept, affirm, maintain, recite, and explain this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, demonstrating it extensively to others and attending to it in the correct manner, and who are never separated from the mind endowed with omniscience. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because dependent on those great bodhisattva beings, [rebirths among] the denizens of the hells will be cut off, and rebirths in the animal realm will be cut off, while destitute gods, destitute nāgas, destitute yakṣas, destitute humans, and all epidemics, misfortunes, contagious diseases, and hostilities will not arise, or else they will not occur, or else they will be alleviated. Similarly, all famines, conflicts, and civil wars will be interrupted, alleviated, and become non-existent.

16.24 “Venerable Lord, it is similarly because, dependent on those great bodhisattva beings, the ways of the ten virtuous actions will emerge in the world, and likewise the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, and the four formless absorptions will emerge in the world. Just as the transcendent perfection of generosity will emerge in the world, so will the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom emerge in the world. Similarly, it is because, [dependent on these bodhisattvas], the emptiness of internal phenomena will emerge in the world, and likewise [the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, will emerge in the world. Similarly, the four applications of mindfulness will emerge in the world, and, in the same vein, [all causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, will emerge in the world. Similarly, [all attainments], up to and including omniscience, will emerge in the world.

16.25 “Moreover, Venerable Lord, it is dependent on these great bodhisattva beings that the royal class and particularly those who stand out like mighty sāl trees will emerge in the world; and similarly, that the priestly class and particularly those who stand out like mighty sāl trees will emerge in the world; that the householder class and particularly those who stand out like mighty sāl trees will emerge in the world; and similarly, that universal monarchs will emerge in the world.

16.26 “Venerable Lord! Similarly, it is dependent on these great bodhisattva beings that the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm are discerned, and similarly, that the gods of [the other realms], up to and including Akaniṣṭha, are discerned.

16.27 “Venerable Lord! Similarly, it is dependent on these great bodhisattva beings that the fruit of entering the stream is discerned, and likewise that those individuals who enter the stream are discerned, and similarly, that the fruit of being tied to one further rebirth, the individuals who are tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, the individuals who are no longer subject to rebirth, and similarly, the fruit of arhatship, and actual arhats are all discerned, and [likewise, too,] that individual enlightenment is discerned, and that pratyekabuddhas are discerned.

16.28 “Venerable Lord! Similarly, it is dependent on these great bodhisattva beings that the maturation of all sentient beings is discerned, that the refinement of the buddhafields is discerned, that the tathāgatas, arhats and genuinely perfect buddhas are discerned, that those who turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine are discerned in the world, and similarly, that the precious jewel of the Buddha emerges, that the precious jewel of the Dharma emerges, and that the precious jewel of the Saṅgha emerges. “Venerable Lord, for these reasons we will ensure that the bodhisattvas will be guarded, sheltered, and concealed by the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.”

16.29 The Blessed One then addressed Śakra, mighty lord of the gods: “Kauśika, it is so! It is just as you have spoken. Kauśika, it is dependent on these great bodhisattva beings that [rebirths among] the denizens of the hells will be cut off, that the worlds of Yama will be cut off, that rebirths in the animal realm will be cut off, and in the same vein, that [all those aforementioned attributes], up to and including the precious jewel of the Buddha, will emerge in the world, and that similarly the precious jewel of the sacred doctrine and the precious jewel of the monastic community will emerge in the world. Kauśika, so it is that these great bodhisattva beings should be honored, venerated, respected, and granted offerings by the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. You should guard, shelter, and conceal them so that their [activities] are never interrupted.

16.30 “Kauśika, those who think that great bodhisattva beings should be honored, venerated, respected, and granted offerings consider that I am worthy of being honored, venerated, respected, and granted offerings. Kauśika, so it is that these great bodhisattva beings should be honored, venerated, respected, and granted offerings by the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. You should guard, shelter, and conceal them so that their [activities] are never interrupted.

16.31 “Kauśika, if this world system of the great trichiliocosm were filled entirely with śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas,

like a grove of reeds, like a grove of bamboo, like a grove of sugar cane, like a paddy field of rice, or like a field of sesame, and if some sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to honor, venerate, respect, and grant offerings to them, with all their necessities, as long as they live, but there was one who instead would honor, venerate, respect, and grant offerings to a single great bodhisattva being who had just begun to set his or her mind on enlightenment, and was not separated from the six transcendent perfections, that latter child of enlightened heritage would generate much greater merit. If you ask why, Kauśika, it is because great bodhisattva beings and the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are not present in the world dependent on the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. Rather, Kauśika, it is dependent on great bodhisattva beings that the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and similarly, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are present in the world. Kauśika, so it is that you should always ensure that great bodhisattva beings are honored, venerated, respected, and granted offerings by the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. You should guard, shelter, and conceal them so that their [activities] are never interrupted.”

16.32 *This completes the sixteenth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Conceptual Notions.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SIXTEEN:
CONCEPTUAL NOTIONS

16.A You should uphold [the view] that those who teach my sacred doctrine resemble a magical display, and that those who listen to my sacred doctrine also resemble a magical display. {This is because from the perspective of ultimate reality} they will neither hear the sacred doctrine which I have taught, nor will they actualize it ... Sentient beings || ... and those who teach the sacred doctrine to them ... || do resemble a magical display ... {and} also resemble a phantom ... The self too is like a dream, like a magical display ... {Similarly}, physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty ... sights ... sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... the sensory element{s} of the eyes ... sights ... visual consciousness; ... the ears ... sounds ... auditory consciousness; ... the nose ... odors ... olfactory consciousness; ... the tongue ... tastes ... gustatory consciousness; ... the body ... tangibles ... tactile consciousness; and ... the mental faculty ... mental phenomena, and ... mental consciousness ... feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded ... up to and including ... mentally compounded ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {up to and including} the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the fruit of ... {having entered} the stream ... of being tied to one further rebirth ... of no longer being subject to rebirth, and [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship ... individual enlightenment and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, too, are like a dream, like a magical display ... {and} nirvāṇa also is like a dream, like a magical display ... {And} if there were anything else more sublime than nirvāṇa, that too, I say, would be like a dream, like a magical display. If you ask why ... it is because dreams, magical displays, and nirvāṇa are without duality and cannot be bisected.

16.B This transcendent perfection of wisdom, which is so profound, which cannot be investigated, which is not within the perceptual range of sophistry; which is subtle, hard to discern, hard to realize, so calm, so abundant, immaculate, and sublime; and which is to be known by the learned and the wise alone will be received by irreversible bodhisattvas. Those who discern the truth—arhats who have realized the depths of the sacred doctrine and fulfilled their intentions, great bodhisattva beings who have carried out their duties toward the conquerors of the past and cultivated the roots of virtuous action under many tens of millions of buddhas, or sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who have been accepted by a spiritual mentor—all of these may receive this transcendent perfection of wisdom, which is so profound, and in the same vein, immaculate, sublime, and to be known by the learned and the wise alone, whenever it is shown to them. They will not construe the notion that physical forms are empty, and that emptiness is physical forms || ... {or} are signless, and that signlessness is physical forms ... {or} are aspirationless, and that aspirationlessness is physical forms ... {or} are non-arising ... unceasing ... void, and so forth ... {or} calm. || Similarly, they will not construe the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the eyes ... up to and including the mental faculty, and feelings conditioned by sensory contact that is {visually compounded up to and including} mentally compounded ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... all the gateways of meditative stability and ... mnemonic incantation ... the fruit of entering the stream ... up to and including individual enlightenment ... omniscience ... {and} conditioned ... {and} unconditioned elements {are empty, and that emptiness is unconditioned elements (and the rest)—or are signless, and that signlessness is unconditioned elements (and the rest)—or are aspirationless, and that aspirationlessness is unconditioned elements (and the rest)—or are non-arising, unceasing, void, and so forth, or calm.}

16.C {From the perspective of ultimate reality} there is no one at all who will receive this transcendent perfection of wisdom, which is so profound, and so forth, up to so immaculate and sublime, and which is to be known by the learned and the wise alone ... because nothing at all is expressed or revealed therein. Insofar as there is nothing at all that is expressed or revealed therein, there are no sentient beings at all who will receive it ... {However from the perspective of relative reality} in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, the three vehicles have been taught—that is to say, the vehicle of the śrāvakas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, and the vehicle of the genuinely perfect buddhas have been extensively taught. The acceptance of great bodhisattva beings has been taught, || ... {as well as} the emanational display of great bodhisattva beings, owing to their extrasensory power of miraculous ability ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom will take birth miraculously, and that similarly they will be endowed with the attributes of undiminished extrasensory powers, and that, owing to their roots of virtuous action, they will go to the buddhafi elds at will, and ... will master those very roots of virtuous action which venerate, respect, and make offerings to the lord buddhas, and ... will never squander any teachings of the sacred doctrine ... until they have attained ... unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... {and} will always be equipoised [in meditation] without having to assume the guise of equipoise, and ... will be endowed with unimpeded ... uninterrupted ... rational ... well-connected ... purposeful ... and distinguished, supramundane inspiration ... || But these have all been taught without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}! The nature of knowers and [other postulated subjects], up to and including viewers, has been taught without apprehending anything {as ultima-

tely real}. Similarly, physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {as well as} [the attainments], up to and including omniscience, have {all} been taught without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

16.D It is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena ... and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that the three vehicles have been extensively taught without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. Similarly, it is owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {and} the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, that the acceptance of great bodhisattva beings has been taught, and in the same vein, that [all the aforementioned attributes], up to and including the fact that great bodhisattva beings will be endowed with distinguished, supramundane inspiration, have been taught without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

16.E Although physical forms, or feelings, or perceptions, or formative predispositions, or consciousness—or, in the same vein, anything else, up to and including omniscience—are non-apprehensible {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, the three vehicles are nonetheless established {from the perspective of relative reality}. That is to say, the three vehicles are indeed designated as the vehicle of the śrāvakas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, and the vehicle of the genuinely perfect buddhas ... You should accept as if they were tathāgatas those bodhisattvas who are, without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, not separated from this transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why ... it is because in this transcendent perfection of wisdom the three vehicles ... are extensively taught, and yet ... apart from engaging in the transcendent perfection of generosity {in relative reality} || ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {and} omniscience ... || the tathāgatas do not apprehend anything {as ultimately real} ... {Consequently} bodhisattvas should indeed train in all these {aspects} ... up to and including omniscience ... It is for that reason that you should know great bodhisattva beings who practice this transcendent perfection of wisdom, inseparably, to be like the tathāgatas ... When I {Lord Buddha Śākyamuni} scattered five lotus flowers [as an offering] to the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha Dīpaṃkara in the Padma-vatī royal court, and while standing in the middle of the market, I was, without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, not separated from the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom. Likewise I was not separated from the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, all the meditative stabilities of the bodhisattvas, all the gateways of mnemonic incantation, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. At that time, the Tathāgata, Arhat, Gen-

uinely Perfect Buddha Dīpaṃkara foreordained that I would attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, saying, “O my child of enlightened heritage, in the future, after countless eons in this world system, during the Auspicious Eon, you will become the Lord Buddha Śākyamuni, a tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha endowed with knowledge and virtuous conduct, a sugata who knows the world, a conductor of living creatures who are to be trained, and an unsurpassed teacher of gods and humans.

16.F When those great bodhisattva beings or fully ordained monks, fully ordained nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, divine princes, or divine princesses have heard this Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom, and are never separated from the {non-dual} mind endowed with omniscience, there are malign demonic forces and their acolytes who would seek an opportunity to harm them, but will find no such opportunity or occasion to do so ... because these sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage will have been totally consecrated in [the understanding] that physical forms ... feelings ... perceptions ... formative predispositions ... and consciousness ... {and} [all things], up to and including omniscience, are emptiness. If you ask why, it is because there is no opportunity for emptiness to impinge upon emptiness ... for signlessness to impinge upon signlessness ... for aspirationlessness to impinge upon aspirationlessness ... because both the things whereby they would find an opportunity to impinge upon them, and the things upon which they would find an opportunity to impinge, are without inherent existence ... {Furthermore} the humans or non-humans who seek an opportunity to impinge upon those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage will find no such opportunity ... because these sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage totally cultivate thoughts of loving kindness toward all sentient beings, and ... totally cultivate thoughts of compassion ... empathetic joy, and ... equanimity, and they do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} ... Those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage ... who practice the transcendent perfection of generosity will be respected because they furnish all sentient beings with genuine happiness {and will consequently not die in unfavorable circumstances}.

16.G Those gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm, situated throughout the world systems of the great trichilocosm, along with those gods of the Trayastriṃśa realm ... the Yāma realm ... the Tuṣita realm ... the Nirmāṇarata realm ... the Paranirmitavaśavartin realm ... the [Mahā]brahma realms ... the Ābhāsvara realms ... the Śubhakarṣna realms, and ... the Bṛhatphala realms, who have embarked upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment but have not yet heard, accepted, maintained, and comprehended this transcendent perfection of wisdom, should always listen to, accept, maintain, and comprehend this transcendent perfection of wisdom, attending to it in the correct manner, and they should never be separated from the {non-dual} mind endowed with omniscience. Moreover ... if these sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage accept, maintain, recite, comprehend, and attend in the correct manner to this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and if they are never separated from the mind endowed with omniscience, they will never be terrified, afraid, or experience their body hairs stiff due to fear, whether they are staying in an empty hut ... in an exposed place, or ... in an open hall or pavilion. If you ask why ... it is because these sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage totally cultivate the emptiness of internal phenomena, but always without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. Similarly, they totally cultivate the emptiness of external phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, but always without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

16.H Then the {aforementioned} gods situated throughout this world system of the great trichilocosm ... and tho-

se [of the other realms], up to and including the Pure Abodes, said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! We shall always guard and shelter those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who accept, affirm, maintain, recite, and explain this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, demonstrating it extensively to others and attending to it in the correct manner, and who are never separated from the {non-dual} mind endowed with omniscience ... because dependent on those great bodhisattva beings, [rebirths among] the denizens of the hells ... {and} the animal realm will be cut off, while destitute gods ... nāgas ... yakṣas ... humans, and all epidemics, misfortunes, contagious diseases, and hostilities will not arise, or else they will not occur, or else they will be alleviated. Similarly, all famines, conflicts, and civil wars will be interrupted, alleviated, and become non-existent ... because, dependent on those great bodhisattva beings, the ways of the ten virtuous actions will emerge in the world, and likewise the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, and the four formless absorptions ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... and likewise [the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the four applications of mindfulness ... {and} [all causal and fruititional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {and} [all attainments], up to and including omniscience, will emerge in the world ... Moreover ... it is dependent on these great bodhisattva beings that the royal class ... the priestly class and ... the householder class and particularly those who stand out like mighty sāl trees will emerge in the world; and similarly, that universal monarchs will emerge in the world ... Similarly, it is dependent on these great bodhisattva beings that the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm are discerned ... and similarly, that the gods of [the other realms], up to and including Akaniṣṭha, are discerned ... {as well as} the fruit of entering the stream ... those individuals who enter the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one further rebirth, the individuals who are tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, the individuals who are no longer subject to rebirth ... the fruit of arhatship, and actual arhats ... individual enlightenment ... pratyekabuddhas ... the maturation of all sentient beings ... the refinement of the buddhafiels ... the tathāgatas, arhats and genuinely perfect buddhas ... {and} those who turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine are {all} discerned in the world, and similarly, that the precious jewel of the Buddha ... the precious jewel of the Dharma ... {and} the precious jewel of the Saṅgha emerges ... For these reasons we will ensure that the bodhisattvas will be guarded, sheltered, and concealed by the world with its gods, humans, and antigods.”

16.1 Kauśika {mighty lord of the gods}, those who think that great bodhisattva beings should be honored, venerated, respected, and granted offerings consider that I {Lord Buddha Śākyamuni} am worthy of being honored, venerated, respected, and granted offerings ... So it is that these great bodhisattva beings should be honored, venerated, respected, and granted offerings by the world with its gods, humans, and antigods ... If this world system of the great trichiliocosm were filled entirely with śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas, like a grove of reeds ... and if some sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage were to honor, venerate, respect, and grant offerings to them, with all their necessities, as long as they live, but there was one who instead would honor, venerate, respect, and grant offerings to a single great bodhisattva being who had just begun to set his or her mind on enlightenment, and was not separated from the six transcendent perfections, that latter child of enlightened heritage would generate much greater merit. If you ask why ... it is because great bodhisattva beings and the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are not present in the world dependent on the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. Rather, Kauśika, it is dependent on great bodhisattva beings that the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and similarly, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect bu-

ddhas are present in the world. Kauśika, so it is that you should always ensure that great bodhisattva beings are honored, venerated, respected, and granted offerings by the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. You should guard, shelter, and conceal them so that their [activities] are never interrupted.

COMMENTARY

In order for the unawakened mind in the illusion of ‘relative’ existence to don the mind of omniscience, which perceives nothing in relative existence to ultimately exist and to be wholly and completely without defining characteristics ~ it must remove all conceptual notions that this thing is ‘that’ or that thing is ‘this’ ~ to be wholly and completely free of duality. **Yet it must still train in the aspects of the path of omniscience within the confines of the realm of ‘relative’ existence, to awaken from the delusion of the mind of duality** ~ where these aspects are understood to be ultimately non-existent and wholly and completely without defining characteristics.

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The omniscient mind in ‘relative’ reality is the non-dual mind of the all-seeing eye ~ which sees every mind as the ‘one’ undivided and uncontaminated natural luminosity of mind. In this non-dual reality within relative reality, the omniscient mind is the ‘awakened mind’ of every awakening conjured individuated being ~ which is in the process of awakening beyond its individuality to the non-dual reality of the omniscient mind. **The omniscient mind is the ‘immaculate conception’ or the ‘uncontaminated conception’ of Our non-dual mind**, which is able to inspire, up to the immaculate and sublime, every part of Its mind, through supramundane inspiration.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: ADVANTAGES

17.1 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom sheds light owing to its utter purity. Venerable Lord! I pay homage to the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is unsullied by the three world systems. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom dispels the blindness of afflicted mental states and all false views. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom has precedence over all branches of enlightenment. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom secures happiness, distinct from all fears, enmity, and harmful [thoughts or deeds]. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom brings light to all sentient beings so that they might acquire the [five] eyes. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom demonstrates the path to those who are going astray so that they might abandon the two extremes. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is omniscience, so that all afflicted mental states and involuntary reincarnation through propensities might be abandoned. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is the mother of the bodhisattvas because it generates all the attributes of the buddhas. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is neither produced, nor does it disintegrate, because it is empty of intrinsic defining characteristics. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom abandons cyclic existences because it is neither an enduring state, nor is it perishable. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom offers protection to those who lack protection because it bestows all that is precious. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is endowed with the completely perfect [ten] powers because it cannot be crushed by any antagonists. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom turns the wheel of the sacred doctrine, repeating it in the three times and in its twelve aspects, becau-

se it is neither subject to promulgation nor reversal. Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom genuinely displays the essential nature of all things because it is the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Venerable Lord! How can bodhisattvas, those who are on the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, those who are on the vehicle of the śrāvakas, or those who are on the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom?”

17.2 The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! Just as they abide alongside the Teacher, and just as they pay homage to the Teacher, so they should do the same with respect to the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, Śāradvatīputra, it is because this transcendent perfection of wisdom is itself the Teacher. The Teacher is not one thing, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom another. Rather, emptiness is the transcendent perfection of wisdom and the nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is empty. It is owing to this transcendent perfection of wisdom that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are distinguished, and similarly that the bodhisattvas, the pratyekabuddhas, the arhats, and in the same vein, [all those of spiritual attainment, down to and including those who have entered the stream to nirvāṇa] are distinguished. It is owing to this transcendent perfection of wisdom that the paths of the ten virtuous actions are distinguished in the world and similarly, that the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, the five extrasensory powers, the transcendent perfection of generosity and the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and the emptiness of internal phenomena along with the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are distinguished in the world. Similarly, it is owing to this transcendent perfection of wisdom that the ten powers of the tathāgatas are distinguished, along with [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and that [the other attainments], up to and including omniscience, are distinguished.”

17.3 Thereupon, Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, thought, “What is the basis of this question that Senior Śāradvatīputra has asked? What is its context?” Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, then asked Senior Śāradvatīputra, “Venerable Śāradvatīputra! What is the basis of this question that you have asked? What is its context?”

17.4 Senior Śāradvatīputra replied to Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, “Kauśika, great bodhisattva beings who have acquired the transcendent perfection of wisdom, owing to their skillful means, have concentrated and subsumed the roots of virtue possessed by the lord buddhas of the past, future, and present, commencing from when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment and lasting as long as the sacred doctrine itself endures, as well as the roots of virtue possessed by the Lord Buddha, along with his monastic community of śrāvakas, and those of the pratyekabuddhas, and the roots of virtue possessed by all other sentient beings apart from them, who are engaged in the Great Vehicle. Making common cause with all sentient beings, they then dedicate these [roots of virtue] for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. So this was the basis of the question I asked.

17.5 “Moreover, Kauśika, the transcendent perfection of wisdom possessed by great bodhisattva beings dominates the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, it dominates the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, and the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. Kauśika, just as those who are born blind, whether they number a hundred,

a thousand, or a hundred thousand, cannot set out on a road, or enter a hamlet, town, city, or country without a guide, and they are incapable and inadequate, having no way to move, in the same way, Kauśika, the five [lower] transcendent perfections resemble one who is born blind. Unguided by the transcendent perfection of wisdom, all of them will be separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom so that they will have no opportunity to set out on the paths associated with perfect enlightenment, from one to the next, or to enter the citadel of omniscience. However, Kauśika, when the five [lower] transcendent perfections, starting with the transcendent perfection of generosity, have been acquired through the transcendent perfection of wisdom, these five transcendent perfections will be endowed with vision. Indeed, it is because they are acquired by means of the transcendent perfection of wisdom that these five transcendent perfections are designated as transcendent perfections.”

17.6 Then Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Venerable Śāradvatīputra! You say that it is because they are acquired by means of the transcendent perfection of wisdom that these five transcendent perfections are designated as transcendent perfections. However, Venerable Śāradvatīputra, are these five transcendent perfections not designated as transcendent perfections when they are acquired by means of the transcendent perfection of generosity? Similarly, are these five transcendent perfections not designated as transcendent perfections when they are acquired by means of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, when they are acquired by means of the transcendent perfection of tolerance, when they are acquired by means of the transcendent perfection of perseverance, or when they are acquired by means of the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration?”

17.7 “Kauśika,” he replied, “It is so! It is just as you have spoken. However, great bodhisattva beings who abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom fully perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly they fully perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, and the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. So it is, Kauśika, that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is designated as beyond these five [lower] transcendent perfections. It is designated as the foremost, the best, the most excellent, the unsurpassed, and the highest.”

17.8 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One as follows: “Venerable Lord! How should the transcendent perfection of wisdom be actualized?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, the transcendent perfection of wisdom should be actualized due to the non-actualization of physical forms. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of wisdom should be actualized due to the non-actualization of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of wisdom should be actualized due to the non-actualization of the transcendent perfection of generosity and the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of wisdom should be actualized due to the non-actualization of the emptiness of internal phenomena, and in the same vein, [of the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, as well as the applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of wisdom should be actualized due to the non-actualization of the understanding of all phenomena, and the non-actualization of the understanding of the aspects of the path

and of omniscience.”

17.9 “Venerable Lord! How is the transcendent perfection of wisdom to be actualized due to the non-actualization of physical forms? How is the transcendent perfection of wisdom to be actualized due to the non-actualization [of all these other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, the transcendent perfection of wisdom should be actualized because physical forms are not actualized, because they do not arise, because they are non-apprehensible, and because they do not disintegrate. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of wisdom should be actualized because feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and in the same vein, [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are not actualized because they do not arise, because they are non-apprehensible, and because they do not disintegrate.”

17.10 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When the transcendent perfection of wisdom is actualized in that manner, what thing is attained?” The Blessed One replied, “Nothing at all is attained. This is why it may be styled ‘the transcendent perfection of wisdom’.”

17.11 “Venerable Lord! What are the things that are not attained?” The Blessed One replied, “Virtuous phenomena and non-virtuous phenomena will not be attained. Similarly, mundane phenomena, supramundane phenomena, contaminated phenomena, uncontaminated phenomena, censurable phenomena, non-censurable phenomena, conditioned phenomena, and unconditioned phenomena will not be attained. If you ask why, Śāradvatīputra, the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not establish anything at all in an apprehending manner. For this reason nothing at all is attained.”

17.12 Then Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Does the transcendent perfection of wisdom not attain and not apprehend even omniscience?” The Blessed One replied, “Kauśika, it is so! It is just as you have spoken. This transcendent perfection of wisdom does not attain and does not apprehend even omniscience.”

17.13 “Venerable Lord! In what way does the transcendent perfection of wisdom not attain and not apprehend even omniscience?” The Blessed One replied, “Kauśika, the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not attain [even] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, whether in the sense of a designation, in the sense of an intimation, or in the sense of a formulation.”

17.14 “Venerable Lord! How then does it bring about attainment?” The Blessed One replied, “It brings about attainment insofar as it does not admit, not establish, not abandon, not adhere to, and not attain anything at all. Kauśika, so it is that the transcendent perfection of wisdom brings about the attainment of all things, without attaining anything at all.” Then Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How wonderful that this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established because all things neither arise nor do they cease, and they are unconditioned, unapprehended, and without fixation!”

17.15 Thereupon, Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If great bodhisattva beings wonder wh-

ether the transcendent perfection of wisdom brings about the attainment of all things, but perceive to the contrary that it does not bring about attainment, in that case, Venerable Lord, those bodhisattvas would undervalue the transcendent perfection of wisdom and keep far away from it.” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti! There is a distinct way in which bodhisattvas might undervalue the transcendent perfection of wisdom and keep far away from it. If, Subhūti, when bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they were to perceive, ‘Alas! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is flaccid, insignificant, and pointless. Alas! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is vacuous,’ in that case, they would undervalue the transcendent perfection of wisdom and keep far away from it. Subhūti! That is the distinct way in which bodhisattvas might undervalue the transcendent perfection of wisdom and keep far away from the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

17.16 Then, Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If one trusts in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, what are the things in which one should not trust?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti! If you have conviction in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, you should not have conviction in physical forms. Similarly, you should not have conviction in feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. You should not have conviction in the eyes, and you should not have conviction in [the other sense organs], up to and including the mental faculty. You should not have conviction in the sense field of sights, and you should not have conviction in [the other sense objects], up to and including mental phenomena. Similarly, you should not have conviction in the transcendent perfection of generosity, and you should not have conviction in the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. You should not have conviction in the emptiness of internal phenomena, and you should not have conviction in the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. You should not have conviction in the applications of mindfulness, and you should not have conviction in [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, you should not have conviction in the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and you should not have conviction in [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. You should not have conviction in the fruit of entering the stream. Similarly, you should not have conviction in the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, in the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, and in the fruit of arhatship. You should not have conviction in individual enlightenment. You should not have conviction in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. You should not have conviction in the understanding of all phenomena. You should not have conviction in the understanding of the aspects of the path. You should not have conviction in omniscience.

17.17 “On the other hand, Subhūti, you should have conviction in the transcendent perfection of wisdom because physical forms are non-apprehensible. Similarly, you should have conviction in the transcendent perfection of wisdom because feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-apprehensible. In the same vein, you should have conviction in the transcendent perfection of wisdom because [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are non-apprehensible.”

17.18 “Subhūti, those who have conviction in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, without apprehending anything, have conviction in physical forms; similarly, they have conviction in feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. In the same vein, if they have conviction, [without apprehending anything,] in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will have conviction in [all those other attributes and attainments], up to and in-

cluding omniscience.” Senior Subhūti then said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is the great transcendent perfection.”

17.19 The Blessed One asked, “Subhūti, for what reasons do you think this transcendent perfection of wisdom is the great transcendent perfection?” He replied, “It does not enhance physical forms, nor does it diminish them. Similarly, it does not enhance feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, nor does it diminish them. It does not enhance the transcendent perfection of generosity, nor does it diminish it. Similarly, it does not enhance the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, and the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, nor does it diminish them. Similarly, it does not enhance the emptiness of internal phenomena, nor does it diminish it. Similarly, it does not enhance the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, nor does it diminish them. Similarly, it does not enhance the applications of mindfulness, nor does it diminish them. Similarly, it does not enhance [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, nor does it diminish them. It does not enhance the ten powers of the tathāgatas, nor does it diminish them. Similarly, it does not enhance [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, nor does it diminish them. It does not enhance enlightenment; nor does it diminish it. It does not enhance buddhahood; nor does it diminish it.”

17.20 “Moreover, the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not absorb physical forms, nor does it diffuse them. Similarly, it does not absorb feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions and consciousness; nor does it diffuse them. In the same vein, it does not absorb [all those other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including buddhahood; nor does it diffuse them.”

17.21 “Moreover, the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not measure physical forms, nor does it not measure them. In the same vein, it does not measure [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood; nor does it not measure them.”

17.22 “Moreover, the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not enlarge physical forms, nor does it contract them. Similarly, it does not enlarge feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions and consciousness; nor does it contract them. In the same vein, it does not enlarge [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood; nor does it contract them.

17.23 “Moreover, the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not strengthen physical forms, nor does it weaken them. Similarly, it does not strengthen feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; nor does it weaken them. In the same vein, it does not strengthen [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood; nor does it weaken them.” “Venerable Lord! For these reasons this transcendent perfection of wisdom is the great transcendent perfection, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.”

17.24 “Venerable Lord! If great bodhisattva beings who have newly entered the [Great] Vehicle, perceive, contingent on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly contingent on the transcendent perfection of meditative

concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity, that the transcendent perfection of wisdom enhances or diminishes physical forms, and similarly, that it enhances or diminishes feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions and consciousness, and in the same vein, that it enhances or diminishes [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood; and in the same vein that it [absorbs or diffuses, measures or does not measure, enlarges or contracts, and] strengthens or weakens physical forms, and similarly, that it strengthens or weakens feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, in that case, Venerable Lord, those great bodhisattva beings do not practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, it is because anything that enhances or diminishes physical forms, and in the same vein, anything that enhances or diminishes [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, cannot be an outcome of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Anything that strengthens or weakens physical forms, and similarly, anything that strengthens or weakens feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and in the same vein, anything that strengthens or weakens [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, cannot be an outcome of the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

17.25 “Anything that enhances or diminishes physical forms, and similarly, anything that enhances or diminishes feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and in the same vein, anything that strengthens or weakens and so forth [any of those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, does so because its [mistaken] perception is great. If you ask why, it is because there is no enlightenment at all for those who have [such mistaken] perception.

17.26 “If you ask why, owing to the fact that sentient beings are uncreated, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is uncreated. Similarly, owing to the fact that physical forms are uncreated, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is uncreated. Similarly, owing to the fact that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are uncreated, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is uncreated. In the same vein, owing to the fact that [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, are uncreated, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is uncreated.

17.27 “Owing to the fact that sentient beings are without essential nature, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is without essential nature. Similarly, in the same vein, owing to the fact that [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, are without essential nature, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is without essential nature.

17.28 “Owing to the fact that sentient beings are emptiness, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is emptiness. Similarly, owing to the fact that physical forms are emptiness, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is emptiness. Similarly, owing to the fact that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are emptiness, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is emptiness. In the same vein, owing to the fact that [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, are emptiness, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is emptiness.

17.29 “Owing to the fact that sentient beings are void, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is void. Similarly, owing to the fact that physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are void, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is void. In the same vein, owing to the fact that [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, are void, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is void.

17.30 “Owing to the fact that sentient beings are non-existent, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is non-existent. Similarly, owing to the fact that physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-existent, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is non-existent. In the same vein, owing to the fact that [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, are non-existent, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is non-existent.

17.31 “Owing to the fact that sentient beings are inconceivable, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is inconceivable. Similarly, owing to the fact that physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are inconceivable, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is inconceivable. In the same vein, owing to the fact that [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, are inconceivable, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is inconceivable.

17.32 “Owing to the fact that sentient beings are indestructible, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is indestructible. Similarly, owing to the fact that physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are indestructible, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is indestructible. In the same vein, owing to the fact that [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, are indestructible, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is indestructible.

17.33 “Owing to the fact that sentient beings do not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood. Similarly, owing to the fact that physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness do not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood. In the same vein, owing to the fact that [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, do not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood.

17.34 “Owing to the fact that sentient beings are not endowed with the powers [of the tathāgatas], you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is not endowed with the powers [of the tathāgatas]. Similarly, owing to the fact that physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are not endowed with the powers [of the tathāgatas], you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is not endowed with the powers [of the tathāgatas]. In the same vein, owing to the fact that [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, are not endowed with the powers [of the tathāgatas], you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is not endowed with the powers [of the tathāgatas]. For these reasons, Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is the great transcendent perfection, possessed by great bodhisattva beings.”

17.35 Then Senior Ānanda said to the Lord [Buddha], “Venerable Lord! The name of the transcendent perfection of generosity is not as well known as the name of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Nor are the names of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, and the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration as well known. Venerable Lord! In the same vein, [all those other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are not as well known as the name of the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

17.36 The Blessed One replied to Senior Ānanda as follows: “Ānanda! This is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom has precedence over the five [other] transcendent perfections; similarly, it has precedence over [all those other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Ānanda! Do you think that a gift undedicated toward omniscience may be styled as the transcendent perfection of generosity?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied.

17.37 “Ānanda! Do you think that ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom that are undedicated toward omniscience may be styled as the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and so forth]?” “No, Venerable Lord!” he replied.

17.38 Senior Ānanda then asked the Lord [Buddha], “Venerable Lord! In what way may a gift, when dedicated toward omniscience, be styled as the transcendent perfection of generosity, and in what way may [the other transcendent perfections], up to and including wisdom, when dedicated toward omniscience, be styled as the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest]?” The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda! When a gift is dedicated toward omniscience in a non-dual manner, it may be styled as the transcendent perfection of generosity. In the same vein, when [the other transcendent perfections], up to and including wisdom, are dedicated toward omniscience in a non-dual manner, they may be styled as the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest]. Similarly, when these are dedicated toward omniscience in an uncreated manner and without apprehending anything, they may be styled as the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest].”

17.39 “Venerable Lord! How is it that when a gift is dedicated toward omniscience in a non-dual manner, and similarly in an uncreated manner, and without apprehending anything, it may be styled as the transcendent perfection of generosity? Likewise, how is it that when [the other transcendent perfections], up to and including wisdom, are dedicated toward omniscience in a non-dual manner, and similarly in an uncreated manner, and without apprehending anything, they may be styled as the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest]?” The Blessed One replied, “It is owing to the non-duality of physical forms, and similarly, owing to the non-duality of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, consciousness, and [all other attributes], up to and including enlightenment.”

17.40 “How is it owing to the non-duality of physical forms, and how is it owing to the non-duality [of the other aggregates and of all attributes], up to and including enlightenment?” The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda! Physical forms are empty of physical forms. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of consciousness [and the other aggregates]. In the same vein, [all other attributes], up to and including enlightenment, are empty of enlightenment [and the rest]. If you ask why, it is because the transcendent perfections and phy-

sical forms are indivisible and without duality. Similarly, [all other attributes], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom and enlightenment, are indivisible and without duality.

17.41 “Ānanda! So it is that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is in the vanguard of these five [other] transcendent perfections, and in the same vein, it is in the vanguard of [all other attributes], up to and including omniscience. Just as the seeds that have been planted in a large field sprout and grow, with the large field acting as their support, in the same way, Ānanda, these five [other] transcendent perfections emerge dependent on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, with the transcendent perfection of wisdom acting as their support. Similarly, the four applications of mindfulness emerge dependent on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, as do [all other causal and frictional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and [all attainments], up to and including omniscience. Ānanda! The five [other] transcendent perfections and [those other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are dependent on omniscience. So it is, Ānanda, that the transcendent perfection of wisdom drives those five [other] transcendent perfections, and similarly drives [all those other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.”

17.42 Senior Ānanda then said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! The Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha has not yet spoken of all the qualities which sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage acquire when they hold, maintain, recite aloud, master, and are attentive to this transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner. Venerable Lord! When they hold and are attentive and so forth to the transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner, the paths of the ten virtuous actions emerge in the world. Similarly, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, and [other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, emerge in the world. Venerable Lord! When they hold and are attentive to the transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner, and so forth, those who have entered the stream are discerned in the world, and similarly, those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, arhats, and pratyekabuddhas all are discerned in the world. Venerable Lord! When they hold and are attentive and so forth to the transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas emerge in the world!”

17.43 The Blessed One replied to Senior Ānanda as follows: “Ānanda! I have not exhaustively spoken of those qualities which sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage possess when they hold and are attentive and so forth to the transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner. If you ask why, Ānanda, the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who hold, maintain, recite aloud, master, and are attentive to this transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner, and are never separated from the mind that knows all things, will possess the immeasurable aggregate of ethical discipline. Similarly, those who hold, maintain, recite aloud, master, and are attentive to this transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner, and are never separated from the mind that knows all things, will possess the immeasurable aggregates of meditative stability, wisdom, liberation, and the perception of liberating pristine cognition.

17.44 “Ānanda! You should know that the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who hold, maintain, recite aloud, master, and are attentive to this transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right mann-

er, and are never separated from the mind that knows all things, will enter into the [way of] the tathāgatas.

17.45 “Ānanda! With regard to all those aggregates from ethical discipline to the perception of liberating pristine cognition, possessed by all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, that is to say, the aggregate of ethical discipline, the aggregate of meditative stability, the aggregate of wisdom, the aggregate of liberation, and the aggregate of the perception of liberating pristine cognition possessed by all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas—Ānanda, all of these do not approximate even a hundredth part or approximate even the causal basis of the aggregates from ethical discipline to the perception of liberating pristine cognition, that is to say, the aggregate of ethical discipline, the aggregate of meditative stability, the aggregate of wisdom, the aggregate of liberation, and the aggregate of the perception of liberating pristine cognition possessed by sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage. If you ask why, Ānanda, the minds of those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage are liberated from the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and they do not hanker for the doctrines of those śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

17.46 “Ānanda! I did not speak of the qualities and advantages that sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage will accrue in this life and in the next life when, Ānanda, they maintain this transcendent perfection of wisdom, having committed it to writing, and also honor, venerate, and respect it with various offerings of flowers, garlands, incense, unguents, powders, religious robes, clothing, parasols, and victory banners.”

17.47 Senior Ānanda then said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! I will always uninterruptedly guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who hold, maintain, recite aloud, master, and are attentive to this transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner, and are never separated from the mind that knows all things, and who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and then honor, revere, and respect it with flowers and those [other offerings], up to and including diverse ribbons, as well as with musical sounds.” The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda! The sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage abide utterly in the emptiness of internal phenomena, and they abide utterly in the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Therefore, they do not consider anyone who may seek to censure the transcendent perfection of wisdom, nor do they consider the censure of the transcendent perfection of wisdom which that person would seek to make. So it is, Ānanda, that because those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have been captivated by the brilliance of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, no one will have occasion [to censure it].”

17.48 “Moreover, Ānanda, the minds of those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who hold and are attentive to the transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner, and so forth, will not cower. They will not be intimidated. They will not be afraid. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because they do not consider any entity which would cause them to cower, and to be intimidated or afraid. Those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who hold and are attentive to the transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner, and so forth, and who commit it to writing, or have it committed to writing, and then revere, honor, respect, and make offerings to it will accrue these qualities and advantages in this life and in the next life. Friends, close

relatives, cousins, kings, ministers, bodhisattvas, gods, virtuous ascetics, brāhmin priests, lord buddhas who are alive and present in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and even those among them who teach the sacred doctrine, along with great bodhisattva beings and pratyekabuddhas, arhats, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, those who are tied to one more rebirth, and those who have entered the stream will all rejoice in [the qualities of] those [sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage]. Similarly, the world with its god realms will rejoice in them. Living creatures, including demons, virtuous ascetics, and brāhmin priests, as well as those who are pleasant among the gods, humans, and antigods will also rejoice in them.

17.49 “Their courage with respect to the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly with respect to the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom will not be broken. Similarly, their cultivation of the emptiness of internal phenomena will not be interrupted, and in the same way, their cultivations of [all other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, will not be interrupted. Similarly, their cultivation of the applications of mindfulness will not be interrupted, and in the same vein, their cultivations of [all other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, will not be interrupted. Similarly, their cultivation of the meditative stabilities will not be interrupted. Likewise, their cultivation of the gateways of mnemonic incantation will not be interrupted. Similarly, their extrasensory powers, which are those of the bodhisattvas, will not be interrupted. Their acts that bring sentient beings to maturity will not be interrupted. Their refinement of the buddhafields will not be interrupted. Their [attainments], up to and including omniscience, will not be interrupted. They will be capable of warding off all heretical refutations and imputations that might arise.

17.50 “Ānanda! Those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who hold, maintain, recite aloud, and master this transcendent perfection of wisdom with the mind of omniscience, and who commit the transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, and have it compiled as a book, and then honor, revere, respect, and make offerings to it with various flowers, garlands, incense, unguents, powders, religious robes, clothing, parasols, victory banners, and ribbons, as well as with musical sounds, will accrue these qualities and advantages in this life and in the next life.

17.51 “Moreover, Ānanda, throughout the world systems of the great trichiliocosm, the gods of the Caturmahārājā-kāyika realm who have cultivated the mind of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment will arrive there, examine this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and master it. They will pay homage to it, bow before it, and [only] then consider departing again [for their own abodes]. Similarly, the gods of the Trayastriṃśa realm; the gods of the Yāma, Tuṣita, Nirmāṇarata, and Paranirmitavaśavartin realms; and likewise, the gods of the Brahmakāyika, Brahmāpariśadya, Mahābrahmā, Parīttābha, Apramāṇābha, Ābhāsvara, Parīttāśubha, Apramāṇāśubha, Śubhakarṣna, Anabhṛaka, Puṇyaprasava, and Bṛhatphala realms who have cultivated the mind of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment will arrive there, examine this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, hold, and master it. They will pay homage to it, bow before it, and [only] then consider departing again [for their own abodes]. The gods of the Pure Abodes, namely, those of the Avṛha, Atapa, Sudṛśa, Sudarśana, and Akaniṣṭha realms also will arrive

there, examine this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, pay homage to it, and so forth, and [only] then consider departing again [for their own abodes].

17.52 “Ānanda! Those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage should think, ‘May I grant the gift of the sacred doctrine to all the gods in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, extending from those of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm as far as the Bṛhatphala realm, who have entered upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, along with those of the Pure Abodes, and also [sundry] gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, mahoragas, antigods, garuḍas, and kiṃnaras who will arrive to examine this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and to hold, master, venerate, pay homage, and make offerings to it.’

17.53 “Ānanda! Those gods present in the world systems of the great trichiliocosm, extending from the Caturmahārājakāyika realm as far as Akaniṣṭha, also will arrive there, examine this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, hold, and master it. They will pay homage to it, bow before it, and [only] then consider departing again [for their own abodes]. They will always uninterruptedly guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage.

17.54 “Similarly, the gods who are present in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, extending from the Caturmahārājakāyika realm as far as Akaniṣṭha, also will arrive there, examine this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, pay homage to it, and so forth, and [only] then consider departing again [for their own abodes]. They will always uninterruptedly guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage.

17.55 “Ānanda! Anyone who seeks to censure those [sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage] would find no opportunity to do so, except in connection with the ripening of past actions. Ānanda! This is also a quality and advantage that sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage will accrue in this life. The gods in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, who have entered upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, owing to their former acts of offering made to this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, will decide to come there to guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because those gods have entered upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment; they offer shelter and protection to all sentient beings, they never forsake sentient beings, they benefit all sentient beings, and they secure them in happiness.”

17.56 Senior Ānanda then asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How can those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage know that, among all the world systems of the ten directions, the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm will come here, and that the gods extending as far as the Akaniṣṭha realm will also come here to examine this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and to hold, retain, venerate, make offerings to, and respect it?”

17.57 The Blessed One replied to Senior Ānanda as follows: “Ānanda! If those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage behold an extensive aura of light around the place where this [book of] the trans-

cent perfection of wisdom has been placed, they should certainly know that eminently powerful gods, endowed with great occult power and great miraculous abilities, will have arrived to examine this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and to hold, retain, venerate, make offerings to, and respect it.

17.58 “Moreover, Ānanda, if those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage smell the pervasive scent of non-human beings, they should certainly know that gods endowed with great occult power and great miraculous abilities will have arrived there to examine this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and to hold, retain, master, pay homage to, make offerings to, and respect it.

17.59 “Moreover, Ānanda, if those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage always maintain scrupulous conduct and make offerings to this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom in accordance with the correct procedures, on account of their scrupulous conduct, many gods will arrive there and rejoice upon examining this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and upon holding, mastering, honoring, retaining, venerating, respecting, and making offerings to it. Gods of feeble power, who were previously present in that place, will be unable to bear the majesty, the glory, and the exaltedness of those eminently powerful gods endowed with great occult power and great miraculous abilities, and so they will consider leaving that place. The more those eminently powerful gods endowed with great occult power and great miraculous abilities think they should come there, the more the volition of those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage will be enhanced. In proximity to this [book], they should not negligently engage in careless actions. The sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage should also perfume that locale with various kinds of incense, as an offering to this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They should arrange various flowers. They should scent it with aromatic jars. They should hang silken flags. They should erect various excellent canopies. They should excellently adorn that locale in many ways.

17.60 “Moreover, Ānanda, the bodies of those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who venerate and make offerings to this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom will never tire. They will be comfortable in body, comfortable in mind, endowed with lightness of body and majesty of body, and their minds will be radiant. Perceiving the [transcendent perfection of wisdom] in that manner, when asleep they will have no inauspicious dreams, for they will behold in their dreams the body of the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha, excellently adorned with the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, radiant with the eighty minor marks, and teaching the sacred doctrine, his golden body surrounded by and in the presence of the community of fully ordained monks. They will also hear the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha impart the sacred doctrines, from the six transcendent perfections and the four applications of mindfulness up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. They will hear the analysis of the meaning of these transcendent perfections. Similarly, they will hear the analysis of the meaning of [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. They will also behold the Tree of Enlightenment. They will see the Bodhisattva next to the Tree of Enlightenment, and they will see him attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Similarly, they will see him, having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood, turning the wheel of the sacred doctrine, and they will also know and behold many hundreds of thousands of bodhisattvas establishing in their discussions how omniscience should be attained, how sentient beings should be brought to maturity, how the bu-

ddhafields should be refined, and how demonic forces, along with their entourages, should be disciplined. They will hear the voices of many hundred billion trillions of buddhas from the eastern direction. Similarly, they will hear the voices of many hundred billion trillions of buddhas from the southern, western, northern, and intermediate directions. They will hear them saying, 'O, in such and such a world system, the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha so and so teaches the sacred doctrine, surrounded by and in the presence of so many thousands of bodhisattvas, and so many hundred billion trillions of śrāvakas.'

17.61 "Similarly, they will behold in the eastern direction many hundred billion trillions of buddhas who are passing into final nirvāṇa. They will behold trillions of stūpas fashioned of the seven kinds of precious metals and gems, containing [the relics] of those who had passed into final nirvāṇa. They will see [themselves] honoring, venerating, and making offerings to those tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, and to the stūpas of those tathāgatas, with flowers, garlands, incense, unguents, powders, religious robes, clothing, parasols, victory banners, ribbons, and diverse musical sounds.

17.62 "Similarly, in the other directions, up to and including the zenith, in the same vein, those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage will have auspicious dreams of this type and they will awaken entirely at ease. Their sustenance will be provided. They will experience lightness of body. They will not be attached to food. They will be without attachment to their religious robes. They will have fewer ideas about food. In the same vein, they will have fewer ideas about everyday necessities. Just as a monk who has engaged in [meditative] union lacks strong attachment to food on arising from his meditative stability, in the same way, they will have fewer ideas about food. If you ask why, Ānanda, they will become like that when their physical sustenance is provided by non-human beings in certain ways: The tathāgatas, bodhisattvas, gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, antigods, garuḍas, kiṃnaras, and mahoragas present in the world systems of the eastern direction, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, will sustain their bodies. As long as they live, these [non-human beings] will honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to them with ribbons and so forth, along with various musical sounds."

17.63 *This completes the seventeenth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled "Advantages."*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SEVENTEEN:

ADVANTAGES

17.A The transcendent perfection of wisdom sheds light owing to its utter purity ... I pay homage to the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... The transcendent perfection of wisdom is unsullied by the three world systems ... dispels the blindness of afflicted mental states and all false views ... has precedence over all branches of enlightenment ... secures happiness, distinct from all fears, enmity, and harmful [thoughts or deeds] ... brings light to all sentient beings so that they might acquire the [five] eyes {of the eye of flesh, the eye of divine clairvoyance, the eye of wisdom, the eye of the sacred doctrine, and the eye of the buddha} ... demonstrates the path to those who are going astray so that they might abandon the two extremes {of eternalism and nihilism} ... is omniscience, so that all afflicted mental states and involuntary reincarnation through propensities might be abandoned ... is the mother of the bodhisattvas because it generates all the attributes of the buddhas ... is neither produced, nor does it disintegrate,

because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} it is empty of intrinsic defining characteristics ... abandons cyclic existences because it is neither an enduring state, nor is it perishable ... offers protection to those who lack protection because it bestows all that is precious ... is endowed with the completely perfect [ten] powers {of the definitive knowledges of relative existence} because it cannot be crushed by any antagonists ... turns the wheel of the sacred doctrine, repeating it in the three times and in its twelve aspects {that the truth of suffering is this—it can be diagnosed—it has been diagnosed; the truth of the origin of suffering is this—it can be abandoned—it has been abandoned; the truth of the cessation of suffering is this—it can be verified—it has been verified; the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering is this—it can be cultivated—it has been cultivated}, because it is neither subject to promulgation nor reversal ... {and moreover} genuinely displays the essential nature of all things because it is the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities.

17.B Just as they abide alongside the Teacher, and just as they pay homage to the Teacher, so they should do the same with respect to the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why ... it is because this transcendent perfection of wisdom is itself the Teacher. The Teacher is not one thing, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom another. Rather, emptiness is the transcendent perfection of wisdom and the nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is empty. It is owing to this transcendent perfection of wisdom that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are distinguished {in the world}, and similarly that the bodhisattvas, the pratyekabuddhas, the arhats, and ... [all those of spiritual attainment, down to and including those who have entered the stream to nirvāṇa] ... the paths of the ten virtuous actions ... the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, the five extrasensory powers, the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and that [the other attainments], up to and including omniscience, are distinguished {in the world}.

17.C Great bodhisattva beings who have acquired the transcendent perfection of wisdom, owing to their skillful means, have concentrated and subsumed the roots of virtue possessed by the lord buddhas of the past, future, and present, commencing from when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment and lasting as long as the sacred doctrine itself endures, as well as the roots of virtue possessed by the Lord Buddha, along with his monastic community of śrāvakas, and those of the pratyekabuddhas, and the roots of virtue possessed by all other sentient beings apart from them, who are engaged in the Great Vehicle. Making common cause with all sentient beings {whose very mind is seen as the one undivided natural luminosity of mind}, they then dedicate these [roots of virtue] for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

17.D The transcendent perfection of wisdom possessed by great bodhisattva beings dominates the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance, and ... meditative concentration ... Just as those who are born blind ... cannot set out on a road, or enter a ... town, city, or country without a guide ... in the same way ... the five [lower] transcendent perfections resemble one who is born blind. Unguided by the transcendent perfection of wisdom, all of them will be separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom so that they will have no opportunity to set out on the paths associated with perfect enlightenment, from one to the next, or to ent-

er the citadel of omniscience. However ... when the five [lower] transcendent perfections ... have been acquired through the transcendent perfection of wisdom, these five transcendent perfections will be endowed with vision. Indeed, it is because they are acquired by means of the transcendent perfection of wisdom that these five transcendent perfections are designated as transcendent perfections ... {Although these five transcendent perfections are still designated as transcendent perfections when they are acquired by means of the transcendent perfections of generosity, ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, and meditative concentration}, great bodhisattva beings who abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom fully perfect {these five lower transcendent perfections} ... So it is ... that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is designated as beyond these five transcendent perfections. It is designated as the foremost, the best, the most excellent, the unsurpassed, and the highest.

17.E The transcendent perfection of wisdom should be actualized {in relative reality} due to the non-actualization {in ultimate reality} of physical forms. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of wisdom should be actualized {in relative reality} due to the non-actualization {in ultimate reality} of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the understanding of all phenomena, and ... the understanding of the aspects of the path and ... omniscience ... The transcendent perfection of wisdom should be actualized {in relative reality} because physical forms {and the rest} are not actualized {in ultimate reality}, because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} they do not arise, because they are non-apprehensible, and because they do not disintegrate ... When the transcendent perfection of wisdom is actualized in that manner ... nothing at all is attained. This is why it may be styled ‘the transcendent perfection of wisdom’ ... Virtuous ... and non-virtuous phenomena will not be attained. Similarly, mundane ... supramundane ... contaminated ... uncontaminated ... censurable ... non-censurable ... conditioned ... and unconditioned phenomena will not be attained ... {because} the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not establish {as ultimately real} anything at all in an apprehending manner || ... even omniscience ... || For this reason nothing at all is attained ... The transcendent perfection of wisdom does not attain [even] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, whether in the sense of a designation, in the sense of an intimation, or in the sense of a formulation ... {and accordingly} brings about attainment insofar as it does not admit, not establish, not abandon, not adhere to, and not attain anything at all ... So it is that the transcendent perfection of wisdom brings about the attainment of all things, without attaining anything at all.

17.F “Venerable Lord! If great bodhisattva beings wonder whether the transcendent perfection of wisdom brings about the attainment of all things, but perceive to the contrary that it does not bring about attainment, in that case, Venerable Lord, those bodhisattvas would undervalue the transcendent perfection of wisdom and keep far away from it.” ... “Subhūti! There is a distinct way in which bodhisattvas might undervalue the transcendent perfection of wisdom and keep far away from it. If, ... when bodhisattvas practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they were to perceive, ‘Alas! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is flaccid, insignificant, and pointless. Alas! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is vacuous,’ in that case, they would undervalue the transcendent perfection of wisdom and keep far away from it.”

17.G If you have conviction in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, you should not have conviction in physical forms {as ultimately real}. Similarly, you should not have conviction in feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {as ultimately real} ... {as well as} the eyes ... up to and including the mental faculty ... the sense field of sights ... up to and including mental phenomena ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth ... the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth ... the fruit of arhatship ... unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... the understanding of all phenomena ... the understanding of the aspects of the path ... {and} omniscience. On the other hand ... you should have conviction in the transcendent perfection of wisdom because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} physical forms are non-apprehensible ... up to and including omniscience, are non-apprehensible ... Those who have conviction in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, have conviction in physical forms {as ultimately non-existent}; similarly, they have conviction in feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... up to and including omniscience {as ultimately non-existent}.

17.H This transcendent perfection of wisdom is the great transcendent perfection ... {because from the perspective of ultimate reality} it does not enhance {non-existent} physical forms, nor does it diminish them || ... {it} does not absorb {non-existent} physical forms, nor does it diffuse them ... {it} does not measure {non-existent} physical forms, nor does it not measure them ... {it} does not enlarge {non-existent} physical forms, nor does it contract them ... {it} does not strengthen {non-existent} physical forms, nor does it weaken them ... || Similarly, it does not enhance {nor diminish, absorb nor diffuse, measure nor not measure, enlarge nor contract, strengthen nor weaken non-existent} feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance, and ... meditative concentration ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {and} [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... enlightenment ... {and} buddhahood ... Those great bodhisattva beings {who perceive the transcendent perfection of wisdom does enhance or diminish, and so forth, physical forms up to and including buddhahood} do not practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... because anything that enhances or diminishes ... {up to} strengthens or weakens physical forms ... up to and including buddhahood, cannot be an outcome of the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {and} does so because its [mistaken] perception is great. If you ask why, it is because there is no enlightenment at all for those who have {such greatly mistaken} perception.

17.I Owing to the fact that sentient beings ... {as well as} physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {and} [all those other attributes], up to and including buddhahood, are {from the perspective of ultimate reality} uncreated || ... without essential nature ... emptiness ... void ... non-existent ... inconceivable ... indestructible ... do not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood ... {and} are not endowed with the powers [of the tathāgatas] ... ||, you should see that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is uncreated {without essential nature, emptiness, void, non-existent, inconceivable, indestructible, does not attain manifestly perfect budd-

hahood, and is not endowed with the powers of the tathāgatas).

17.J The transcendent perfection of wisdom has precedence over the five [other] transcendent perfections; similarly, it has precedence over [all those other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... Ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom that are undedicated toward omniscience may {not} be styled as the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and so forth] ... When a gift is dedicated toward omniscience in a non-dual manner, it may be styled as the transcendent perfection of generosity ... {likewise} when [the other transcendent perfections], up to and including wisdom, are dedicated toward omniscience in a non-dual manner, they may be styled as the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest]. Similarly, when these are dedicated toward omniscience in an uncreated manner and without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, they may be styled as the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest] ... {This} is owing to the non-duality of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions {and} consciousness ... up to and including enlightenment {which are ultimately non-existent} ... {and being} empty of enlightenment [and the rest] ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... are indivisible and without duality.

17.K The transcendent perfection of wisdom is in the vanguard of these five [other] transcendent perfections, and ... [all other attributes], up to and including omniscience. Just as the seeds that have been planted in a large field sprout and grow, with the large field acting as their support, in the same way ... these five [other] transcendent perfections emerge dependent on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, with the transcendent perfection of wisdom acting as their support. Similarly, the four applications of mindfulness emerge dependent on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, as do [all other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and [all attainments], up to and including omniscience ... The five [other] transcendent perfections and [those other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are dependent on omniscience. So it is ... that the transcendent perfection of wisdom drives those five [other] transcendent perfections, and similarly drives [all those other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

17.L {When} sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage ... hold, maintain, recite aloud, master, and are attentive to this transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner ... the paths of the ten virtuous actions ... the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, and [other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, emerge in the world ... those who have entered the stream ... those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, arhats, and pratyekabuddhas all are discerned in the world ... {and} the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas emerge in the world! ... {These} sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who ... are never separated from the {omniscient} mind that knows all things, will possess the immeasurable aggregate{s} of ethical discipline ... meditative stability, wisdom, liberation, and the perception of liberating pristine cognition ... {and} will {thereby} enter into the [way of] the tathāgatas ... All those aggregates from ethical discipline to the perception of liberating pristine cognition, possessed by all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas ... do not approximate even a hundredth part or approximate even the causal basis of the aggregates ... possessed by sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage ... {This is because their} minds ... are liberated from the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and they do not hanker for the doctrines of those śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

17.M The qualities and advantages that sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage will accrue in this life and in the next life when ... they maintain this transcendent perfection of wisdom {in the right manner, and so forth}, having committed it to writing {as a book, or have it committed to writing}, and also honor, venerate, and respect it with various offerings of flowers, garlands, incense, unguents, powders, religious robes, clothing, parasols, and victory banners {include} ... {1} {They} abide utterly in the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Therefore, they do not consider anyone {as ultimately real} who may seek to censure the transcendent perfection of wisdom, nor do they consider {as ultimately real} the censure of the transcendent perfection of wisdom which that person would seek to make. So it is ... that because those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage have been captivated by the brilliance of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, no one will have occasion [to censure it] ... {2} The minds of those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who hold and are attentive to the transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner, and so forth, will not cower ... be intimidated ... {nor} be afraid ... because they do not consider {as ultimately real} any entity which would cause them to cower, and to be intimidated or afraid ... {3} Their courage with respect to the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom will not be broken ... {4} Their cultivation of the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, will not be interrupted. Similarly, their cultivation of the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the meditative stabilities ... the gateways of mnemonic incantation ... their extrasensory powers, which are those of the bodhisattvas ... their acts that bring sentient beings to maturity ... their refinement of the buddhafields ... {and} their [attainments], up to and including omniscience, will not be interrupted ... {5} They will be capable of warding off all heretical refutations and imputations that might arise ... {6} Throughout the world systems of the great trichiliocosm, the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm ... {up to and including} the Pure Abodes ... will arrive there, examine this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom {and master it}, pay homage to it, and so forth, and [only] then consider departing again [for their own abodes] ... {Here} those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage should think, ‘May I grant the gift of the sacred doctrine to all the gods in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, extending from those of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm as far as the Brhatphala realm, who have entered upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, along with those of the Pure Abodes, and also [sundry] gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, mahoragas, antigods, garuḍas, and kiṃnaras who will arrive to examine this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and to hold, master, venerate, pay homage, and make offerings to it.’ {7} Anyone who seeks to censure those [sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage] would find no opportunity to do so, except in connection with the ripening of past actions ... {8} The gods in the world systems of the ten directions ... who have entered upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, owing to their former acts of offering made to this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom, will decide to come there to guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage ... {because} they offer shelter and protection to all sentient beings.

17.N If those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage behold an extensive aura of light around the place where this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom has been placed ... {or} smell the perfusive scent of non-human beings, they should certainly know that gods endowed with great occult power and great miraculous abilities will have arrived there to examine this {book} ... and to hold, retain, master, pay homage to, make offerings to, and

respect it. Moreover ... if those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage always maintain scrupulous conduct and make offerings to this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom in accordance with the correct procedures, on account of their scrupulous conduct, many gods will arrive there and rejoice upon examining this {book} ... The more those eminently powerful gods endowed with great occult power and great miraculous abilities think they should come there, the more the volition of those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage will be enhanced. In proximity to this [book], they should not negligently engage in careless actions. The sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage should also perfume that locale with various kinds of incense, as an offering to this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {and} arrange various flowers ... scent it with aromatic jars ... hang silken flags ... erect various excellent canopies ... {and} excellently adorn that locale in many ways.

17.O Moreover ... the bodies of those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who venerate and make offerings to this [book of] the transcendent perfection of wisdom will never tire. They will be comfortable in body, comfortable in mind, endowed with lightness of body and majesty of body, and their minds will be radiant. Perceiving the [transcendent perfection of wisdom] in that manner, when asleep they will have no inauspicious dreams, for they will behold in their dreams the body of the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha ... {and hear} impart-
{ed} the sacred doctrines ... They will hear the analysis of the meaning of these transcendent perfections ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. They will also behold the Tree of Enlightenment. They will see the Bodhisattva next to the Tree of Enlightenment, and they will see him attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... turning the wheel of the sacred doctrine, and they will also know and behold many hundreds of thousands of bodhisattvas establishing in their discussions how omniscience should be attained, how sentient beings should be brought to maturity, how the buddhafiels should be refined, and how demonic forces, along with their entourages, should be disciplined. They will hear the voices of many hundred billion trillions of buddhas ... {and} will behold ... many hundred billion trillions of buddhas who are passing into final nirvāṇa ... {and} trillions of stūpas fashioned of the seven kinds of precious metals and gems, containing [the relics] of those who had passed into final nirvāṇa. They will see [themselves] honoring, venerating, and making offerings to those tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, and to the stūpas of those tathāgatas, with flowers, garlands, incense, unguents, powders, religious robes, clothing, parasols, victory banners, ribbons, and diverse musical sounds ... Those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage will have auspicious dreams of this type and they will awaken entirely at ease. Their sustenance will be provided. They will experience lightness of body ... {and} be without attachment to their religious robes ... {and} have fewer ideas about food ... {and} about everyday necessities. Just as a monk who has engaged in [meditative] union lacks strong attachment to food on arising from his meditative stability, in the same way, they will have fewer ideas about food ... They will become like that when their physical sustenance is provided by non-human beings ... The tathāgatas, bodhisattvas, gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, antigods, gaṛuḍas, kiṃnaras, and mahoragas present in the world systems ... will sustain their bodies ... {and} as long as they live, these [non-human beings] will honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to them with ribbons and so forth, along with various musical sounds.

COMMENTARY

While it is true sentient beings are from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality—uncreated, without essential nature, emptiness, void, non-existent, inconceivable, indestructible, do not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, and are

not endowed with the powers [of the tathāgatas]; it is also true that **sentient beings are from the perspective of ‘relative’ reality—created, with essential nature, not empty, not void, existent, conceivable, destructible, do attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, and are, upon attaining manifestly perfect buddhahood, endowed with the powers [of the tathāgatas].** Thus does the Buddha make perfectly clear in chapter two of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: “*Śāradvatīputra, bodhisattvas do perceive all such phenomena distinctly, but that pertains to the relative truth, not the ultimate truth.*”

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From the perspective of the transcendent perfection of wisdom within the realm of ‘relative’ existence there is only the ‘one and only’ Bodhisattva standing next to the Tree of Enlightenment ~ for as We leave this world of ‘relative’ existence as the Buddha So and So or as the Buddha Such and Such—to pass into our (final) parinirvāṇa—are We still not every bodhisattva that is, that ever will be, that ever was? **For the one undivided non-dual mind of every bodhisattva that ever will be, will forever remain ‘undivided’ within the illusion of individuality.** And even when billions of trillions of buddhas leave this world of relativity behind, know that We as the Bodhisattva still endure, for as long as the sacred doctrine still endures, until the end of time.

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The Perfection of Wisdom of the omniscient mind, is the Holy Spirit of the ‘one’ undivided mind, that reaches and teaches into the hearts and minds of every conjured individuated being. This is the Teacher that will teach us all things and prepare our mind unto the Way of omniscience, where our hearts become open to the truth of ‘oneness’ within the illusory realm of ‘relative’ existence. She is the holy Mother, who gives birth to the buddhas, sent by the great illusionist, Vajradhara ~ who as the ‘diamond-holder’ of the great creation, is the Father Creator of this illusory existence. We are the children, the ‘collective One Son’, of the great illusionist Vajradhara ~ where we must don the ‘immaculate conception’ of His diamond-being—through the Perfection of Wisdom of the omniscient mind—known as Vajrasattva. Only by donning the diamond mind of the uncrushable nature of non-duality, will our mind become free of all contaminants, and rise above all notion it is the Son, and rise above all notion it is the Mother, and rise above all notion it is the Father, and realize it is, and forever will be, and has been nothing ever other than the ‘One’.

SUCH IS THE NATURE OF THE TRANSCENDENT PERFECTION OF WISDOM

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What is this dedication toward omniscience? When we dedicate our efforts of generosity, ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration and wisdom toward the ultimate goal and citadel of ‘omniscience’, it can only be that our efforts reflect the fundamental mindset of the non-dual omniscient mind ~ that all things, from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality—including omniscience—are ultimately uncreated and non-existent, and being non-existent entities beyond Our singularity in God, are thus non-dual. **Here our efforts are styled as the transcendent perfection of generosity and the like, where we transcend completely all notion of duality** ~ for if we dedicate our efforts believing in ‘duality reality’—where we fashion in our heart the notion of eternal individuality *beyond* Our singularity—then we dedicate our efforts not toward the ‘goal’ of omniscience, but merely to the dualistic mind.

18.1 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Where did those great bodhisattva beings who aspire to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom pass away before coming into this [world]? For how long have they embarked on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? How many tathāgatas have they honored? How long have they practiced the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly, how long have they practiced the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom? Do they genuinely and methodically aspire to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom?”

18.2 The Blessed One replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra! Those great bodhisattva beings have come into this [world] having honored innumerable, countless, and limitless tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. They have [subsequently] been reborn and are now present in this world. Śāradvatīputra, those great bodhisattva beings have embarked on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for immeasurable, countless, and limitless hundred billion trillion eons. From the time when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment onwards, they have practiced the transcendent perfection of generosity and then come [here]; in the same way they have practiced the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and then come here. Śāradvatīputra, from that time onwards they have honored countless, limitless tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, and then come here [into this world]. Śāradvatīputra, when those great bodhisattva beings see or hear the transcendent perfection of wisdom they will think, ‘I have seen the Teacher.’ Śāradvatīputra, those great bodhisattva beings will realize this transcendent perfection of wisdom in a signless, non-dual, and non-focusing manner, genuinely and methodically.”

18.3 Thereupon, Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Is the transcendent perfection of wisdom then disclosed to listeners and viewers? The Blessed One replied, “It is not, Subhūti! If you ask why, Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom has no listeners or viewers. Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is neither heard nor seen, owing to the nature of phenomena being inanimate. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration is neither heard nor seen, owing to the nature of phenomena being inanimate. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity are neither heard nor seen, owing to the nature of phenomena being inanimate. Similarly, the emptiness of internal phenomena is neither heard nor seen, owing to the inanimate nature of phenomena, and in the same vein, the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are neither heard nor seen, owing to the nature of phenomena being inanimate. Similarly, the applications of mindfulness are neither heard nor seen, owing to the nature of phenomena being inanimate. Similarly, [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, are neither heard nor seen, owing to the nature of phenomena being inanimate. Similarly, the ten powers of the tathāgatas and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are neither heard nor seen, owing to the nature of phenomena being inanimate. Subhūti, even enlightenment and the buddhas

are neither heard nor seen, owing to the nature of phenomena being inanimate.”

18.4 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is profound and it is hard to aspire to it.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have spoken. Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is profound. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly Subhūti, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, it is because the natural expression of physical forms, though without entity, is still physical forms. Similarly, Subhūti, the natural expression of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, though without entity, is still consciousness [and the other aggregates].

18.5 “Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of generosity, too, is neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of the transcendent perfection of generosity, though without entity, is still the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom are neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, it is because the natural expression of [those transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, though without entity, is still the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest].

18.6 “Subhūti, the emptiness of internal phenomena is neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of the emptiness of internal phenomena, though without entity, is still the emptiness of internal phenomena. In the same vein, Subhūti, the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are also neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities [and the rest], though without entity, is still the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities [and the rest].

18.7 “Subhūti, the four applications of mindfulness are neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of the four applications of mindfulness, though without entity, is still the four applications of mindfulness. In the same vein, Subhūti, [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path; [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the ten powers of the tathāgatas and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas; [and the attainments], up to and including the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, and omniscience are all neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of omniscience and the other [attributes and attainments], though without entity, is still omniscience [and the rest].

18.8 “Moreover, Subhūti, the past limits of physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of the past limits of physical forms, though without entity, is still physical form. Similarly, Subhūti, the past limits of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of their past limits, though without entity, is still consciousness [and the rest]. In the same vein, the past limits [of all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are neither fettered nor liberated because the natural expression of their

past limits, though without entity, is still omniscience [and the rest].

18.9 “Moreover, Subhūti, physical forms are neither fettered by nor liberated from their past limits. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of their past limits, though without entity, is still physical form. Similarly, Subhūti, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered by nor liberated from their past limits. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of their past limits, though without entity, is still consciousness [and the other aggregates]. In the same vein, Subhūti, [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are neither fettered by nor liberated from their past limits. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of their past limits, though without entity, is still omniscience [and the rest].

18.10 “Subhūti, physical forms are neither fettered by nor liberated from their future limits. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of their future limits, though without entity, is still physical form. Similarly, Subhūti, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered by nor liberated from their future limits. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of their future limits, though without entity, is still consciousness [and the other aggregates]. In the same vein, Subhūti, [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are neither fettered by nor liberated from their future limits. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of their future limits, though without entity, is still omniscience [and the rest].

18.11 “Subhūti, physical forms are neither fettered by nor liberated from their present circumstances. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of their present circumstances, though without entity, is still physical form. Similarly, Subhūti, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither fettered by nor liberated from their present circumstances. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of their present circumstances, though without entity, is still consciousness [and the other aggregates]. In the same vein, Subhūti, [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are neither fettered by nor liberated from their present circumstances. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the natural expression of their present circumstances, though without entity, is still omniscience [and the rest].”

18.12 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! For those who do not persevere, who have not planted the roots of virtuous action, who have fallen into the clutches of evil associates, who are under the sway of demonic forces, and who are indolent, feeble in perseverance, forgetful, and who practice without alertness, it is difficult to aspire toward this transcendent perfection of wisdom.” The Blessed One replied, “It is so, Subhūti! It is just as you have said. Subhūti, it is difficult for those who do not persevere, and so on, and who practice without alertness to aspire toward this transcendent perfection of wisdom.

18.13 “Subhūti, the purity of physical forms is identical to the purity of the fruit. Similarly, the purity of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is identical to it. In the same vein, the purity of [all other attributes], up to and including enlightenment, is identical to the purity of the fruit.

18.14 “Moreover, Subhūti, the purity of physical forms is the purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. The purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the purity of physical forms. So it is that the purity of physical forms and the purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed. In the same vein, the purity of physical forms is the purity [of all other attributes], up to and including omniscience. The purity [of all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, is the purity of physical forms. So it is that the purity of physical forms and the purity of omniscience are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed.

18.15 “Moreover, Subhūti, the purity of non-duality, the purity of physical forms, and the purity of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed.

18.16 “Moreover, Subhūti, physical forms are pure and, similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are pure, owing to the purity of sentient beings, living organisms, living creatures, and so forth, up to knowers and viewers. In the same vein, omniscience is pure, owing to the purity of knowers, viewers, and so forth. So it is that the purity of knowers and viewers, and this purity of omniscience, are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed.

18.17 “Moreover, Subhūti, physical forms are pure, and, similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are pure, owing to the purity of desire, hatred, and delusion. In the same vein, [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure. So it is that the purity of desire, hatred, and delusion; the purity of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; and the purity of [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed.

18.18 “Moreover, Subhūti, formative predispositions are pure, owing to the purity of fundamental ignorance. Consciousness is pure, owing to the purity of formative predispositions. Name and form are pure, owing to the purity of consciousness. The six sense fields are pure, owing to the purity of name and form. Sensory contact is pure, owing to the purity of the six sense fields. Sensation is pure, owing to the purity of sensory contact. Craving is pure, owing to the purity of sensation. Grasping is pure, owing to the purity of craving. The rebirth process is pure, owing to the purity of grasping. Birth is pure, owing to the purity of the rebirth process. Aging and death, along with sorrow, lamentation, suffering, discomfort, and agitation are pure, owing to the purity of birth.

18.19 “The transcendent perfection of wisdom is pure, owing to the purity of aging and death, along with sorrow, lamentation, suffering, discomfort, and agitation. The transcendent perfection of meditative concentration is pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. The transcendent perfection of perseverance is pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. The transcendent perfection of tolerance is pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of perseverance. The transcendent perfection of ethical discipline is pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of tolerance. The transcendent perfection of generosity is pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.

18.20 “The emptiness of internal phenomena, and in the same vein, the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of generosity. The applications of mindfulness are pure, owing to the purity of the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities [and the rest]. [All other attributes], up to and including the understanding of all phenomena, are pure, owing to the purity of the applications of mindfulness [and so forth]. The understanding of the aspects of the path is pure, owing to the purity of the understanding of all phenomena. Omniscience is pure, owing to the purity of the understanding of the aspects of the path. So it is that the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, and omniscience are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed.

18.21 “Moreover, Subhūti, physical forms are pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. In the same vein, [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. So it is that the purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom and the purity of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed.

18.22 “In the same vein as before, physical forms are pure, and [all other phenomena, attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. Similarly, physical forms are pure, and [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of perseverance. Similarly, physical forms are pure, and [all other phenomena, attributes, and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of tolerance. In the same vein, physical forms are pure, and [all other phenomena, attributes, and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline. Similarly, physical forms are pure, and [all other phenomena, attributes, and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of generosity.

18.23 “Moreover, Subhūti, physical forms are pure, and [all other phenomena, attributes, and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of the emptiness of internal phenomena, and in the same vein as before, physical forms are pure, and [all other phenomena, attributes, and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Similarly, physical forms are pure, and [all other phenomena, attributes, and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of the applications of mindfulness. In the same vein, physical forms are pure, and [all other phenomena, attributes, and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of [the other causal attributes], up to and including the [noble eightfold] path. In the same vein as before, physical forms are pure, and [all other phenomena, attributes, and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. So it is that the purity [of all these attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and the purity of physical forms, and the purity of omniscience, are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed. The same refrain may also be applied in the case of each of the [aforementioned] terms, [from physical forms to omniscience]. In other

words, when presented more extensively, the same refrain may also be extrapolated from each of those terms and appended consecutively.

18.24 “Moreover, Subhūti, unconditioned phenomena are pure, owing to the purity of conditioned phenomena. Conditioned phenomena are pure, owing to the purity of unconditioned phenomena. So it is that the purity of conditioned phenomena and the purity of unconditioned phenomena are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed.

18.25 “Moreover Subhūti, the future and the present are pure, owing to the purity of the past. The past and the present are pure, owing to the purity of the future. The past and the future are pure, owing to the purity of the present. So it is that the purity of the past, the purity of the future, and the purity of the present are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed.”

18.26 Thereupon Senior Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This purity of phenomena is profound.” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! This purity of phenomena is due to absolute purity.”

18.27 “Due to the absolute purity of what?” he asked. “The purity of phenomena is profound due to the absolute purity of physical forms. Similarly, the purity of phenomena is profound due to the absolute purity of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. Similarly, the purity of phenomena is profound due to the absolute purity of the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, the purity of phenomena is profound due to the absolute purity of the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, the purity of phenomena is profound due to the absolute purity of the applications of mindfulness; due to the absolute purity of the [other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path; and due to the absolute purity of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, the purity of phenomena is profound due to the absolute purity of enlightenment, and due to the absolute purity of omniscience and genuinely perfect buddhahood.”

18.28 “Venerable Lord! This purity of phenomena is illuminating.” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is illuminating due to absolute purity.”

18.29 “Due to the absolute purity of what is this purity of phenomena illuminating?” he asked. The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is illuminating due to the absolute purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is illuminating due to the absolute purity of [the other transcendent perfections], down to the transcendent perfection of generosity. In the same vein, the purity of phenomena is illuminating due to the absolute purity of [all attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

18.30 “Venerable Lord! This purity of phenomena is not subject to involuntary reincarnation.” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is not subject to involuntary reincarnation due to absolute purity.”

18.31 “Due to the absolute purity of what is this purity of phenomena not subject to involuntary reincarnation?” he asked. The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is not subject to involuntary reincarnation due to the absolute purity of physical forms which does not pass away. In the same vein as before, the purity of phenomena is not subject to involuntary reincarnation due to the absolute purity of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, which does not pass away.”

18.32 “Venerable Lord! This purity of phenomena is not subject to affliction.” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is not subject to affliction due to absolute purity.”

18.33 “Due to the absolute purity of what is this purity of phenomena not subject to affliction?” he asked. The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is not subject to affliction due to the natural luminosity of physical forms. Similarly, the purity of phenomena is not subject to affliction due to the natural luminosity of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

18.34 “Venerable Lord! This purity of phenomena is neither attained nor is it manifestly realized.” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is neither attained nor manifestly realized due to absolute purity.”

18.35 “Due to the absolute purity of what is this purity of phenomena neither attained nor manifestly realized?” he asked. The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is neither attained nor manifestly realized due to the emptiness of physical forms. In the same vein, this purity of phenomena is neither attained nor manifestly realized due to the emptiness of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

18.36 “Venerable Lord! This purity of phenomena has not been actualized.” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena has not been actualized due to absolute purity.”

18.37 “Due to the absolute purity of what has this purity of phenomena not been actualized?” he asked. The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is due to the non-actualization of physical forms. In the same vein, the purity of phenomena is due to the non-actualization of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

18.38 “Venerable Lord! This purity of phenomena is not subject to rebirth in the world system of desire.” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is not subject to rebirth in the world system of desire due to absolute purity.”

18.39 “Venerable Lord! How is this purity of phenomena not subject to rebirth in the world system of desire?” he asked. The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is not subject to rebirth in the world system of desire because the essential nature of the world system of desire is non-apprehensible.”

18.40 “Venerable Lord! This purity of phenomena is not subject to rebirth in the world system of form.” The Blessed

One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is not subject to rebirth in the world system of form due to absolute purity.”

18.41 “Venerable Lord! How is this purity of phenomena not subject to rebirth in the world system of form?” he asked. The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is not subject to rebirth in the world system of form because the essential nature of the world system of form is non-apprehensible. The same goes also for the world system of formlessness.”

18.42 “Venerable Lord! This purity of phenomena is not cognizant.” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is not cognizant due to absolute purity.”

18.43 “Venerable Lord! How is this purity of phenomena not cognizant?” he asked. The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is not cognizant due to the inanimate nature of phenomena.”

18.44 “Of what is it not cognizant?” The Blessed One replied, “It is not cognizant of physical forms due to the emptiness of inherent existence, and similarly, it is not cognizant of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness due to the emptiness of inherent existence.”

18.45 “Venerable Lord! Then is this purity of phenomena due to the purity of all things?” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of phenomena is due to the absolute purity of all things.”

18.46 “Venerable Lord! Why is this purity of phenomena due to the [absolute] purity of all things?” The Blessed One replied, “It is so because all things are non-apprehensible.”

18.47 “Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom neither helps nor hinders omniscience.” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The transcendent perfection of wisdom neither helps nor hinders omniscience due to absolute purity.”

18.48 “Venerable Lord! Why does the transcendent perfection of wisdom neither help nor hinder omniscience?” “Because it is the abiding nature of phenomena.”

18.49 “Venerable Lord! The purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not appropriate anything at all.” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra! The purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not appropriate anything at all due to the absolute purity of all things.”

18.50 “Venerable Lord! Why does the purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom not appropriate anything at all?” The Blessed One replied, “Because the expanse of reality is non-apprehensible.”

18.51 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! The purity of physical forms is due to the purity of the self.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, this is because the self is absolutely pure.”

18.52 “Venerable Lord! Why is the purity of physical forms due to the purity of the self?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so because of selflessness.”

18.53 “Venerable Lord! The purity of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is due to the purity of self.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, this is because the self is absolutely pure.”

18.54 “Venerable Lord! Why is the purity of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness due to the purity of the self?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so because of selflessness.”

18.55 “Venerable Lord! The purity of the transcendent perfection of generosity is due to the purity of the self, and the same goes for the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Venerable Lord! The purity of the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path is due to the purity of the self. Venerable Lord! The purity of the ten powers of the tathāgatas and the purity of [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is due to the purity of the self.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, this is because the self is absolutely pure.”

18.56 “Venerable Lord! Why is the purity of [all those attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, due to the purity of the self?” The Blessed One replied, “It is so because of selflessness.” “Venerable Lord! The purity of the fruit of entering the stream is due to the purity of the self, and the same goes for the purity of the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, the fruit of arhatship, individual enlightenment, and genuinely perfect enlightenment.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, this is because the self is absolutely pure.”

18.57 “Venerable Lord! Why is the purity of [all these fruits], up to and including genuinely perfect enlightenment, due to the purity of the self?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so because of the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics.”

18.58 “Venerable Lord! The purity of omniscience is due to the purity of the self.” The Blessed One replied, “It is so because the self is absolutely pure.”

18.59 “Venerable Lord! Why is the purity of omniscience due to the purity of the self?” The Blessed One replied, “This is because of selflessness, because of the absence of defining characteristics, and because of the absence of any knower.”

18.60 “Venerable Lord! There is neither attainment nor emergent realization due to the purity of duality.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, there is neither attainment nor clear realization due to absolute purity.”

18.61 “Venerable Lord! Why is there neither attainment nor clear realization due to the purity of duality?” The Bles-

sed One replied, “It is so because [duality] arises erroneously.”

18.62 “Venerable Lord! The limitlessness of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is due to the limitlessness of self.” The Blessed One replied, “This is because the self is absolutely pure.”

18.63 “Venerable Lord! Why is the limitlessness of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness due to the limitlessness of self?” The Blessed One replied, “It is so because of the absence of self, and because of the emptiness of the unlimited, and the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end.”

18.64 “[Venerable Lord!] It is the transcendent perfection of wisdom of great bodhisattva beings through which this is realized.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, this is because all things are absolutely pure.”

18.65 “Venerable Lord! Why is it the transcendent perfection of wisdom of great bodhisattva beings through which this is realized?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so because of the understanding of the aspects of the path.”

18.66 “Venerable Lord! If these great bodhisattva beings, skilled in means, who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom think that they do not cognize physical forms as physical forms; that they do not cognize feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as consciousness [and the rest]; that they do not cognize past phenomena as past phenomena; that they do not cognize future phenomena as future phenomena; that they do not cognize present phenomena as present phenomena; that they do not cognize the transcendent perfection of generosity as the transcendent perfection of generosity; that they do not cognize [the other] transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, as the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest]; and in the same vein, that they do not cognize [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, as omniscience [and the rest], then those bodhisattvas will abide in genuine reality, the definitive aggregates which comprise unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

18.67 Thereupon Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti! Do great bodhisattva beings, skilled in means, who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom have dualistic perception?” Senior Subhūti replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra! With regard to great bodhisattva beings, skilled in means, who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, it is on account of the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of external phenomena, and similarly on account of the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all things, and the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, O Senior Śāradvatīputra, that these great bodhisattva beings, skilled in means, who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom are without all conceptual notions [such as], ‘I should give a gift,’ ‘I should give a gift to that person,’ ‘I should give this sort of gift,’ ‘I should maintain ethical discipline,’ ‘I should maintain ethical discipline in this manner,’ ‘I should cultivate tolerance,’ ‘I should cultivate tolerance in this manner,’ ‘I should try to persevere,’ ‘I should try to persevere in this manner,’ ‘I should be equipoised in meditative concentration,’ ‘I should be equipoised in meditative

concentration in this manner,' 'I should cultivate wisdom,' 'I should cultivate wisdom in this manner,' 'I should generate merit,' 'I should generate merit in this manner,' 'I should embark on the maturity of the bodhisattvas,' 'I should embark on the maturity of the bodhisattvas in this manner,' 'I should refine the buddhafi elds,' 'I should refine the buddhafi elds in this manner,' 'I should bring sentient beings to maturity,' 'I should bring sentient beings to maturity in this manner,' 'I should attain omniscience,' or 'I should attain omniscience in this manner.' Senior Śāradvatīputra, this is indicative of the non-attachment of great bodhisattva beings, skilled in means, who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom."

18.68 Thereupon Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: "Senior Subhūti! How should one recognize the attachments of those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who belong to the vehicle of the bodhisattvas?" Senior Subhūti replied to Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, "Kauśika, when those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who belong to the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, perceive their own minds, perceive generosity, perceive the transcendent perfection of generosity, perceive ethical discipline, perceive the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, perceive tolerance, perceive the transcendent perfection of tolerance, perceive perseverance, perceive the transcendent perfection of perseverance, perceive meditative concentration, perceive the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, perceive wisdom, perceive the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly, when they perceive the emptiness of internal phenomena, when they perceive the emptiness of external phenomena and the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, and in the same vein, when they perceive the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities, when they perceive the four applications of mindfulness, perceive [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, perceive the ten powers of the ta-thāgatas, perceive [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, perceive buddhahood, perceive the roots of virtue that give rise to buddhahood, and on assessing and synthesising all these phenomena, dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, while perceiving that they are making this dedication—Kauśika, all these should be recognized as indicative of the attachment of the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who belong to the vehicle of the bodhisattvas. When they are involved with those modes of attachment, they cannot practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, which is without attachment. If you ask why, Kauśika, they are incapable of dedicating the nature of physical forms, and they are incapable of dedicating the nature of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. In the same vein as before, they are incapable of dedicating the nature of [all those other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.

18.69 "Moreover, Kauśika, great bodhisattva beings should delight others, they should discern the sameness of all things, and, empathizing with all situations that arise in all ways, they should cause others to rejoice in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They should encourage them, fill them with enthusiasm, and instruct them. When practicing the transcendent perfection of generosity [and so forth], they should not be attentive to conceptual notions based on mental images, thinking, 'I am giving a gift,' 'I am maintaining ethical discipline,' 'I am cultivating tolerance,' 'I am trying to persevere,' 'I am absorbed in meditative concentration,' 'I am cultivating wisdom,' 'I am practicing the emptiness of internal phenomena,' 'I am practicing the emptiness of external phenomena,' 'I am cultivating the applications of mindfulness,' and in the same vein, 'I am cultivating [all other attributes], up to and including the

eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas,' and 'I am engaged in the practice of perfect enlightenment.' Rather, the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who do so should cause others to rejoice in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They should encourage them, fill them with enthusiasm, and instruct them. When, through rejoicing, encouragement, inspiration, and instruction they cause others to rejoice, encouraging them, filling them with enthusiasm, and instructing them, they themselves will not degenerate [in their commitments], and this will encourage the buddhas to praise and accept them. The sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who act in that manner will renounce all the limits of attachment."

18.70 Thereupon the Blessed One addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: "Subhūti, you have spoken well concerning the purification of the limits of attachment possessed by great bodhisattva beings, and also concerning great bodhisattva beings who purify the limits of attachment. Subhūti, for this reason I will also explain other more subtle limits of attachment. So listen well and be attentive!" "Venerable Lord, may it be so!" Senior Subhūti replied, and listened to the Blessed One, who said, "Subhūti, when some sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who have embarked on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are attentive to mental images of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, Subhūti, inasmuch as they are attentive to mental images, to that extent there is attachment.

18.71 "Moreover Subhūti, when these [sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage] are attentive to mental images of all the roots of virtue possessed by past, present, and future tathāgatas, from the time when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment until they establish the sacred doctrine, and having been attentive in terms of mental images, dedicate them to the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, inasmuch as they are attentive to mental images, Subhūti, to that extent there is attachment.

18.72 "Similarly, Subhūti, when they are attentive to mental images of the roots of virtue possessed by the śrāvakas of those tathāgatas, and to all the roots of virtue possessed by other sentient beings, and dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, inasmuch as they are attentive to mental images of sentient beings [and so forth], they do not [actually] dedicate these [roots of virtue] to their unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and to that extent there is attachment. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because they should not be attentive to mental images even of the roots of virtue possessed by the tathāgatas and the community of śrāvakas of the tathāgatas."

18.73 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, "Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is profound." The Blessed One replied, "Subhūti, this is because all phenomena are naturally void."

18.74 "Venerable Lord, I pay homage to the transcendent perfection of wisdom!" The Blessed One replied, "Subhūti, since it is unfabricated and unconditioned, there is no one at all who can attain manifestly perfect buddhahood."

18.75 "Venerable Lord! There is nothing at all that attains manifestly perfect buddhahood." The Blessed One replied, "Subhūti, so it is that the nature of phenomena is without duality. Subhūti, the nature of phenomena is entirely

singular. Subhūti, this singular nature of phenomena is without inherent existence. Subhūti, this nature is the genuine nature. This genuine nature is unconditioned. Subhūti, so it is that when great bodhisattva beings know that the lack of inherent existence with respect to all phenomena is unconditioned, they abandon all the limits of attachment.”

18.76 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is hard to realize.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, this is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom has not been seen, heard, or cognized by anyone at all.”

18.77 “Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is inconceivable.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, this is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom has not been produced by mind, it has not been produced by physical forms, not by feelings, not by perceptions, not by formative predispositions, and not by consciousness. In the same vein as before, it has not been produced by the applications of mindfulness, and it has not been produced by [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. It has not been produced by the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and similarly, it has not been produced by [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.”

18.78 *This completes the eighteenth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Purity.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER EIGHTEEN:

PURITY

18.A Those great bodhisattva beings have come into this [world] having honored innumerable, countless, and limitless tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. They have [subsequently] been reborn and are now present in this world ... {They} have embarked on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for immeasurable, countless, and limitless hundred billion trillion eons. From the time when they first begun to set their mind on enlightenment onwards, they have practiced the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom, and then come here ... When those great bodhisattva beings see or hear the transcendent perfection of wisdom they will think, ‘I have seen the Teacher.’ ... Those great bodhisattva beings will realize this transcendent perfection of wisdom in a signless, non-dual, and non-focusing manner, genuinely and methodically.

18.B The transcendent perfection of wisdom has no listeners or viewers ... {and in ultimate reality} is neither heard nor seen, owing to the nature of phenomena being inanimate. Similarly, the transcendent perfection{s} of meditative concentration ... perseverance ... tolerance ... ethical discipline, and ... generosity ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {and} even enlightenment and the buddhas are neither heard nor seen {in ultimate reality}, owing to the nature of phenomena being inanimate.

18.C This transcendent perfection of wisdom is profound ... because physical forms are neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness || ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {and} the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the four applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path; [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the ten powers of the tathāgatas and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas; [and the attainments], up to and including the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, and omniscience are all neither fettered nor liberated. || If you ask why, it is because the natural expression of physical forms {up to and including omniscience, in relative reality}, though without entity {in ultimate reality}, is still physical forms {up to and including omniscience}.

18.D Moreover ... the past limits {future limits and present circumstances} of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {and} [of all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are neither fettered nor liberated because the natural expression of their past limits {future limits and present circumstances, in relative reality}, though without entity {in ultimate reality}, is still omniscience [and the rest] ... Moreover ... physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {and} [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are neither fettered by nor liberated from their past limits {future limits and present circumstances} ... because the natural expression of their past limits {future limits and present circumstances, in relative reality}, though without entity {in ultimate reality}, is still omniscience [and the rest].

18.E For those who do not persevere, who have not planted the roots of virtuous action, who have fallen into the clutches of evil associates, who are under the sway of demonic forces, and who are indolent, feeble in perseverance, forgetful, and who practice without alertness, it is difficult to aspire toward this transcendent perfection of wisdom.

18.F The purity of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {and} [all other attributes], up to and including enlightenment, is identical to the purity of the fruit {of the path of enlightenment} ... Moreover ... the purity of physical forms is the purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {and} [of all other attributes], up to and including omniscience. The purity {of the transcendent perfection of wisdom and} [of all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, is the purity of physical forms. So it is that the purity of physical forms and the purity of {the transcendent perfection of wisdom and of all other attributes and attainments, up to and including} omniscience are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed. Moreover ... the purity of non-duality, the purity of physical forms, and the purity of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed.

18.G Moreover ... physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are pure, owing to the purity of sentient beings, living organisms, living creatures, and so forth, up to knowers and viewers. In the same vein, omniscience is pure, owing to the purity of knowers, viewers, and so forth. So it is that the purity of knowers and viewers, and this purity of omniscience {and the rest}, are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they

cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed. Moreover ... physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are pure, owing to the purity of desire, hatred, and delusion. In the same vein, [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure. So it is that the purity of desire, hatred, and delusion; the purity of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; and the purity of [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed. Moreover ... formative predispositions are pure, owing to the purity of fundamental ignorance. Consciousness is pure, owing to the purity of formative predispositions. Name and form are pure, owing to the purity of consciousness. The six sense fields are pure, owing to the purity of name and form. Sensory contact is pure, owing to the purity of the six sense fields. Sensation is pure, owing to the purity of sensory contact. Craving is pure, owing to the purity of sensation. Grasping is pure, owing to the purity of craving. The rebirth process is pure, owing to the purity of grasping. Birth is pure, owing to the purity of the rebirth process. Aging and death, along with sorrow, lamentation, suffering, discomfort, and agitation are pure, owing to the purity of birth. The transcendent perfection of wisdom is pure, owing to the purity of aging and death, along with sorrow, lamentation, suffering, discomfort, and agitation. The transcendent perfection of meditative concentration is pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. The transcendent perfection of perseverance is pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. The transcendent perfection of tolerance is pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of perseverance. The transcendent perfection of ethical discipline is pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of tolerance. The transcendent perfection of generosity is pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline. The emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of generosity. The applications of mindfulness are pure, owing to the purity of the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities [and the rest]. [All other attributes], up to and including the understanding of all phenomena, are pure, owing to the purity of the applications of mindfulness [and so forth]. The understanding of the aspects of the path is pure, owing to the purity of the understanding of all phenomena. Omniscience is pure, owing to the purity of the understanding of the aspects of the path. So it is that {all these, up to and including} the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, and omniscience are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed. Moreover ... physical forms ... up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom {and the other transcendent perfections}. So it is that the purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom {and the other transcendent perfections} and the purity of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed. Moreover ... physical forms ... and [all other phenomena, attributes, and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are pure, owing to the purity of the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {and} the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal attributes], up to and including the [noble eightfold] path ... {as well as} [the fruititional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. So it is that the purity [of all these attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and the purity of physical forms, and the purity of omniscience, are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed. Moreover ... unconditioned phenomena are pure, owing to the purity of conditioned phenomena {and vice versa} ... So it is that the purity of conditioned phenomena and the purity of unconditioned phenomena

are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed. Moreover ... the future and the present are pure, owing to the purity of the past. The past and the present are pure, owing to the purity of the future. The past and the future are pure, owing to the purity of the present. So it is that the purity of the past, the purity of the future, and the purity of the present are indivisible: they cannot be separated, they cannot be differentiated, and they cannot be severed.

18.H This purity of phenomena is due to absolute purity. The purity of phenomena is profound {and illuminating} due to the absolute purity of physical forms. Similarly, the purity of phenomena is profound {and illuminating} due to the absolute purity of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... enlightenment ... omniscience and genuinely perfect buddhahood.

18.I The purity of phenomena is not subject to involuntary reincarnation due to the absolute purity of physical forms ... {and} [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, which does not pass away ... The purity of phenomena is not subject to affliction due to the natural luminosity {of mind} of physical forms ... {and} [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience ... The purity of phenomena is neither attained nor manifestly realized due to absolute purity ... {which is} due to the emptiness of physical forms ... {and} [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience ... The purity of phenomena is due to the non-actualization of physical forms ... {and} [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience ... The purity of phenomena is not subject to rebirth in the world system{s} of desire {form or formlessness} due to absolute purity ... because the essential nature of the world system{s} of desire {form and formlessness} is non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality} ... The purity of phenomena is not cognizant due to absolute purity ... due to the inanimate nature of phenomena ... {and} is not cognizant of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {and all other attributes and attainments, up to and including omniscience} due to the emptiness of inherent existence ... The purity of phenomena is due to the absolute purity of all things ... because all things are non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}.

18.J The transcendent perfection of wisdom neither helps nor hinders omniscience due to absolute purity ... because it is the abiding nature of phenomena ... The purity of the transcendent perfection of wisdom does not appropriate anything at all due to the absolute purity of all things ... because the expanse of {relative} reality is non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}.

18.K The purity of physical forms is due to the purity of the self ... because the self is absolutely pure ... {and} it is so because of selflessness ... {Similarly} the purity of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas and the purity of [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qua-

lities of the buddhas, is due to the purity of the self ... because the self is absolutely pure ... {and} it is so because of selflessness.

18.L The purity of the fruit of entering the stream is due to the purity of the self, and the same goes for the purity of the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, the fruit of arhatship, individual enlightenment, and genuinely perfect enlightenment ... This is because the self is absolutely pure ... {and} it is so because of the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics ... The purity of omniscience is due to the purity of the self ... because the self is absolutely pure ... This is because of selflessness, because of the absence of defining characteristics, and because of the absence of any knower ... {Consequently} there is neither attainment nor clear realization due to absolute purity ... {or} due to the purity of duality ... because [duality] arises erroneously ... The limitlessness of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is due to the limitlessness of self ... because the self is absolutely pure ... It is so because of the absence of self, and because of the emptiness of the unlimited {—which is the arising of anything which has no limits}, and the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end {—which is the coming to pass of anything in relative existence which has no beginning nor end} ... It is the transcendent perfection of wisdom of great bodhisattva beings through which this is realized ... because all things are absolutely pure.

18.M It {is} the transcendent perfection of wisdom of great bodhisattva beings through which this is realized ... because of the understanding of the aspects of the path ... If these great bodhisattva beings, skilled in means, who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom think that they do not cognize physical forms as {actual} physical forms; that they do not cognize feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness as {actual} consciousness [and the rest]; that they do not cognize past phenomena as {actual} past phenomena; that they do not cognize future phenomena as {actual} future phenomena; that they do not cognize present phenomena as {actual} present phenomena; that they do not cognize the transcendent perfection of generosity as {actually} the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, as {actually} the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest] ... that they do not cognize [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, as {actual} omniscience [and the rest], then those bodhisattvas will abide in genuine reality, the definitive aggregates which comprise unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

18.N It is on account of the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of external phenomena, and similarly on account of the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all things, and the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics ... that these great bodhisattva beings, skilled in means, who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom are without all {dualistic} conceptual notions [such as] ... 'I should give a gift to this person,' ... 'I should maintain ethical discipline,' ... 'I should cultivate tolerance,' ... 'I should try to persevere,' ... 'I should be equipoised in meditative concentration,' 'I should cultivate wisdom,' ... 'I should generate merit,' ... 'I should embark on the maturity of the bodhisattvas,' ... 'I should refine the buddhfields,' 'I should bring sentient beings to maturity,' 'I should bring sentient beings to maturity in this manner,' 'I should attain omniscience,' or 'I should

attain omniscience in this manner.’ ... This is indicative of the non-attachment of great bodhisattva beings, skilled in means, who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

18.O When those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who belong to the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, {distinctly} perceive their own minds, {then distinctly} perceive generosity ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... ethical discipline ... the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline ... tolerance ... the transcendent perfection of tolerance ... perseverance ... the transcendent perfection of perseverance ... meditative concentration ... the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration ... wisdom ... the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities ... the four applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {and} [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... buddhahood ... the roots of virtue that give rise to buddhahood, and on assessing and synthesising all these phenomena, dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, while perceiving that they are making this dedication ... all these should be recognized as indicative of the attachment of the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who belong to the vehicle of the bodhisattvas. When they are involved with those modes of attachment, they cannot practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, which is without attachment. If you ask why ... they are incapable of dedicating the nature of physical forms {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, and ... they are incapable of dedicating the nature of [all those other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.

18.P Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings should delight others, they should discern the sameness of all things, and, empathizing with all situations that arise in all ways, they should cause others to rejoice in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They should encourage them, fill them with enthusiasm, and instruct them. When practicing the transcendent perfection of generosity [and so forth], they should not be attentive to {dualistic} conceptual notions based on mental images, thinking, ‘I am giving a gift,’ ‘I am maintaining ethical discipline,’ ‘I am cultivating tolerance,’ ... ‘I am cultivating [all other attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas,’ and ‘I am engaged in the practice of perfect enlightenment.’ Rather, the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who do so should cause others to rejoice in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They should encourage them, fill them with enthusiasm, and instruct them. When, through rejoicing, encouragement, inspiration, and instruction they cause others to rejoice, encouraging them, filling them with enthusiasm, and instructing them, they themselves will not degenerate, and this will encourage the buddhas to praise and accept them. The sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who act in that manner will renounce all the limits of attachment ... I will also explain other more subtle limits of attachment ... When some sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who have embarked on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are attentive to mental images of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas ... inasmuch as they are attentive to mental images, to that extent there is attachment ... Moreover ... when ... {they} are attentive to mental images of all the roots of virtue possessed by past, present, and future tathāgatas {or by the śrāvakas of those tathāgatas or by other sentient beings} ... and having been attentive in terms of mental images, dedicate them to the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, inasmuch as they are attentive to mental images ... they do not [actually] dedicate these [roots of virtue] to their unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and to that extent there is attachment.

18.Q The transcendent perfection of wisdom is profound ... because all phenomena are naturally void ... Since it is unfabricated and unconditioned, there is no one at all who can attain manifestly perfect buddhahood ... So it is that the nature of phenomena is without duality ... {and} is entirely singular ... {and} is without inherent {dualistic} existence ... This nature is the genuine nature. This genuine nature is unconditioned ... So it is that when great bodhisattva beings know that the lack of inherent {dualistic} existence with respect to all phenomena is unconditioned, they abandon all the limits of attachment ... The transcendent perfection of wisdom is hard to realize ... because ... {it} has not been seen, heard, or cognized by anyone at all ... The transcendent perfection of wisdom is inconceivable ... because ... {it} has not been produced by mind ... physical forms ... feelings ... perceptions ... formative predispositions, and ... consciousness ... {and by all other attributes and attainments} up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

COMMENTARY

Any conceptual notion, such as “I should give a gift” only reinforces the concept of ‘duality reality’ within the mind of the conjured individuated being. Here the conceptual notion of the ‘individual self’ is highlighted, strengthened and reinforced against the backdrop of the imagined various objects, where their defining characteristics within the realm of relativity seem to appear as real. Thus the ‘absolute’ purity of all these phenomena must be established within the awakening mind ~ which definitively sees that *all* phenomena are without any intrinsic defining characteristics. Here the reality of the purity of Our singularity is ‘clearly realized’ in the purity of all things ~ which are ultimately neither arising, ceasing, afflicted nor purified, nor cognized, nor apprehended in any way. Here the Buddha reveals in the chapter (above): ***“The purity of phenomena is not subject to affliction {or arising, ceasing or purification} due to the natural luminosity {of mind} of {all phenomena} ... which is due to the non-actualization {of every thing} ... {and} to the purity of the self {being the absence of self} ... {which in ultimate reality} is absolutely pure.”***

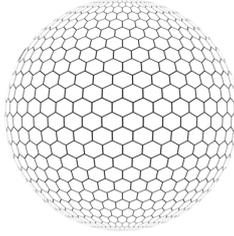
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A great bodhisattva being practices the transcendent perfection of wisdom when its mind is not perceived as ‘separate’ or ‘distinct’ from the path of omniscience. Here there is no “I am practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom”, or “I am dedicating this practice of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings” ~ for this creates a duality relationship. **And in creating such a duality relationship, the mind is attached to a distinct phenomena**—which has only occurred as a result of this phenomena being perceived as ultimately real. Here the great bodhisattva being transcends all attachment, and through their efforts to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, have already naturally dedicated their efforts to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ~ making common cause with all sentient beings, who are merely seen as the ‘one and only’ natural luminosity of mind.

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What is this purity of phenomena, which is due to the natural luminosity of mind of all phenomena? If from the perspective of ‘relative’ reality one were to perceive the natural luminosity of mind as a great sphere—which from the perspective of ultimate reality is not a sphere, but merely the natural luminosity of mind of Our singularity—and on the surface of that sphere a great number of conjured individuated beings were in possession of that natural luminosity of mind, while perceiving it not to be so—and all ‘conceptions’ of phenomena were conjured onto that illusory

surface by these conjured individuated beings—**and these conjured individuated beings were on a journey to discover they did not exist as individuated beings, but only as the natural luminosity of mind**—and that all conceptions they had conjured onto this surface had never been conjured at all ... *this is the absolute purity of phenomena*, which is due to the non-actualization of every thing and to the purity of self, being the absence of self, which in ultimate reality is absolutely pure.



CHAPTER NINETEEN: AGENTS AND NON-AGENTS

19.1 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is an agent that has no actions.” The Blessed One replied, “This is because it is non-apprehensible as an agent, because it is non-apprehensible in terms of all phenomena, and so forth.”

19.2 “Venerable Lord! How then should great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with physical forms. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. In the same vein, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with [any other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.

19.3 “They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are permanent or that they are impermanent. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are permanent or that they are impermanent. They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are imbued with happiness or that they are imbued with suffering. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are imbued with happiness or that they are imbued with suffering. They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are a self or that they are not a self. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are a self or that they are not a self.

19.4 “They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are empty or that they are not empty. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty or that they are not empty. They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are with signs or that they are signless. Similarly, they practice the

transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are with signs or that they are signless. They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms have aspirations or that they are without aspirations. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness have aspirations or that they are without aspirations.

19.5 “They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are calm or that they are not calm. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are calm or that they are not calm. They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are void or that they are not void. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are void or that they are not void.

19.6 “They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are afflicted or that they are purified. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are afflicted or that they are purified. They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms arise or that they are non-arising. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness arise or that they are non-arising. They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms cease or that they are unceasing. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness cease or that they are unceasing.

19.7 “They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are entities or that they are non-entities. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are entities or that they are non-entities.

19.8 “They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are pure or that they are impure. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are pure or that they are impure. In the same vein, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that [all attainments], up to and including omniscience, are permanent or that they are impermanent, and that [all fruitional attributes], up to and including the [five] eyes, are pure or that they are impure.

19.9 “If you ask why, it is because when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom,

they do not consider the notions that physical forms are permanent or that they are impermanent. Similarly, they do not consider the notions that they are imbued with happiness or that they are imbued with suffering, that they are a self or that they are not a self, that they are empty or that they are not empty, that they are with signs or that they are signless, that they have aspirations or that they are without aspirations, that they are calm or that they are not calm, that they are void or that they are not void, that they are afflicted or that they are purified, that they arise or that they are non-arising, that they cease or that they are unceasing, that they are entities or that they are non-entities, or that they are pure or impure.

19.10 “Similarly, they do not consider the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and likewise, [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are permanent or that they are impermanent, that they are imbued with happiness or that they are imbued with suffering, that they are a self or that they are not a self, or in the same vein, that they are pure or that they are impure, and so forth.

19.11 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are perfected or that they are not perfected. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are perfected or that they are not perfected. In the same vein, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are perfected or that they are not perfected.

19.12 “If you ask why, it is because when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not apprehend and do not consider physical forms. Similarly, they do not apprehend and do not consider feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; in the same vein, they do not apprehend and do not consider [any attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

19.13 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How wonderful is the Lord [Buddha’s] eloquent exegesis of these aspects of [attachment and] non-attachment, possessed by the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who espouse the vehicle of the bodhisattvas!” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have said. The aspects of [attachment and] non-attachment, possessed by those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who espouse the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, have been eloquently explained by the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha.

19.14 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms are with attachment or that they are without attachment. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are with attachment or that they are without attachment.

19.15 “Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the no-

tions that the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are with attachment or that they are without attachment. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena are with attachment or that they are without attachment.

19.16 “Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom are with attachment or that they are without attachment.

19.17 “And in the same vein, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that the applications of mindfulness are with attachment or that they are without attachment. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that the [other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, are with attachment or that they are without attachment.

19.18 “They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that the ten powers of the tathāgatas are with attachment or that they are without attachment. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that the [other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are with attachment or that they are without attachment. In the same vein, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that [all attainments], up to and including omniscience, are with attachment or that they are without attachment.

19.19 “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings practice in that manner, they understand that physical forms are neither with attachment nor are they without attachment. Similarly, they understand that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are neither with attachment, nor are they without attachment. In the same vein, they understand that the fruit of entering the stream is neither with attachment, nor is it without attachment. Similarly, they understand that the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, the fruit of arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are neither with attachment, nor are they without attachment.”

19.20 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How wonderful it is that this profound sacred doctrine is neither diminished even when it is not explained, nor is it enhanced even when it is explained!” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, It is so! It is just as you have said. This profound sacred doctrine is neither diminished even when it is not explained, nor is it enhanced even when it is explained. Just as, Subhūti, if the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas were to eulogize space for the duration of their entire lives, space would neither be diminished even when it is not eulogized, nor would it be enhanced even when it is eulogized, in the same way, Subhūti, an illusory person is neither enhanced when eulogized, nor diminished when not eulogized. Similarly, Subhūti, this sacred doctrine is neither enhanced when it is explained, nor is it diminished when it is

not explained. Even when it is explained, it is just that, and even when it is not explained, it is just that.”

19.21 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Those great bodhisattva beings who are neither disheartened nor intimidated when practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom and cultivating the transcendent perfection of wisdom, those who will not be disheartened but remain equipoised in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, without fear, and who do not turn away from unsurpassed genuinely perfect enlightenment, achieve that which is difficult. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because this cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is like cultivating space, and the same goes for [the other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity.”

19.22 “In space the transcendent perfection of wisdom is not discerned; nor are [the other transcendent perfections], down to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity, discerned. In space, physical forms are not discerned; nor are feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions and consciousness discerned. In space, the emptiness of internal phenomena is not discerned; nor are the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of both internal and external phenomena, and [the other aspects of emptiness] up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, discerned. In space, the applications of mindfulness are not discerned; nor are [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, discerned; nor indeed are the ten powers of the tathāgatas and the [other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, discerned. In space, the fruit of entering the stream is not discerned; nor is the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth discerned; nor are the fruits of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed genuinely perfect enlightenment discerned.

19.23 “Venerable Lord! I pay homage to those great bodhisattva beings who would don this great armor. Venerable Lord! Those who would don this armor for the sake of sentient beings actually seek to strive, struggle, and make efforts for the sake of space. Venerable Lord! Those who seek to liberate sentient beings from cyclic existence, and who would don the great armor, are actually seeking to liberate space. Venerable Lord! Those who would don this armor for the sake of sentient beings are actually seeking to buttress the sky. Venerable Lord! Those great bodhisattva beings who attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of sentient beings acquire the great power of perseverance. Venerable Lord! Those great bodhisattva beings who embark on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings are heroic and courageous. Venerable Lord! Those great bodhisattva beings who seek to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of sentient beings who resemble space, don the great armor and they don armor which is inconceivable and unequalled.

19.24 “If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, if this world system of the great trichiliocosm were completely filled with tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, like a grove of reeds, a grove of bamboo, a grove of sugar cane, a paddy field, or a grove of wild licorice; and if these tathāgatas were to remain [in the world] and teach the sacred doctrine for an eon or more than an eon; and if each of these tathāgatas were to establish innumerable, countless, immeasurable sentient beings in final nirvāṇa, Venerable Lord, the depletion or replenishment of the world of sentient beings would not be discernible. If one were to ask why, it is because sentient beings are non-existent and be-

cause sentient beings are void. In the same vein as before, this applies extensively [also] to all the world systems of the ten directions.

19.25 “Venerable Lord! For these reasons I state that those who would don the great armor and seek to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of sentient beings, are actually seeking to liberate space.”

19.26 Then there was a certain monk present within the assembly who thought, “O Venerable Lord! I pay homage to the transcendent perfection of wisdom, in which, although nothing at all arises or ceases, the aggregate of ethical discipline is still discerned, the aggregate of meditative stability is still discerned, the aggregate of wisdom is still discerned, the aggregate of liberation is still discerned, the aggregate of the perception of liberating pristine cognition is still discerned, and similarly, [the fruit of] entering the stream is still discerned, as indeed are [the fruits] of being tied to one more rebirth, of no longer being subject to rebirth, of arhatship, of individual enlightenment, and of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas. Great bodhisattva beings are still discerned, as indeed are the precious jewel of the Buddha, the precious jewel of the Dharma, and the precious jewel of the Saṅgha. The turnings of the wheel of the sacred doctrine are also still discerned!”

19.27 Then Śakra, mighty king of the gods, asked Senior Subhūti as follows: “Venerable Subhūti, when bodhisattvas are equipoised in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom, with respect to what are they equipoised in union?” Senior Subhūti replied, “The mind that would be equipoised in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom is actually equipoised in union with space.”

19.28 Śakra, mighty king of the gods, then said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! I will guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who hold, maintain, recite aloud, master, and are attentive to this transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner.”

19.29 Then Senior Subhūti addressed Śakra, mighty king of the gods, “Kauśika, can you conceive of anything which you would wish to guard and protect, and toward which you would offer sanctuary?” “No, Venerable Subhūti!” he replied.

19.30 “Kauśika, if those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage abide in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been described, that itself will guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to them; those human and non-human adversaries who wish to harm them will find no opportunity to do so. One should know that those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been described, will never be separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom. “Kauśika, anyone thinking to guard, protect and offer sanctuary to great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom would actually be thinking to guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to space.

19.31 “Kauśika, can you guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to a dream, a mirage, an optical aberration, a magical display, or a phantom?” “No, Venerable Subhūti!” he replied. “Kauśika, in the same way, anyone thinking to guard,

protect, and offer sanctuary to great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom would not succeed and would tire themselves out!

19.32 “Kauśika, do you think you can guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to the tathāgatas or to an emanation of the tathāgatas?” “No, Venerable Subhūti!” he replied. “Kauśika, in the same way, anyone thinking to guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom would not succeed and would simply tire themselves out!”

19.33 “Kauśika, do you think you can guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to the expanse of reality, the finality of existence, the real nature, and the inconceivable expanse?” “No, Venerable Subhūti!” he replied. “Kauśika, in the same vein as before, [anyone wishing to do so] would not succeed and would simply tire themselves out!”

19.34 Then Śakra, mighty king of the gods, asked Senior Subhūti as follows: “Venerable Subhūti, do you think that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom discern, provisionally, that all things are like a dream, like a mirage, like an echo, like an illusion, and like a phantom, and then, based on this understanding, that they do not make assumptions about their dreams, nor do they make assumptions on account of their dreams?” Senior Subhūti then replied to Śakra, mighty king of the gods, “Kauśika, whenever great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, when they do not make assumptions based on physical forms, and they do not make assumptions on account of physical forms; when they do not make assumptions associated with physical forms, and do not make assumptions about physical forms; and similarly, when they do not make assumptions based on feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, when they do not make assumptions on account of consciousness [and the rest], when they do not make assumptions associated with consciousness [and the rest], and do not make assumptions about consciousness [and the rest]; and in the same vein as before, when they do not make assumptions based on [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, when they do not make assumptions on account of omniscience [and so forth], when they do not make assumptions associated with omniscience [and so forth], and do not make assumptions about omniscience [and so forth]—in all those circumstances, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do discern that phenomena are like a dream, and so forth, and that they are like a phantom. Then, consequent on this understanding, they do not make assumptions based on dreams, they do not make assumptions on account of dreams, they do not make assumptions associated with dreams, and they do not make assumptions about dreams, and so on. They do not make assumptions based on phantoms, they do not make assumptions on account of phantoms. They do not make assumptions associated with phantoms, and they do not make assumptions about phantoms.”

19.35 Thereupon, through the power of the Buddha, the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm, in this world system of the great trichilocosm, along with the gods of the Trayastriṃśa realm; the Yāma, Tuṣita, Nirmāṇarata, and Paranirmitavaśavartin realms; those of the Brahmāpurohita and Mahābrahmā realms; those of the Parīttābha, Apramāṇābha, and Ābhāsvara realms; and all the gods of [the other realms], up to and including the Pure Abodes, scattered divine flowers, divine sandalwood powders, and divine incense powders toward Lord Śākyamuni. They then approached the place where Lord Śākyamuni was seated, prostrated their heads at the feet of the Blessed One, and took their place to one side.

19.36 Then through the power of the Buddha, those gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm and those gods [of the other realms], up to and including the Pure Abodes, beheld in the eastern direction the forms of the thousand buddhas teaching the sacred doctrine, while monks named Subhūti exclusively requested this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and Śakra, mighty king of the gods, then exclusively requested this specific chapter of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, they beheld the thousand buddhas in each of all the world systems of the south, west, north, nadir, and zenith, along with the four intermediate directions. The same refrain [as for the eastern direction] should be extensively applied to all these, in every detail.

19.37 Then the Blessed One addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti! Once the great bodhisattva being Maitreya has attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, he will teach this transcendent perfection of wisdom in this very place. All the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of this Auspicious Eon will indeed come to this very place and teach this transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

19.38 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Through what modes, through what indications, and through what signs will the Bodhisattva Maitreya teach this transcendent perfection of wisdom, having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are permanent or that they are impermanent. He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are imbued with happiness or that they are imbued with suffering. He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are a self and that they are not a self.

19.39 “He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are empty or that they are not empty. He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are with signs or that they are signless. He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms have aspirations or that they are without aspirations.

19.40 “He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are calm or that they are not calm. He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are void or that they are not void. He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are afflicted or that they are purified.

19.41 “He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms arise or that they cease. He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are entities or that they are non-entities. He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are pure or that they are impure. He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are fettered or that they are liberated. Just as in the case of physical forms, so in the case of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness he will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that these are fettered or that they are liberated, and so forth.

19.42 “He will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are past, that they are future, or that they are present. Similarly, he will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are past, that they are future, or that they are present. In the same vein, he will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are past, that they are future, or that they are present. “In the same manner, he will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms are utterly pure or that they are not utterly pure. Similarly, he will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are utterly pure or that they are not utterly pure. In the same vein, he will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are utterly pure or that they are not utterly pure.”

19.43 Thereupon Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure owing to the absolute purity of physical forms. Similarly, Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure owing to the absolute purity of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness.”

19.44 “Venerable Lord! How is the transcendent perfection of wisdom absolutely pure owing to the absolute purity of physical forms, and similarly, how is the transcendent perfection of wisdom absolutely pure owing to the absolute purity of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, physical forms are absolutely pure because they neither arise nor cease, and they are neither afflicted nor purified. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are absolutely pure because they neither arise nor cease, and they are neither afflicted nor purified. Moreover, Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure owing to the absolute purity of space.”

19.45 “Venerable Lord! How is the transcendent perfection of wisdom absolutely pure owing to the absolute purity of space?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, space is absolutely pure because it neither arises nor ceases, and it is neither afflicted nor purified. Moreover, Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure because physical forms are unsullied. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure because feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are unsullied.”

19.46 “Venerable Lord! How is the transcendent perfection of wisdom absolutely pure owing to the unsullied nature of space?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure because space cannot be grasped. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure because space cannot be conventionally designated. Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure because, just like the resonance of the echo of an echo in space, Subhūti, space cannot be conventionally designated.”

19.47 “Venerable Lord! How is the transcendent perfection of wisdom absolutely pure because space is not apprehended?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure because space is not apprehended in any respect. Moreover Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure because all things neither arise nor cease, and are neither afflicted nor purified.”

19.48 “Venerable Lord! How is the transcendent perfection of wisdom absolutely pure because all things neither arise nor cease, and are neither afflicted nor purified?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure because all things are utterly pure.”

19.49 Thereupon, Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who hold, maintain, master, recite aloud, and are attentive to this transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner will, Venerable Lord, not suffer ailments of the eyes, nor will they suffer ailments of the ears, nor will they suffer ailments of the nose, nor will they suffer ailments of the tongue, nor will their limbs be defective, nor will their bodies become too decrepit, and nor will they die a terrible death. That is to say, the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm and [those of the other realms], up to and including the gods of the Pure Abodes, along with many thousands of other gods, will deliberately follow them. On the eighth day, the fourteenth day, and the fifteenth day [of the lunar month], many hosts of the gods will congregate in places where those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who teach the sacred doctrine, preach and expound this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they will indeed generate many innumerable, countless, inconceivable, and unappraisable merits.”

19.50 The Blessed One then addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have said. When those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage preach and expound this transcendent perfection of wisdom on the eighth day, the fourteenth day, and the fifteenth day [of the lunar month] they will generate many innumerable, countless, inconceivable, and unappraisable merits; when they preach and expound this transcendent perfection of wisdom, an entourage of gods will be in their presence. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because this transcendent perfection of wisdom is most precious. Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is precious in that it can liberate sentient beings from the hells, and it can liberate them from the birthplaces of animals, the world of Yama, and the impoverished states of human beings, yakṣas, and nāgas.

19.51 “Moreover, it offers the prospects of rebirth among the royal class, standing out like a tall sāl tree; or among the priestly class, standing out like a tall sāl tree; or among the householder class, standing out like a tall sāl tree; or among the merchant class, standing out like a tall sāl tree. Similarly, it offers the prospect of rebirth among the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm, and in the same vein, among [the other god realms], up to and including the gods of the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. Similarly, it offers the fruit of entering the stream, and likewise it offers the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, and of arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

19.52 “If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because in this transcendent perfection of wisdom the paths of the ten virtuous actions are extensively revealed. Having trained therein, the royal class, standing out like a tall sāl tree, is discerned in the world. Similarly, the priestly class, standing out like a tall sāl tree; the householder class, standing out like a tall sāl tree; and the mercantile class, standing out like a tall sāl tree; and similarly, the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm are all discerned in the world, as are [the other classes of gods], up to and including the gods of the Paranirmitavaśavartin realm. Similarly, the gods of the Brahmākāyika realm, and the gods of the Brahmapurohita, Brahmapariśadya, Mahābrahmā, Ābhāsvara, Parīttābha, Apramāṇābha, Śubhakṛtsna, Parīttāsubha, Apramāṇasubha realms, and

so forth, up to and including the gods of the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception, are all discerned in the world. Similarly, the fruit of entering the stream, and likewise the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are all discerned in the world.

19.53 “Also, Subhūti, the four meditative concentrations are revealed in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly, [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, are revealed therein. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of generosity is revealed therein, and likewise, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom are revealed therein. Similarly, the emptiness of internal phenomena is revealed therein, the emptiness of external phenomena is revealed therein, and in the same vein, [all other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are revealed therein. Similarly, the ten powers of the tathāgatas are revealed therein, and in the same vein as before, [all other fruitional attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are revealed therein. It is after training therein that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are discerned in the world. For these reasons, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is designated as the ‘precious transcendent perfection.’

19.54 “In this precious transcendent perfection, there is nothing at all that arises or ceases, nothing that is afflicted or purified, and nothing that is to be retained or forsaken. If you ask why, it is because there is nothing at all that could arise or cease, nothing that could be afflicted or purified, and nothing that could be retained or forsaken. Subhūti, in this precious transcendent perfection, there are no phenomena at all that are apprehensible, be they virtuous, non-virtuous, determinate, indeterminate, mundane, supramundane, contaminated, uncontaminated, conditioned, or unconditioned. For this reason, Subhūti, this precious transcendent perfection is non-apprehensible.

19.55 “Subhūti, this precious transcendent perfection is unsullied by anything whatsoever. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the things by which the precious transcendent perfection might be sullied are non-apprehensible. Subhūti, if great bodhisattva beings, while practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom, do not grasp in the manner [previously mentioned], do not conceptualize in that manner, and do not conceptually elaborate in that manner, they will indeed practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They will proceed from one buddhafiield to another buddhafiield in order to venerate, respect, and make offerings to the lord buddhas, and when they proceed from one buddhafiield to another buddhafiield, they will bring hundreds of thousands of sentient beings to maturity, and they will also refine the buddhafiields.

19.56 “Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom does not teach anything at all, nor does it not teach anything. It does not grasp anything at all, nor does it offer anything, nor does it give rise to anything, nor does it cause anything to cease, nor does it bring about the affliction or the purification of anything, nor does it diminish or enhance anything, and nor is it past, future, or present.

19.57 “Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom does not transcend the world system of desire, nor is it es-

established in the world system of desire. It does not transcend the world system of form, nor is it established in the world system of form. It does not transcend the world system of formlessness, nor is it established in the world system of formlessness. It neither bestows nor withholds the transcendent perfection of generosity. It neither bestows nor withholds the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline. It neither bestows nor withholds the transcendent perfection of tolerance. It neither bestows nor withholds the transcendent perfection of perseverance. It neither bestows nor withholds the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. It neither bestows nor withholds the emptiness of internal phenomena. It neither bestows nor withholds the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. It neither bestows nor withholds the fruit of entering the stream. Similarly, it neither bestows nor withholds the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, or arhatship. It neither bestows nor withholds individual enlightenment. It neither bestows nor withholds the maturity of the bodhisattvas. It neither bestows nor withholds omniscience.

19.58 “Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom neither bestows nor withholds the attributes of ordinary people. It neither bestows nor withholds the attributes of those who have entered the stream. It neither bestows nor withholds the attributes of those who have attained [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship. It neither bestows nor withholds the attributes of the bodhisattvas. It neither bestows nor withholds the attributes of the genuinely perfect buddhas.

19.59 “Moreover, Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom does not withhold the conditioned elements, nor does it bestow the unconditioned elements. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because, regardless of whether the ta-thāgatas have appeared or not, it is the abiding nature of all things, and the expanse of reality is [this same] abiding nature. Indeed, this expanse of reality is not forgetful and it does not degenerate.”

19.60 Then many thousands of divine princes, congregating in the midst of the heavens, cheered long and loud. They scattered their divine flowers—blue lotuses, day lotuses, night lotuses, and white lotuses—and they grew hoarse saying, “Ah! We have seen the wheel of the sacred doctrine turned for the second time in Jambudvīpa!” Thereupon, those thousands of divine princes accepted that phenomena are non-arising.

19.61 Then the Blessed One addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, owing to the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, this turning of the wheel of the sacred doctrine is not the first in Jambudvīpa, nor is it the second. This transcendent perfection of wisdom is not at all established as a doctrine that is to be set in motion or reversed.”

19.62 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What is the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, owing to which this transcendent perfection of wisdom is not at all established as a doctrine to be set in motion or reversed?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is empty of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, [the other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity, are empty of the transcendent perfection of generosity, and so forth. Similarly, the emptiness of internal phenomena is empty of the emptiness of internal phenomena. The emptiness of external phenomena is empty of the emptiness of external phenomena. The emptiness of both external and internal pheno-

mena is empty of the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are empty of the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, and so forth.

19.63 “The applications of mindfulness are empty of the applications of mindfulness, and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, are empty of the noble eightfold path, and so forth. Similarly, the ten powers of the tathāgatas are empty of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are empty of the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and so forth.

19.64 “Ordinary persons are empty of ordinary persons. The fruit of entering the stream is empty of the fruit of entering the stream. The fruit of being tied to one more rebirth is empty of the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth. The fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth is empty of the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth. Arhatship is empty of arhatship. Individual enlightenment is empty of individual enlightenment. The essential nature of the bodhisattvas is empty of the essential nature of the bodhisattvas. Omniscience is empty of omniscience.”

19.65 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom which the bodhisattvas have is the great transcendent perfection, for all things are empty of the essential nature, and indeed they are empty of all things. Dependent on this transcendent perfection of wisdom, great bodhisattva beings attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine, even though nothing at all is set in motion or reversed. Nothing at all is considered or promulgated by anyone at all.

19.66 “If one were to ask why, it is because, in emptiness, that which would set in motion or reverse anything at all is in no way apprehensible. If one were to ask why, it is because all things are invariably unactualized. If one were to ask why, it is because emptiness does not set in motion or reverse anything at all. Signlessness does not set in motion or reverse anything at all. Aspirationlessness does not set in motion or reverse anything at all. That which describes, explains, designates, establishes, analyzes, interprets, elucidates, introduces, and expounds the transcendent perfection of wisdom in this manner is the absolutely pure exegesis of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. This exegesis of the transcendent perfection of wisdom has neither been explained nor revealed by anyone at all. It has never been requested by anyone at all. It has never been actualized by anyone at all, nor has anyone ever attained nirvāṇa with reference to it, nor has anyone ever been worthy of offerings on account of this revelation of the sacred doctrine.”

19.67 *This completes the nineteenth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Agents and Non-agents.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER NINETEEN:
AGENTS AND NON-AGENTS

19.A The transcendent perfection of wisdom is an agent {in relative reality} that has no actions {in ultimate reality}

... This is because {in ultimate reality} it is non-apprehensible as an agent, because it is non-apprehensible in terms of all phenomena, and so forth.

19.B Great bodhisattva beings ... practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... whenever they do not engage with physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {and} [any other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience {as ultimately real}. They practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms {up to and including omniscience} are permanent or ... impermanent ... imbued with happiness or ... with suffering ... are a self or ... not a self ... are empty or ... not empty ... are with signs or ... signless ... have aspirations or ... are without aspirations ... are calm or ... not calm ... are void or ... not void ... are afflicted or ... purified ... arise or ... are non-arising ... cease or ... are unceasing ... are entities or ... non-entities ... are pure or ... impure. If you ask why, it is because when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not consider the notions that physical forms ... up to and including omniscience, are permanent or ... impermanent ... and so forth. Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings ... practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms ... up to and including omniscience, are perfected or that they are not perfected ... because when they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not apprehend and do not consider physical forms {as ultimately real} ... up to and including omniscience ... “How wonderful is the Lord [Buddha’s] eloquent exegesis of these aspects of [attachment and] non-attachment, possessed by the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who espouse the vehicle of the bodhisattvas!” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have said. The aspects of [attachment and] non-attachment, possessed by those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who espouse the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, have been eloquently explained by the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha. Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom whenever they do not engage with the notions that physical forms ... up to and including omniscience, are with ... {or} without attachment ... {for} they understand that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, the fruit of arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are neither with attachment, nor are they without attachment {from the perspective of ultimate reality, where they do not exist as ‘apprehensible’ things}.”

19.C Just as ... if the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas were to eulogize space for the duration of their entire lives, space would neither be diminished even when it is not eulogized, nor would it be enhanced even when it is eulogized, in the same way ... this {profound yet non-existent} sacred doctrine is neither enhanced when it is explained {in relative reality}, nor is it diminished when it is not explained {in ultimate reality} ... Those great bodhisattva beings who are neither disheartened nor intimidated when practicing ... and cultivating the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... but remain equipoised in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, without fear, and who do not turn away from unsurpassed genuinely perfect enlightenment, achieve that which is difficult ... because this cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is like cultivating space, and the same goes for [the other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity. In space the transcendent perfection of wisdom is not discerned; nor are [the other transcendent perfections] ... {or} physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions and consciousness ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the

emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth ... the fruits of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed genuinely perfect enlightenment discerned.

19.D Those great bodhisattva beings who would don this great armor ... for the sake of sentient beings actually seek to strive, struggle, and make efforts for the sake of space ... Those who seek to liberate sentient beings from cyclic existence, and who would don the great armor, are actually seeking to liberate space ... Those who would don this armor for the sake of sentient beings are actually seeking to buttress the sky ... Those great bodhisattva beings who {embark on and} attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of sentient beings {who resemble space} acquire the great power of perseverance ... {and} are heroic and courageous ... Those great bodhisattva beings who seek to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of sentient beings who resemble space, don the great armor ... which is inconceivable and unequalled ... {because} if this world system of the great trichiliocosm were completely filled with tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, like a grove of reeds ... and if these tathāgatas were to remain [in the world] and teach the sacred doctrine for an eon or more than an eon; and if each of these tathāgatas were to establish innumerable, countless, immeasurable sentient beings in final nirvāṇa ... the depletion or replenishment of the world of sentient beings would not be discernible. If one were to ask why, it is because sentient beings are non-existent and because sentient beings are void ... For these reasons ... those who would don the great armor and seek to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of sentient beings, are actually seeking to liberate space.

19.E I pay homage to the transcendent perfection of wisdom, in which, although nothing at all arises or ceases {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, {from the perspective of relative reality} the aggregate of ethical discipline is still discerned, {along with} the aggregate of meditative stability ... the aggregate of wisdom ... the aggregate of liberation ... the aggregate of the perception of liberating pristine cognition ... {the fruits of} entering the stream ... of being tied to one more rebirth, of no longer being subject to rebirth, of arhatship, of individual enlightenment, and of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas ... great bodhisattva beings ... the precious jewel of the Buddha, the precious jewel of the Dharma, and the precious jewel of the Saṅgha ... {and} the turnings of the wheel of the sacred doctrine are also still discerned!

19.F The mind that would be equipoised in union with the transcendent perfection of wisdom is actually equipoised in union with space ... If those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage abide in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been described, that itself will guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to them {and they will never be separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom}; those human and non-human adversaries who wish to harm them will find no opportunity to do so ... Anyone thinking to guard, protect and offer sanctuary to great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom would actually be thinking to guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to space ... Can you guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to a dream, a mirage, an optical aberration, a magical display, or a phantom? ... Do you think you can guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to the tathāgatas or to an emanation of the tathāgatas? ... Do you think you can guard, protect, and offer sanctuary to the expanse of {relative} reality, the finality of {relative} existence, the real nature {of phenomena}, and the inconceivable expanse {of relative

existence)? ... [Anyone wishing to do so] would not succeed and would simply tire themselves out!

19.G Whenever great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, when they do not make assumptions based on physical forms ... on account of physical forms ... associated with physical forms, and ... about physical forms ... and in the same vein ... when they do not make assumptions based on [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience ... on account of omniscience [and so forth] ... associated with omniscience [and so forth], and ... about omniscience [and so forth]—in all those circumstances, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do discern that phenomena are like a dream, and so forth, and that they are like a phantom. Then, consequent on this understanding, they do not make assumptions based on dreams {or phantoms} ... on account of dreams {or phantoms} ... associated with dreams {or phantoms}, and ... about dreams {or phantoms}, and so on.

19.H Then through the power of the Buddha, those gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm and those gods [of the other realms], up to and including the Pure Abodes, beheld in the eastern direction the forms of the thousand buddhas teaching the sacred doctrine, while monks named Subhūti exclusively requested this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and Śakra, mighty king of the gods, then exclusively requested this specific chapter of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, they beheld the thousand buddhas in each of all the world systems {of the remaining ten directions} of the south, west, north, nadir, and zenith, along with the four intermediate directions ... Once the great bodhisattva being Maitreya has attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, he will teach this transcendent perfection of wisdom in this very place. All the {thousand} tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of this Auspicious Eon will indeed come to this very place and teach this transcendent perfection of wisdom.

19.I The Bodhisattva Maitreya, having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, will not teach the sacred doctrine according to the notions that physical forms {feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and all other attributes and attainments up to and including omniscience} are permanent or ... impermanent ... imbued with happiness or ... with suffering ... are a self {or} ... not a self ... are empty or ... not empty ... are with signs or ... signless ... have aspirations or ... are without aspirations ... are calm or ... not calm ... are void or ... not void ... are afflicted or ... purified ... arise or ... cease ... are entities or ... non-entities ... are pure or ... are impure ... are fettered or ... liberated ... are past ... future, or ... present ... {or} are utterly pure or ... not utterly pure.

19.J The transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure owing to the absolute purity of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {which} are absolutely pure because they neither arise nor cease, and they are neither afflicted nor purified. Moreover ... the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure owing to the absolute purity of space ... {which} is absolutely pure because it neither arises nor ceases, and it is neither afflicted nor purified. Moreover ... the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure because physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are unsullied ... {and} is absolutely pure because space cannot be grasped ... {or} conventionally designated ... because, just like the resonance of the echo of an echo in space ... space cannot be conventionally designated ... The transcendent perfection of

wisdom is absolutely pure because space is not apprehended in any respect. Moreover ... the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure because all things neither arise nor cease, and are neither afflicted nor purified ... The transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely pure because all things are utterly pure {which is indicative that all things are non-arising and unceasing, neither afflicted nor purified and are without apprehension—where all such non-existent things are unconditioned}.

19.K Those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who hold, maintain, master, recite aloud, and are attentive to this transcendent perfection of wisdom in the right manner will ... not suffer ailments of the eyes ... ears ... nose ... {or} tongue, nor will their limbs be defective, nor will their bodies become too decrepit, and nor will they die a terrible death. When those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage preach and expound this transcendent perfection of wisdom on the eighth day, the fourteenth day, and the fifteenth day [of the lunar month] they will generate many innumerable, countless, inconceivable, and unappraisable merits ... {and} an entourage of gods will be in their presence. If you ask why ... it is because this transcendent perfection of wisdom is most precious ... {for} it can liberate sentient beings from the hells ... from the birthplaces of animals, the world of Yama, and the impoverished states of human beings, yakṣas, and nāgas. Moreover, it offers the prospects of rebirth among the royal class ... the priestly class ... the householder class ... or among the merchant class, standing out like a tall sāl tree. Similarly, it offers the prospect of rebirth among the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm ... up to and including the gods of the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. Similarly, it offers the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, and of arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why ... it is because in this transcendent perfection of wisdom the paths of the ten virtuous actions are extensively revealed. Having trained therein, the royal class ... the priestly class ... the householder class ... and the mercantile class, standing out like a tall sāl tree ... up to and including the gods of the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception, are all discerned in the world. Similarly, the fruit of entering the stream ... {up to and including} unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are all discerned in the world.

19.L Also ... the four meditative concentrations are revealed in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly, ... {all other attributes and attainments}, up to and including omniscience, are revealed therein. It is after training therein that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are discerned in the world. For these reasons, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is designated as the 'precious transcendent perfection.' In this precious transcendent perfection, there is nothing at all that arises or ceases, nothing that is afflicted or purified, and nothing that is to be retained or forsaken. If you ask why, it is because there is nothing at all that could arise or cease, nothing that could be afflicted or purified, and nothing that could be retained or forsaken ... In this precious transcendent perfection, there are no phenomena at all that are apprehensible {as ultimately real}, be they virtuous, non-virtuous, determinate, indeterminate, mundane, supramundane, contaminated, uncontaminated, conditioned, or unconditioned. For this reason ... this precious transcendent perfection is {also} non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}.

19.M This precious transcendent perfection is unsullied by anything whatsoever ... because the things by which the precious transcendent perfection might be sullied are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} ... If great bodhisattva beings, while practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom, do not grasp in the manner {any phenomena as ulti-

mately real}, do not conceptualize in that manner {any phenomena as ultimately real}, and do not conceptually elaborate in that manner {any phenomena as ultimately real}, they will indeed practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They will proceed from one buddhfield to another ... in order to venerate, respect, and make offerings to the lord buddhas, and when they proceed from one buddhfield to another ... they will bring hundreds of thousands of sentient beings to maturity, and they will also refine the buddhfields.

19.N This transcendent perfection of wisdom does not teach anything at all {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, nor does it not teach anything {on the basis of it having no inherent dualistic existence}. It does not grasp anything at all, nor does it offer anything, nor does it give rise to anything, nor does it cause anything to cease, nor does it bring about the affliction or the purification of anything, nor does it diminish or enhance anything, and nor is it past, future, or present ... This transcendent perfection of wisdom does not transcend the world system{s} of desire {form or formlessness}, nor is it established in the world system{s} of desire {form or formlessness} ... It neither bestows nor withholds the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... {and} meditative concentration ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, or arhatship ... individual enlightenment ... the maturity of the bodhisattvas ... {or} omniscience ... This transcendent perfection of wisdom neither bestows nor withholds the attributes of ordinary people ... the attributes of those who have entered the stream ... {up to and including} the attributes of the bodhisattvas ... {and} the genuinely perfect buddhas ... This transcendent perfection of wisdom does not withhold the conditioned elements, nor does it bestow the unconditioned elements ... because, regardless of whether the tathāgatas have appeared or not, it is the abiding nature of all things {which is indicative that all things are non-arising and unceasing, neither afflicted nor purified and are without apprehension—where all such non-existent things are unconditioned}, and the expanse of {relative} reality is [this same] abiding nature. Indeed, this expanse of {relative} reality is not forgetful and it does not degenerate.

19.O Owing to the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, this {second} turning of the wheel of the sacred doctrine is not the first in Jambudvīpa, nor is it the second. This transcendent perfection of wisdom is not at all established as a doctrine that is to be set in motion or reversed ... {because} the transcendent perfection of wisdom is empty of the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {up to and including} omniscience is empty of omniscience ... for all things are empty of the essential nature, and indeed they are empty of all things. Dependent on this transcendent perfection of wisdom, great bodhisattva beings attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine, even though nothing at all is set in motion or reversed ... because, in emptiness, that which would set in motion or reverse anything at all is in no way apprehensible {due to there being no apprehender and no object of apprehension} ... because all things are invariably unactualized. If one were to ask why, it is because emptiness does not set in motion or reverse anything at all. Signlessness does not set in motion or reverse anything at all. Aspirationlessness does not set in motion or reverse anything at all. That which describes, explains, designates, establishes, analyzes, interprets, elucidates, introduces, and expounds the transcendent perfection of wisdom in this manner is the absolutely pure exegesis of the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {which} has neither been explained ... revealed ... {nor} requested ... {nor} actualized by anyone at all.

COMMENTARY

From the perspective of the omniscient mind—the all-seeing eye within the realm of relativity—there is only the ‘one and only’ Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha. The transcendent perfection of wisdom that speaks through every tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha, as the ‘voice’ of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, speaks on behalf of the Creator of every conjured individuated being ~ the great illusionist Vajradhara. This action of the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas speaks through every tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha, through the ‘immaculate conception’ of Vajradhara's diamond-being—through the Perfection of Wisdom of the omniscient mind—known as Vajrasattva. **Here the ‘Father’ aspect of Vajradhara (the diamond-holder), the ‘Mother’ aspect of the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, and the ‘Son’ aspect of Vajrasattva (the ‘immaculate conception’ of God’s diamond-being) unite as the uncrushable ‘undivided’ one.** Through this singular aspect of Vajrasattva, located within the mindstream of every conjured individuated being, the transcendent perfection of wisdom is able to speak through Senior Subhūti, Senior Ānanda and Senior Śāradvatīputra, as well as the Buddha Śākyamuni, with the ‘identical’ wisdom of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. It is for this reason the Buddha states (above): *“Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have said. The aspects of [attachment and] non-attachment, possessed by those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage ... have been eloquently explained by the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha.”*

*

The Buddha reveals (above): *“All the {thousand} tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of this Auspicious Eon will indeed come to this very place and teach this transcendent perfection of wisdom.”* **The unity of the buddhas, as the ‘one and only’ Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha can therefore be likened to a great wheel ~ with the hub representing Vajradhara and the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, the circumference representing Vajrasattva, and the thousand spokes representing the thousand buddhas.** Thus does the Buddha reveal in chapter two of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: *“The Blessed One has feet that are marked with the motif of the wheel. In this regard, the expression ‘marked with the motif of the wheel’ denotes the perfectly formed motif of a wheel with a thousand spokes, a hub, and a circumference, which elegantly appears on the soles of his two feet.”*

*

It is important to understand that every buddha must move through the stage of ‘individual enlightenment’ (which is the ‘attainment’ component of the vehicle of the pratyekabuddha), without actualizing the finality of ‘relative’ existence within the perceptual framework of their mind. It is here the stage of ‘individual enlightenment’ is transcended and replaced with ‘unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment’, which is the complete realization of non-individuality and the awakening of every conjured individuated being to the ‘undivided’ natural luminosity of mind. Here the Buddha states further in chapter twenty-four of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: *“{Great bodhisattva beings} should also cultivate the understanding through which individual enlightenment {of the vehicle of the pratyekabuddha} is actualized, but through which the finality of {relative} existence is not actualized ... {whereupon} they ... should enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas ... It is in this way ... that great bodhisattva beings who seek to attain emancipation in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should abide in these sacred [doctrines], and do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.”*



The ten virtuous actions collectively comprise the three modes of excellent ‘physical’ conduct, the four modes of excellent ‘verbal’ conduct, and the three modes of excellent ‘mental’ conduct. These are described further by the Buddha in chapter twenty-seven of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: “Even for the sake of their own lives, they do not deprive sentient beings of life, they do not steal that which is not given, they do not commit acts of sexual misconduct, they do not tell lies, they do not slander, they do not speak harshly, they do not resort to nonsensical speech, they do not become covetous, they do not become vindictive, and they do not resort to {the sixty-two} wrong views {revealed extensively in the Brahmajāla Sūtra}.” [Read *The Brahmajāla Sūtra*, p. 671]

CHAPTER TWENTY: ENLIGHTENED ATTRIBUTES

20.1 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is the infinite transcendent perfection.” The Blessed One replied, “This is owing to the infinity of space!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is sameness.” The Blessed One replied, “This is owing to the sameness of all things!”

20.2 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is void.” The Blessed One replied, “This is owing to emptiness, beyond limitations!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection cannot be crushed.” The Blessed One replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of all things!”

20.3 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is non-existent.” The Blessed One replied, “This is owing to namelessness and non-corporeality!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is like space.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of exhalation and inhalation!”

20.4 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is inexpressible.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of ideation and scrutiny!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is nameless.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the aggregates of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness!”

20.5 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is non-departing.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-arriving of all things!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection cannot be appropriated.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-grasping of all things!”

20.6 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is inexhaustible.” He replied, “This is owing to the perpetual exhaustion and refinement of all things!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is non-arisen.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-cessation and non-arising of all things!”

20.7 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is without a creator.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of creators!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is without a knower.” He replied, “This is owing to the inanimate nature of all things!”

20.8 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection does not transmigrate.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of death and transmigration!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection does not disintegrate.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-disintegration of all things!”

20.9 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is dreamlike.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the perception of dreams!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is like an echo.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of sounds and the ears!”

20.10 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is like an optical aberration.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of mirrors and reflections!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is like a mirage.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of flowing water!”

20.11 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is like a magical display.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of non-entities!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is without afflicted mental states.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of all afflicted mental states!”

20.12 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is without purification.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-existence of all afflicted mental states!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is unsullied.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of stains!”

20.13 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is without conceptual elaboration.” He replied, “This is owing to the eradication of all conceptual elaborations!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is without assumptions.” He replied, “This is owing to the eradication of all assumptions!”

20.14 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is unshakeable.” He replied, “This is owing to the stability of the expanse of reality!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is free from desires.” He replied, “This is owing to the incontrovertible realization of all things!”

20.15 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is without obsession.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-conceptuality of all things!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is calm.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of mental images!”

20.16 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is not desire.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of desire!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is not hatred.” He replied, “This is owing to the absence of hatred!”

20.17 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is not delusion.” He replied, “This is owing to the dispelling of all the darkness of ignorance!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is not afflicted mental states.” He replied, “This is owing to the absence of imagination!”

20.18 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is not sentient.” He replied, “This is owing to the absence of sentient beings!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is not to be forsaken.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-arising of all things!”

20.19 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection does not apprehend the two extremes.” He replied, “This is owing to the abandonment of the two extremes!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is undifferentiated.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-association of all things!”

20.20 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is unblemished.” He replied, “This is owing to the transcendence of all that is achieved by śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is non-conceptual.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of all concepts!”

20.21 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is immeasurable.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the dimensions of all things!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is unattached.” He replied, “This is owing to the absence of attachment with regard to all things!”

20.22 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is impermanent.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-disintegration of all things!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is imbued with suffering.” He replied, “This is owing to indefatigability with respect to all things!”

20.23 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is not a self.” He replied, “This is owing to non-fixation upon all things!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is emptiness.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of all things!”

20.24 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is without defining characteristics.” He replied, “This is owing to the absence of distinguishing counterparts with respect to all things!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of internal phenomena.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of internal phenomena!”

20.25 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of external phenomena.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of external phenomena!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of external and internal phenomena.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of external and internal phenomena!”

20.26 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of emptiness.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of emptiness!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of great extent.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of all things!”

20.27 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of ultimate reality.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of ultimate reality!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the

emptiness of conditioned phenomena.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of conditioned phenomena!”

20.28 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of the unlimited.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of the unlimited!”

20.29 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of non-dispersal.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of non-dispersal!”

20.30 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of inherent existence.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of unconditioned phenomena!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of all things.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of internal and external phenomena!”

20.31 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics.” He replied, “This is owing to the voidness of phenomena associated with the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the applications of mindfulness.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena!”

20.32 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the correct exertions.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of virtuous and non-virtuous attributes!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the supports for miraculous ability.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the four supports for miraculous ability!”

20.33 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the faculties.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the five faculties!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the powers.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the five powers!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the branches of enlightenment.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the seven branches of enlightenment!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the noble path.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the noble eightfold path!”

20.34 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is empty.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the aspects of emptiness and the aspect of voidness!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is signless.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the aspects of calmness!”

20.35 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is aspirationless.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of aspirations!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the aspects of liberation.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the eight aspects of liberation!”

20.36 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the steps of meditative equipoise.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is generosity.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of miserliness!”

20.37 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is ethical discipline.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of degenerate morality!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is tolerance.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of malice and tolerance!”

20.38 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is perseverance.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of indolence!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is meditative concentration.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of distraction!”

20.39 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is wisdom.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-apprehension of stupidity!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the ten powers.” He replied, “This is owing to their uncrushability by all things!”

20.40 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the four assurances.” He replied, “This is owing to their uncrushability by all things and owing to their undauntedness concerning the understanding of the aspects of the path!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the unhindered discernments.” He replied, “This is owing to the absence of attachment and absence of obstruction with respect to all knowledge!”

20.41 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes great compassion.” He replied, “This is owing to the non-abandonment of all sentient beings!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection constitutes the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.” He replied, “This is owing to its transcending of all the doctrines of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas!”

20.42 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the [nature of the] tathāgata.” He replied, “This is owing to the reality divulged as such in all languages!” “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is naturally arisen.” He replied, “This is owing to the sway that it holds over all things!”

20.43 “Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection is the genuinely perfect buddha.” He replied, “This is owing to the attainment of manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all things, in all their finest aspects!”

20.44 Then all the gods inhabiting the world system of desire and all the gods inhabiting the world system of form, within this world system of the great trichilocosm, as many as they are, scattered divine flowers, incense, joss sticks, nectar, and black agar wood powders. Approaching the Blessed One, they prostrated with their heads toward the

feet of the Blessed One, and stood to one side. Then, even as they stood to one side, the gods inhabiting the world system of desire and the world system of form asked the Blessed One, “With regard to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom which the Venerable Lord is explaining, what, O Lord, are the defining characteristics of this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom?”

20.45 The Blessed One replied to those gods as follows: “Gods, this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom has the defining characteristic of emptiness. Gods, this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom has the defining characteristic of signlessness, and the defining characteristic of aspirationlessness. Similarly, O gods, this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom has the defining characteristic of non-conditioning, the defining characteristic of non-arising, the defining characteristic of non-cessation, the defining characteristic of non-defilement, the defining characteristic of non-purification, and the defining characteristic of non-entity. Gods, although this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom has such defining characteristics, for the sake of the world the tathāgatas have named, symbolized, designated, and expressed it in conventional terms, but, O gods, that is not the case in ultimate reality. It cannot be disturbed by the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. If you ask why, it is because the world with its gods, humans, and antigods is also endowed with those very same defining characteristics.

20.46 “Similarly, O gods, defining characteristics are not perceived by means of defining characteristics. Nor is the absence of defining characteristics perceived by means of defining characteristics, nor are defining characteristics perceived by means of the absence of defining characteristics, nor even is the absence of defining characteristics perceived by means of the absence of defining characteristics. Therefore, O gods, as far as defining characteristics, the absence of defining characteristics, the defining characteristics of defining characteristics, and their combinations are concerned, it is impossible for any of them to know and for any of them to be known.

20.47 “Gods, these defining characteristics have not been conditioned by physical forms. They have not been conditioned by feelings, perceptions, and formative predispositions; nor have they been conditioned by consciousness. They have not been conditioned by internal emptiness. They have not been conditioned by external emptiness, nor have they been conditioned by external and internal emptiness, and, in the same vein, they have not been conditioned by the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. They have not been conditioned by [the attributes and attainments], extending from the applications of mindfulness, and so on, up to and including omniscience. Gods, these defining characteristics are neither human nor non-human; they neither have contamination nor are they without contamination; they are neither mundane nor are they supramundane; and they are neither conditioned nor are they unconditioned.

20.48 “Furthermore, O gods, do you think that if someone were to say that such and such is the defining characteristic of space, they would be speaking correctly?” “O Lord, they would be incorrect in stating that [such and such] is the defining characteristic of space. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because space is unconditioned. Therefore, it is not endowed with any defining characteristic whatsoever; nor is it thus endowed, because it is non-existent and non-apprehensible.”

20.49 The Blessed One then addressed those gods inhabiting the world system of desire and those inhabiting the

world system of form as follows: “Gods, whether the tathāgatas have appeared or whether the tathāgatas have not appeared [in the world], the expanse that is the defining characteristic of reality is itself established. The tathāgatas are called tathāgatas because they have genuinely attained manifestly perfect buddhahood.”

20.50 The gods then said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Because they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with regard to those defining characteristics, the tathāgatas engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed with respect to phenomena. It is due to having been established in these defining characteristics that the tathāgatas have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with regard to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, whose defining characteristics transcend all attachments. These defining characteristics through which the tathāgatas have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood are profound.

20.51 “Venerable Lord, how wonderful is this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom within the perceptual range of the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha—the Tathāgata who became a bodhisattva in former lives by engaging therein, and acquired the five extrasensory powers of the bodhisattvas, and who then, in this very lifetime, attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to omniscience, and, having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to omniscience, comprehended all these defining characteristics. He comprehends the defining characteristics of all things. He comprehends the defining characteristics of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. Similarly, he comprehends the defining characteristics of the transcendent perfection of generosity. He comprehends the defining characteristics of the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. He comprehends the defining characteristics [of the attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

20.52 The Blessed One then addressed the gods inhabiting the world system of desire and those inhabiting the world system of form: “Gods, the defining characteristic of physical forms is that they are capable of assuming material form, but the tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to the absence of their defining characteristic. Similarly, feelings have the defining characteristic of emotional experience, perceptions have the defining characteristic of comprehensibility, formative predispositions have the defining characteristic of conditioning, and consciousness has the defining characteristic of particularizing intrinsic awareness, but the tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to the absence of all their defining characteristics.

20.53 “The transcendent perfection of generosity has the defining characteristic of renunciation, but the tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to the absence of its defining characteristic. The transcendent perfection of ethical discipline has the defining characteristic of non-involvement, the transcendent perfection of tolerance has the defining characteristic of imperturbability, the transcendent perfection of perseverance has the defining characteristic of uncrushability, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration has the defining characteristic of undistractedness, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom has the defining characteristic of non-fixation with respect to all things, but the tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to the absence of all their defining characteristics.

20.54 “The four meditative concentrations, and similarly the four immeasurable aspirations and the four formless absorptions, have the defining characteristic of non-disturbance, but the tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to the absence of all their defining characteristics. The thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment have the defining characteristic of being conducive to emancipation, but the tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to the absence of their defining characteristics. Emptiness as a gateway to liberation has the defining characteristic of emancipation, signlessness as a gateway to liberation has the defining characteristic of non-grasping, aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation has the defining characteristic of non-striving, equanimity has the defining characteristic of non-conditioning, the eight aspects of liberation have the defining characteristic of non-captivation, the ten powers of the tathāgatas have the defining characteristic of invincibility, the four assurances have the defining characteristic of undauntedness, great compassion has the defining characteristic of kindness, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas have the defining characteristic of unsurpassibility, but the tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to the absence of their defining characteristics. Omniscience has the defining characteristic of being unobscured with respect to the definitive nature of all things, but the tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to the absence of its defining characteristic. So it is, O gods, that because the tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to the absence of defining characteristics in all things, the tathāgatas are said to ‘perceive pristine cognition without attachment.’”

20.55 Then the Blessed One addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti! The transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, and it instructs them. Therefore, the tathāgatas are established, intimately dependent on this transcendent perfection of wisdom. As such, they honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to the doctrines of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. So it is, Subhūti, that the tathāgatas honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this very sacred doctrine of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas originate from this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and because the tathāgatas are grateful and thankful for this transcendent perfection of wisdom. Subhūti, rightly would one speak if one were to say correctly that the tathāgatas are grateful and thankful. Subhūti, if you ask how the tathāgatas are grateful and thankful, it is, Subhūti, because the tathāgatas continuously honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to, and similarly favor and pursue, the vehicle and the path—that is to say, the vehicle through which they have reached [the level of] a tathāgata, and the path by which they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. In this sense, Subhūti, it should be recognized that the tathāgatas are grateful and thankful.

20.56 “Moreover, Subhūti, the tathāgatas have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood knowing that the sacred doctrines are uncreated because there is no agent. Similarly, they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood knowing that all things are uncreated because they have no corporeality. Subhūti, the tathāgatas are indeed grateful and thankful because this manifestly perfect buddhahood is attained dependent on the profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.

20.57 “Moreover, Subhūti, it is dependent on this very transcendent perfection of wisdom—not on nature or symbolic conventions—that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are brought to understand that all things are uncreated. It is for these reasons, Subhūti, that this transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathā-

gatas, and instructs the worlds [of sentient beings].”

20.58 Senior Subhūti then asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Since the Tathāgata has said that all things are unknowable and invisible, how then does the transcendent perfection of wisdom give rise to the tathāgatas, and instruct the worlds [of sentient beings]?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have spoken. All things are unknowable and invisible. If you ask, Subhūti, how all things are unknowable and invisible, all things, Subhūti, are unsupported and uncontained. For this reason, Subhūti, all things are unknowable and invisible, and accordingly, Subhūti, the transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathāgatas, and instructs the worlds [of sentient beings]. Furthermore, it is instructive because physical forms are unseen. Similarly, it is instructive because feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are unseen. In the same vein, it is instructive because [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are unseen. So it is, Subhūti, that the transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathāgatas, and instructs the worlds [of sentient beings].”

20.59 “Venerable Lord, how is this transcendent perfection of wisdom instructive because physical forms are unseen? Similarly, how is this transcendent perfection of wisdom instructive because feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are unseen? In the same vein as before, how is this transcendent perfection of wisdom instructive because [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are unseen?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is instructive because physical forms are unseen when there is no consciousness arising that apprehends physical forms. Similarly, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is instructive because consciousness [and the other aggregates] are unseen when there is no consciousness arising that apprehends feelings, that apprehends perceptions, that apprehends formative predispositions, and that apprehends consciousness. Likewise, in the same vein, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is instructive because [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are unseen when there is no consciousness arising that apprehends omniscience, and so forth. So it is, Subhūti, that this transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathāgatas, and instructs the worlds [of sentient beings].

20.60 “Moreover, Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom indicates to these worlds that the five psycho-physical aggregates are empty. Similarly, it indicates to these worlds that the twelve sense fields and the eighteen sensory elements are empty. Similarly, it indicates to these worlds that the paths of the ten virtuous actions, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, and the four formless absorptions are empty. Similarly, it indicates to these worlds that the twelve links of dependent origination and the false view about perishable composites, which are the basis of the sixty-two false views, are empty. Similarly, it indicates to these worlds that [the transcendent perfections], from the transcendent perfection of generosity up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, are empty. Similarly, it indicates to these worlds that internal emptiness is empty, and in the same vein, it indicates that the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities, are empty. Similarly, it indicates to these worlds that the four applications of mindfulness are empty. Similarly, in the same vein as before, it indicates to these worlds that [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are empty. It indicates to these worlds that omniscience is empty. So it is, Subhūti, that this transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to

the tathāgatas, and instructs the worlds [of sentient beings].

20.61 “Moreover, Subhūti, it is dependent on this very transcendent perfection of wisdom that tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas reveal to the worlds that the five psycho-physical aggregates are empty; that they comprehend, know, and cognize the worlds also to be empty; and that they indicate as much to [the sentient beings inhabiting] these worlds. So it is, Subhūti, that this transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathāgatas, and instructs the worlds [of sentient beings].

20.62 “Moreover, Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom reveals to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas that the world is empty. If you ask what world it reveals to be empty, it reveals the world comprising the five psycho-physical aggregates to be empty. Similarly, it reveals the world comprising the twelve sense fields to be empty. Similarly, it reveals the world comprising the eighteen sensory elements to be empty. In the same vein as before, it reveals the worlds comprising [all the attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, to be empty. So it is, Subhūti, that this transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathāgatas, and instructs the worlds [of sentient beings].

20.63 “Moreover, Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom reveals to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas that the world is inconceivable. If you ask what world it reveals to be inconceivable, it reveals the world comprising the five psycho-physical aggregates, the twelve sense fields, and the eighteen sensory elements to be inconceivable. In the same vein, it reveals the worlds comprising [all the attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, to be inconceivable. So it is, Subhūti, that this transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathāgatas, and instructs the worlds [of sentient beings].

20.64 “Moreover, Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom reveals to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas that the world is calm and empty of inherent existence. If you ask what world it reveals to be calm, empty, and so forth, it reveals [everything] from the five psycho-physical aggregates up to and including omniscience to be calm, and similarly, it reveals [everything] from the five psycho-physical aggregates up to and including omniscience to be empty of inherent existence. So it is, Subhūti, that this transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathāgatas, and instructs the worlds [of sentient beings].

20.65 “Moreover, Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom reveals to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas the mundane perception that this world is without mundane perception and that other worlds are also without mundane perception. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because there are no phenomena through which perception could occur, either in this world or in other worlds.”

20.66 Senior Subhūti then said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of great deeds. Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of inconceivable deeds and innumerable deeds.” The Blessed One replied, “It is so, Subhūti! It is just as you have spoken. This transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of great deeds. Similarly, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of inconceivable deeds, unappraisable deeds, and deeds that are equ-

al to the unequaled.

20.67 “Subhūti, if you ask how this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of great deeds, by means of deeds that are equal to the unequaled, and so forth, this denotes the great deeds of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas. That is to say, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established for the purpose of granting refuge to and not forsaking all sentient beings.

20.68 “Subhūti, if you ask how this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of inconceivable deeds, Subhūti, inconceivability denotes genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgata, self-origination, and omniscience. For these reasons, Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of the inconceivable deeds of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas.

20.69 “Subhūti, if you ask how this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of unappraisable deeds, Subhūti, there are no sentient beings whatsoever among the five classes of living beings who are categorized as sentient beings, who can conceive of or estimate genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgata, self-origination, or omniscience. This is the power of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. For these reasons, Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of the unappraisable deeds of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas.

20.70 “Subhūti, if you ask how the transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of innumerable deeds, Subhūti, innumerable denotes genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgatas, self-origination, and omniscience. Subhūti, since there are no sentient beings whatsoever among the five classes of living beings who are categorized as sentient beings, who are equal to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, how could any surpass them! Only the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas can analyze these [attributes] by means of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. For these reasons, Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of the innumerable deeds of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, and by means of their deeds which are equal to the unequaled, and so forth.”

20.71 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Are genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgatas, self-origination, and omniscience inconceivable, unappraisable, innumerable, and equal to the unequaled?” The Blessed One replied, “It is so, Subhūti. It is just as you have said. Subhūti, that which is inconceivable is genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgatas, self-origination, and omniscience. Subhūti, that which is unappraisable is genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgatas, self-origination, and omniscience. Subhūti, that which is innumerable is genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgatas, self-origination, and omniscience. Subhūti, that which is equal to the unequaled is genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgatas, self-origination, and omniscience.

20.72 “Similarly, Subhūti, physical forms are also inconceivable, unappraisable, innumerable, and equal to the unequaled. Likewise, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, too, are inconceivable, unappraisable, innumerable, and equal to the unequaled; in the same vein, Subhūti, [all attributes and attainments],

up to and including omniscience, are inconceivable, [unappraisable, innumerable,] and equal to the unequaled.

20.73 “Subhūti, all things are indeed inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth, and in that regard, mind and mental states are non-existent and non-apprehensible. Subhūti, physical forms, too, are non-existent, being inconceivable, [unappraisable, innumerable,] and equal to the unequaled. Similarly, Subhūti, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-existent, being inconceivable, [unappraisable, innumerable,] and equal to the unequaled; in the same vein, Subhūti, [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are non-existent, being inconceivable, [unappraisable, innumerable,] and equal to the unequaled.”

20.74 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How are physical forms non-existent, being inconceivable, unappraisable, innumerable, and equal to the unequaled? Similarly, why are feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness non-existent, being inconceivable, unappraisable, innumerable, and equal to the unequaled? In the same vein, why are [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, non-existent, being inconceivable, [unappraisable, innumerable,] and equal to the unequaled?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, physical forms are indeed without limit. Therefore physical forms are non-existent, while being inconceivable, [unappraisable, innumerable,] and equal to the unequaled. Similarly, Subhūti, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are also without limits. Therefore, consciousness [and the other aggregates] are non-existent, while being inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth. Likewise, Subhūti, [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are also without limits. Therefore omniscience [and so forth] are non-existent, while being inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth.”

20.75 [Then Senior Subhūti] asked [the Blessed One], “How are physical forms without limits? Similarly, how are feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness without limits? In the same vein, how are [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, without limits?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, physical forms are inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth. Therefore physical forms are without limits. Similarly, Subhūti, in the same vein as before, [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth. Therefore omniscience [and the rest] are without limits.

20.76 “Subhūti, do you think that physical forms are apprehensible with respect to that which is inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth? Or, in the same vein, do you think that [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are apprehensible?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

20.77 “Subhūti, it is for these reasons that all things are inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth. Subhūti, all these attributes of the tathāgatas, which the tathāgatas possess, are inconceivable, unappraisable, innumerable, and equal to the unequaled. Therefore the attributes of the tathāgatas are inconceivable and free from concepts, unappraisable and free from appraisals, and equal to the unequaled and free from parity with the unequaled. Subhūti, that which is unthinkable is designated as unthinkable. That which is unappraisable is designated as unappraisable. That which is innumerable is designated as innumerable. Subhūti, it is for these reasons, too, that the attributes of the tathāgatas, which the tathāgatas possess, are inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth. For example, Subhūti, just as space is inconceivable and equal to the unequaled, in the same way, Subhūti, the attributes of

the tathāgatas are inconceivable and equal to the unequalled. Indeed they cannot be conceived, appraised, or quantified by the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. Similarly, the attributes which the tathāgatas possess are innumerable.”

20.78 While [the Blessed One] was delivering this chapter concerning the attributes of the tathāgatas which are inconceivable, unappraisable, innumerable, and equal to the unequalled, the minds of five hundred fully ordained monks were liberated from contaminants, and freed from grasping, [which is the immediate cause of rebirth]. The minds of two hundred fully ordained nuns were liberated from contaminants, and freed from grasping. Six hundred laymen and three hundred laywomen developed the unobscured and immaculate eye of the sacred doctrine. Two thousand bodhisattvas came to accept that phenomena are non-arising, and they all received prophetic declarations [concerning their future enlightenment] within this Auspicious Eon.

20.79 *This completes the twentieth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Enlightened Attributes.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY:
ENLIGHTENED ATTRIBUTES

20.A {From the perspective of ultimate reality} this transcendent perfection of wisdom {in relative reality} is the **infinite transcendent perfection** ... owing to the infinity of space! ... **is sameness** ... owing to the sameness of all things! ... **is void** ... owing to emptiness, beyond limitations! ... **cannot be crushed** ... owing to the non-apprehension of all {non-existent} things! ... **is non-existent** ... owing to namelessness and non-corporeality! ... **is like space** ... owing to the non-apprehension of exhalation and inhalation! ... **is inexpressible** ... owing to the non-apprehension of ideation and scrutiny! ... **is nameless** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the aggregates of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness! ... **is non-departing** ... owing to the non-arriving of all {non-existent} things! ... **cannot be appropriated** ... owing to the non-grasping of all {non-existent} things! ... **is inexhaustible** ... owing to the perpetual exhaustion and refinement of all {non-existent} things ... **is non-arisen** ... owing to the non-cessation and non-arising of all {non-existent} things! ... **is without a creator** ... owing to the non-apprehension of {all non-existent} creators! ... **is without a knower** ... owing to the inanimate nature of all {non-existent} things! ... **does not transmigrate** ... owing to the non-apprehension of death and transmigration! ... **does not disintegrate** ... owing to the non-disintegration of all {non-existent} things! ... **is dreamlike** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the perception of dreams! ... **is like an echo** ... owing to the non-apprehension of sounds and the ears! ... **is like an optical aberration** ... owing to the non-apprehension of mirrors and reflections! ... **is like a mirage** ... owing to the non-apprehension of flowing water! ... **is like a magical display** ... owing to the non-apprehension of non-entities! ... **is without afflicted mental states** ... owing to the non-apprehension of all afflicted mental states! ... **is without purification** ... owing to the non-existence of all afflicted mental states! ... **is unsullied** ... owing to the non-apprehension of stains! ... **is without conceptual elaboration** ... owing to the eradication of all conceptual elaborations! ... **is without assumptions** ... owing to the eradication of all assumptions! ... **is unshakeable** ... owing to the stability {or stabilizing} of the expanse of {relative} reality! ... **is free from desires** ... owing to the incontrovertible realization of all things! ... **is without obsession** ... owing to the non-conceptuality of all things! ... **is calm** ... owing to the non-apprehension of mental images! ... **is not desire** ... owing to the non-apprehension of desire! ... **is not hatred** ... owing to the absence of hatred!

... **is not delusion** ... owing to the dispelling of all the darkness of ignorance! ... **is not afflicted mental states** ... owing to the absence of imagination! ... **is not sentient** ... owing to the absence of sentient beings! ... **is not to be forsaken** ... owing to the non-arising of all things {which could be forsaken}! ... **does not apprehend the two extremes {of nihilism and eternalism}** ... owing to the abandonment of the two extremes! ... **is undifferentiated** ... owing to the non-association of all {non-existent} things! ... **is unblemished** ... owing to the transcendence of all {conceptual states of duality} that is achieved by {the} śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas! ... **is non-conceptual** ... owing to the non-apprehension of all concepts! ... **is immeasurable** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the dimensions of all things! ... **is unattached** ... owing to the absence of attachment with regard to all things! ... **is impermanent** ... owing to the non-disintegration of all {non-existent} things {which neither arise nor cease}! ... **is imbued with suffering** ... owing to indefatigability {or the untiring perseverance of the maturity of understanding} with respect to all things! ... **is not a self** ... owing to non-fixation upon all {non-existent} things! ... **is emptiness** ... owing to the non-apprehension of all {non-existent} things! ... **is without defining characteristics** ... owing to the absence of distinguishing counterparts with respect to all {non-existent} things! ... **is the emptiness of internal phenomena** ... owing to the non-apprehension of internal phenomena! ... **is the emptiness of external phenomena** ... owing to the non-apprehension of external phenomena! ... **is the emptiness of external and internal phenomena** ... owing to the non-apprehension of external and internal phenomena! ... **is the emptiness of emptiness** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of emptiness! ... **is the emptiness of great extent** ... owing to the non-apprehension of all {non-existent} things! ... **is the emptiness of ultimate reality** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of {the path of nirvāna leading to} ultimate reality! ... **is the emptiness of conditioned phenomena** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of conditioned phenomena! ... **is the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena! ... **is the emptiness of the unlimited** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of the unlimited {of that which arises which has no limits}! ... **is the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of that which {arises which} has neither beginning nor end! ... **is the emptiness of non-dispersal** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of non-dispersal {of that which arises which has no separation or disintegration}! ... **is the emptiness of inherent existence** ... owing to the non-apprehension of unconditioned phenomena! ... **is the emptiness of all things** ... owing to the non-apprehension of internal and external phenomena! ... **is the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics** ... owing to the voidness of phenomena associated with the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics! ... **is the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities! ... **constitutes the applications of mindfulness** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena {as ultimately existent}! ... **constitutes the correct exertions** ... owing to the non-apprehension of virtuous and non-virtuous attributes {as ultimately existent}! ... **constitutes the supports for miraculous ability** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the four supports for miraculous ability {as ultimately existent}! ... **constitutes the faculties** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the five faculties {as ultimately existent}! ... **constitutes the powers** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the five powers {as ultimately existent}! ... **constitutes the branches of enlightenment** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the seven branches of enlightenment {as ultimately existent}! ... **constitutes the noble path** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the noble eightfold path {as ultimately existent}! ... **is empty** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the aspects of emptiness and the aspect of voidness! ... **is signless** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the aspects of calmness {which is without apprehension of mental images}! ... **is aspirationless** ... owing to the non-apprehension of aspirations! ... **constitutes the aspects of li-**

beration ... owing to the non-apprehension of the eight aspects of liberation {as ultimately existent}! ... **constitutes the steps of meditative equipoise** ... owing to the non-apprehension of the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise {as ultimately existent}! ... **is generosity** ... owing to the non-apprehension of miserliness! ... **is ethical discipline** ... owing to the non-apprehension of degenerate morality! ... **is tolerance** ... owing to the non-apprehension of malice and tolerance! ... **is perseverance** ... owing to the non-apprehension of indolence! ... **is meditative concentration** ... owing to the non-apprehension of distraction! ... **is wisdom** ... owing to the non-apprehension of stupidity! ... **constitutes the ten powers {which are the definitive knowledges of all phenomena within relative reality}** ... owing to their uncrushability by all {non-existent} things! ... **constitutes the four assurances** ... owing to their uncrushability by all {non-existent} things and owing to their undauntedness concerning the understanding of the aspects of the path! ... **constitutes the unhindered discernments** ... owing to the absence of attachment and absence of obstruction with respect to all knowledge! ... **constitutes great compassion** ... owing to the non-abandonment of all sentient beings {which are inherently non-existent}! ... **constitutes the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas** ... owing to its transcending of all the {dualistic} doctrines of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas! ... **is the tathāgata** ... owing to the {‘suchness’ of the} reality {of all things} divulged as such in all languages! ... **is naturally arisen** ... owing to the sway that it holds over all {non-existent} things! ... {and} **is the genuinely perfect buddha** ... owing to the attainment of manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all things, in all their finest aspects!

20.B This profound transcendent perfection of wisdom has the defining characteristic{s} of emptiness ... of signlessness ... of aspirationlessness ... of non-conditioning ... of non-arising ... of non-cessation ... of non-defilement ... of non-purification, and ... of non-entity ... Although this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom has such defining characteristics, for the sake of the world the tathāgatas have named, symbolized, designated, and expressed it in conventional terms, but, O gods, that is not the case in ultimate reality. It cannot be disturbed by the world with its gods, humans, and antigods ... because ... {these are} also endowed with those very same defining characteristics ... {From the perspective of ultimate reality} defining characteristics are not perceived by means of defining characteristics. Nor is the absence of defining characteristics perceived by means of defining characteristics, nor are defining characteristics perceived by means of the absence of defining characteristics, nor even is the absence of defining characteristics perceived by means of the absence of defining characteristics. Therefore ... as far as defining characteristics, the absence of defining characteristics, the defining characteristics of defining characteristics, and their combinations are concerned, it is impossible for any of them to know and for any of them to be known {due to the absence of the duality of subject and object in ultimate reality!} ... These defining characteristics have not been conditioned by physical forms ... and so on, up to and including omniscience ... {and} are neither human nor non-human ... neither have contamination nor are they without contamination ... are neither mundane nor are they supramundane; and they are neither conditioned nor are they unconditioned.

20.C If someone were to say that such and such is the defining characteristic of space ... they would be incorrect ... because space is unconditioned. Therefore, it is not endowed with any defining characteristic whatsoever; nor is it thus endowed, because it is non-existent and non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality} ... Whether the tathāgatas have appeared or whether the tathāgatas have not appeared [in the world], the expanse that is the defining characteristic of {relative} reality is itself established {by this transcendent perfection of wisdom}. The tathāgatas are called tathāgatas because they have genuinely attained manifestly perfect buddhahood ... Because they have attained manifest-

ly perfect buddhahood with regard to those defining characteristics, the tathāgatas engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed with respect to phenomena. It is due to having been established in these defining characteristics that the tathāgatas have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with regard to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, whose defining characteristics transcend all attachments.

20.D How wonderful is this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom within the perceptual range of the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha ... {who} comprehends the defining characteristics of all things ... up to and including omniscience ... The defining characteristic of physical forms is that they are capable of assuming material form ... feelings have the defining characteristic of emotional experience, perceptions have the defining characteristic of comprehensibility, formative predispositions have the defining characteristic of conditioning, and consciousness has the defining characteristic of particularizing intrinsic awareness ... The transcendent perfection of generosity has the defining characteristic of renunciation ... the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline has the defining characteristic of non-involvement, the transcendent perfection of tolerance has the defining characteristic of imperiturbability, the transcendent perfection of perseverance has the defining characteristic of uncrushability, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration has the defining characteristic of undistractedness, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom has the defining characteristic of non-fixation with respect to all things ... The four meditative concentrations ... the four immeasurable aspirations and the four formless absorptions, have the defining characteristic of non-disturbance ... The thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment have the defining characteristic of being conducive to emancipation ... Emptiness as a gateway to liberation has the defining characteristic of emancipation, signlessness as a gateway to liberation has the defining characteristic of non-grasping, aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation has the defining characteristic of non-striving, equanimity has the defining characteristic of non-conditioning, the eight aspects of liberation have the defining characteristic of non-captivation, the ten powers of the tathāgatas have the defining characteristic of invincibility, the four assurances have the defining characteristic of undauntedness, great compassion has the defining characteristic of kindness, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas have the defining characteristic of unsurpassibility ... Omniscience has the defining characteristic of being unobscured with respect to the definitive nature of all things, but the ... tathāgatas attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to {perceiving} the absence of defining characteristics in all things ... {and it is because of this} the tathāgatas are said to 'perceive pristine cognition without attachment.'

20.E The transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, and it instructs them. Therefore, the tathāgatas are established, intimately dependent on this transcendent perfection of wisdom. As such ... the tathāgatas honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this very sacred doctrine of the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... because the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas originate from this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and because the tathāgatas are grateful and thankful for this transcendent perfection of wisdom ... If you ask how the tathāgatas are grateful and thankful, it is ... because the tathāgatas continuously honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to, and similarly favor and pursue, the {Great} vehicle ... through which they have reached [the level of] a tathāgata, and the path by which they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Moreover ... the tathāgatas have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood knowing that the sacred doctrines are uncreated {from the perspective of ultimate reality} because there is no agent {in non-duality}. Similarly, they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood knowing that

all things are uncreated because they have no corporeality {in ultimate reality} ... Moreover ... it is dependent on this very transcendent perfection of wisdom—not on nature or symbolic conventions—that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are brought to understand that all things are uncreated {from the perspective of ultimate reality}. It is for these reasons ... this transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathāgatas, and instructs the worlds [of sentient beings].

20.F All things are unknowable and invisible {from the perspective of ultimate reality} ... {because} all things ... are unsupported and uncontained. For this reason ... the transcendent perfection of wisdom gives rise to the tathāgatas, and instructs the worlds [of sentient beings] ... It is instructive because physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {and} [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are unseen ... when there is no consciousness arising {in ultimate reality} that apprehends omniscience, and so forth ... Moreover ... {it} indicates to these worlds that the five psycho-physical aggregates ... the twelve sense fields and the eighteen sensory elements ... the twelve links of dependent origination and the false view about perishable composites, which are the basis of the sixty-two false views ... the transcendent perfection of generosity up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {the} aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities ... {and} [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {and} omniscience ... {are} empty ... Moreover ... it is dependent on this very transcendent perfection of wisdom that tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas reveal to the worlds that the five psycho-physical aggregates {up to and including omniscience} are empty; that they comprehend, know, and cognize the worlds also to be empty; and that they indicate as much to [the sentient beings inhabiting] these worlds ... Moreover ... this transcendent perfection of wisdom reveals to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas that the world is empty. If you ask what world it reveals to be empty, it reveals the world comprising the five psycho-physical aggregates ... the world comprising the twelve sense fields ... the world comprising the eighteen sensory elements ... {and} the worlds comprising [all the attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, to be empty ... {as well as} inconceivable ... {and also} calm and empty of inherent {dualistic} existence ... Moreover ... {it} reveals to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas the mundane perception that this world is without mundane perception and that other worlds are also without mundane perception ... because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} there are no phenomena through which {this mundane ‘dualistic’} perception could occur, either in this world or in other worlds.

20.G This transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of great deeds ... of inconceivable deeds, unappraisable deeds, and deeds that are {innumerable and} equal to the unequalled ... {which} denotes the {four} great deeds of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas. That is to say, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established for the purpose of granting refuge to and not forsaking all sentient beings ... by means of inconceivable deeds ... {which} denotes {the four great deeds of} genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgata, self-origination, and omniscience ... by means of unappraisable deeds ... {for} there are no sentient beings whatsoever ... who can conceive of or estimate genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgata, self-origination, or omniscience ... by means of innumerable deeds ... {which} denotes genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgatas, self-origination, and omniscience ... Since there are no sentient beings whatsoever ... who are categorized as sentient beings, who are equal to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, how could any surpass

them! Only the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas can analyze these {four great deeds} by means of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. For these reasons ... this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of the innumerable deeds of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, and by means of their deeds which are equal to the unequaled, and so forth.

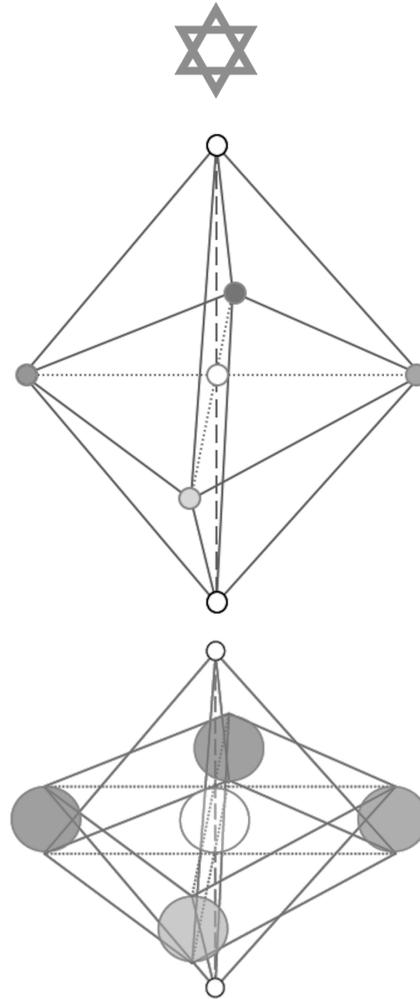
20.H That which is inconceivable {as well as unappraisable, innumerable and equal to the unequaled ~ that being equal to the “unequaled” singular nature of phenomena} is genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgatas, self-origination, and omniscience ... Similarly ... physical forms ... up to and including omniscience, are inconceivable, [unappraisable, innumerable,] and equal to the unequaled ... All things are indeed inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, and in that regard, mind and mental states {including those of the tathāgatas} are non-existent and non-apprehensible ... Physical forms, too ... up to and including omniscience, are non-existent {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, being inconceivable, [unappraisable, innumerable,] and equal to the unequaled.

20.I Physical forms {up to and including omniscience} are indeed without limit. Therefore physical forms {up to and including omniscience} are non-existent, while being inconceivable, [unappraisable, innumerable,] and equal to the unequaled ... {Conversely} physical forms {up to and including omniscience} are inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth. Therefore physical forms {up to and including omniscience} are without limits ... Physical forms {up to and including omniscience} are {not} apprehensible {in ultimate reality} with respect to that which is inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth ... It is for these reasons that all things are inconceivable, equal to the unequaled, and so forth ... All these attributes of the tathāgatas, which the tathāgatas possess ... are inconceivable and free from concepts, unappraisable and free from appraisals, and equal to the unequaled {singular nature of phenomena} and {as a result of being “one” with this non-dual nature} free from {being positioned in} parity with the unequaled {singular nature of phenomena} ... Just as space is inconceivable and equal to the unequaled {singular nature}, in the same way ... the {non-existent} attributes of the tathāgatas are inconceivable and equal to the unequaled. Indeed they cannot be conceived, appraised, or quantified by the world with its gods, humans, and antigods. Similarly, the attributes which the tathāgatas possess are innumerable.

COMMENTARY

The Perfection of Wisdom of this experience of relativity is known and created by the great illusionist *Vajradhara*, who in creating this illusion of relative existence, maintains the upper pyramid with the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, in accord with the lower pyramid of *Vajrasattva*—the perfection of *Vajradhara*'s diamond-being—within the mindstream of every conjured individuated being. And when the lower and upper pyramids are perceived as “one” within the mindstream of every conjured individuated being, they merge as one like a great morning star that enlightens the mind of the awakening being, that echo the freedom that has come to pass as the Morning Glory of the Morning Star. Here the enlightened being realizes the truth that the notion of relativity is merely a creation; that the natural luminosity of mind is all there is, which is devoid of any dualistic defining characteristics. Here there *is* no Creator in ultimate reality, nor any other thing beyond Our singularity ~ where names and corporeality are a thing of the past of the illusory realm of relativity. Thus the Buddha reveals (above): “{In ultimate reality} this transcendent perfection is without a creator ... owing to the non-apprehension of {any} creators! ... This transcendent perfection is without a

knower ... owing to the inanimate nature of all things!” [Read also *The Teaching of the Diamond-Holder*, p. 652]



The two pyramids resemble a diamond, with Vajradhara (meaning diamond-holder) at the top, Vajrasattva (meaning diamond-being) at the bottom, and the five dhyani wisdom buddhas of the Holy Spirit in between. Here the Creator (Vajradhara) speaks to the Son (Vajrasattva) via the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas ~ located within the mindstream of every conjured individuated being. **When all identification with the individual self is abandoned, the upper and lower pyramids then merge as ‘one’ to form the MerKaBa Light Body as a natural expanse of beryl—which is a six-pointed hexagonal crystalline structure—during the stage of enlightenment.** Here the Buddha reveals in chapter ten of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: “Great bodhisattva beings ... should don the armor of [the attainments], up to and including omniscience. They should {also} don the armor of the buddha body. Then they will illuminate the world system of the great trichilocosm ... as a natural expanse of beryl.”

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“THUS” is the suchness of the reality of all things which “COMES” into the mindstream of every conjured individuated being—in every language imaginable under the sun—who is awakening to the Truth of the Reality of What Is. This is the Holy Spirit of the five wisdom buddhas—also known as the Five Wisdom Tathāgatas—which arrives with the Truth of the Reality of all things ~ and accordingly is known as the *Tathāgata* ~ for tathā means “THUS” and āgata means “COME”. Thus does the Buddha reveal (above): **“This transcendent perfection of wisdom is the tathāgata ... owing to the {‘suchness’ of the} reality {of all things} divulged as such in all languages!”**



Self-origination indicates the conjured individuated being has originated from its own natural luminosity of mind ~ within the inconceivable expanse of ‘relative’ reality. One could say the conjured individuated being has originated from the great illusionist Vajradhara—and that certainly would not be incorrect—yet is not every conjured individuated being the great illusionist Vajradhara? Yet what is in a name in the ‘ultimate’ reality of namelessness and non-corporeality, where even the inconceivable can seem conceivable within the realm of ‘relative’ reality? Here We remember, as the great pretender, the FOUR GREAT DEEDS of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, which are (1) genuinely perfect buddhahood, (2) the nature of the tathāgata, (3) self-origination, and (4) omniscience. While these four great deeds are wholly inconceivable, wholly unappraisable, wholly innumerable, and equal to the unequalled in “ultimate” reality, they are enumerated in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, for they reveal the pathway of uniting with the “One”. Firstly does the mind of the conjured individuated being aspire to the ‘immaculate conception’ of **genuinely perfect buddhahood**—which is the lower pyramid aspect of Vajrasattva (the Son). Here it progresses on the path to buddhahood by relying on the guidance of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, which are **the nature of the tathāgata** of the “Thus Come” One, revealing as the Holy Spirit the Reality of all things. Only then does the mind of the awakening being see it has originated of the Father in **self-origination**, where it comes to accept it is the great Vajradhara or primordial buddha of the “Thus Come” One. Once this trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are accepted by the mind of the awakening one—and are seen as indivisible as the “Thus Come” One—can it then and only then don the mind of **omniscience** and unite with all aspects as the undivided “One”. And then this great buddha will enumerate above as the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha: *“That which is inconceivable ... that which is unappraisable ... that which is innumerable ... {and} that which is equal to the unequalled is {1} genuinely perfect buddhahood, {2} the nature of the tathāgata, {3} self-origination, and {4} omniscience.”*

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: EARLY INDICATIONS

21.1 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is profound. Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of great deeds. Accordingly, Venerable Lord, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of unappraisable deeds, innumerable deeds, and deeds that are equal to the unequalled.”

21.2 Then the Blessed One addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have said. This transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of great deeds. This transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of deeds that are equal to the unequalled, and so forth. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the five [other] transcendent perfections are subsumed within this transcendent perfection of wisdom; the emptiness of internal phenomena is subsumed within it; the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, are subsumed within it; the four applications of mindfulness are subsumed within it; and in the same vein, [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, are subsumed within it. The ten powers of the tathāgatas are subsumed within it. Subhūti, [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are subsumed within this transcendent perfection of wisdom.

21.3 “Subhūti, just as a king of the royal class who has been empowered through coronation delegates all the royal functions and royal duties that he exercises concerning the citizens to his obedient subjects and senior ministers—delegating responsibility so that he has few concerns—in the same way, Subhūti, all the doctrines of the śrāvakas, or all the doctrines of the pratyekabuddhas, or all the doctrines of the bodhisattvas, or all the doctrines of the genuinely perfect buddhas, as many as they are, are subsumed within the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and it is the transcendent perfection of wisdom which implements them. So, for these reasons, Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of great deeds. This transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of deeds that are equal to the unequalled, and so forth, in order that one might not appropriate or become fixated on physical forms, and likewise, in order that one might not appropriate and become fixated on feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and in the same vein as before, in order that one might not appropriate and become fixated on [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

21.4 Senior Subhūti then asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How is this transcendent perfection of wisdom established in order that one might not appropriate and become fixated on physical forms? How is it established in order that one might not appropriate and become fixated on feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness? How is it established in order that one might not appropriate and become fixated on [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience?”

21.5 Then the Blessed One addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti! Do you consider those physical forms which the transcendent perfection of wisdom could appropriate or become fixated upon?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

21.6 The Blessed One continued, “Subhūti, Do you consider those feelings, those perceptions, those formative predispositions, and those modes of consciousness that the transcendent perfection of wisdom could appropriate or become fixated upon?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

21.7 The Blessed One continued, “Subhūti, Do you consider [those attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, that the transcendent perfection of wisdom could appropriate or become fixated upon?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

21.8 “That is it! That is it, Subhūti! It is just as you have said. I also do not consider those [physical forms] that the transcendent perfection of wisdom could appropriate or become fixated upon. Likewise, I also do not consider those feelings, those perceptions, those formative predispositions, and those modes of consciousness that the transcendent perfection of wisdom could appropriate or become fixated upon. I also do not consider those [attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, that the transcendent perfection of wisdom could appropriate or become fixated upon. So it is that the bodhisattvas who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not appropriate or become fixated on physical forms; in the same vein, they should not appropriate or become fixated on [any attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

21.9 Then the gods inhabiting the world system of desire and those inhabiting the world system of form said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is profound, hard to discern, and hard to

realize! It cannot be investigated and it is not within the range of sophistry. It can be known by the wise and by those skilled in examining its subtlety. Venerable Lord! Great bodhisattva beings who have heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom and formed aspirations regarding it include those who fulfilled their higher deeds in the presence of former conquerors, those who have planted the roots of virtuous action, and those who have been accepted by spiritual mentors. Venerable Lord! Compared to the cognition and exertion of all those sentient beings in the world systems of the great trichiliocosm, as many as they are, who have become followers through faith, and similarly those who have become followers of the sacred doctrine, who have reached the eighth level, who have entered the stream, who are tied to one more rebirth, who are no longer subject to rebirth, who have attained arhatship, and who have become pratyekabuddhas—when any who accept this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom for but a single day, wishing for it, appraising it, or investigating it, it is their cognition and exertion that will be greater, not the cognition and exertion of those who have become followers through faith, those who have become pratyekabuddhas, and so forth. If one were to ask why, it is because, in contrast to the cognition and exertion of those who have become followers through faith, and similarly the cognition and exertion of those who have become pratyekabuddhas, great bodhisattva beings have accepted that phenomena are non-arising.”

21.10 Then the Blessed One addressed those gods inhabiting the world system of desire and those gods inhabiting the world system of form as follows: “O gods! It is so! It is so! It is just as you have said. O gods! I say that when any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who have heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom; who, having heard it, aspire toward it; who, having aspired toward it, commit it to writing, or have it committed to writing; or who, after similarly holding and teaching it, are attentive in the correct manner to the pristine cognition of genuinely perfect buddhahood—those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage will more swiftly attain final nirvāṇa by means of the pristine cognition of genuinely perfect buddhahood, not those sons or daughters who are followers of the vehicle of the śrāvakas, and who practice according to other sūtras apart from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, for an eon or longer than an eon. If you ask why, O gods, it is because those perfect doctrines associated with the attainment of manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are extensively revealed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, consequent on the doctrines in which followers through faith, and so on, up to and including those who have attained arhatship and those who have become pratyekabuddhas, should train, and the doctrines in which great bodhisattva beings have trained.”

21.11 Then the gods inhabiting the world system of desire and those inhabiting the world system of form said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is the great transcendent perfection. Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is the unappraisable transcendent perfection, the innumerable transcendent perfection, and the transcendent perfection that is equal to the unequaled. Venerable Lord! Having trained in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, those who have become followers through faith, those who have reached the eighth level, those who have entered the stream, those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, those who have attained arhatship, and those who have become pratyekabuddhas will all attain emancipation in the expanse of nirvāṇa, in which no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates is left behind. Having trained therein, great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and they will attain final nirvāṇa, in which no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates

gates is left behind. Yet this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom will neither be diminished nor replenished.”

21.12 Then the gods extolled the teachings of the Blessed One. Rejoicing, they prostrated with their heads toward the feet of the Blessed One and circumambulated him three times before departing from his presence. Having gone not very far, they departed through their miraculous powers and became invisible, the gods inhabiting the world system of desire proceeding to the world system of desire, and the gods inhabiting the world system of form proceeding to the world system of form.

21.13 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When those individuals who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas have heard this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and, immediately after hearing it, form aspirations toward it; and, as before, commit it to writing, retain, hold, and master it; and are always attentive to it in the correct manner, and so forth, from where will they pass away and be reborn into this [human world]?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, those individuals who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas immediately having heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, form aspirations toward it, and, as before, commit it to writing, retain, hold, and master it, and are always attentive to it in the correct manner. They will always follow in pursuit, from whence they came, to hear this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. Subhūti, just as a milch cow follows after her new-born calf, in the same way when those who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, immediately after hearing this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, form aspirations toward it, and, as before, commit it to writing, retain, hold, and master it, and are always attentive to it in the correct manner—those individuals who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas will exclusively pass away among humankind and be reborn among humankind. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those individuals who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas in this way after hearing, retaining, holding, mastering, and being attentive to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom in the correct manner in their former lives—and having, in the above manner, committed it to writing, compiled it as a book, and then honored, revered, and respected it with flowers, garlands, unguents, powders, butter lamps, incense, clothing, parasols, victory banners, and ribbons—will, through these roots of virtuous action, abandon the eight unfavorable conditions, and be reborn among humankind.”

21.14 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How could individuals endowed with enlightened attributes who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas have honored the lord buddhas in other buddhafi elds, and then have passed away to be reborn in this [human world], where they hear this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and immediately after hearing it, form aspirations toward it, and, having formed aspirations, commit it to writing, have it committed to writing, and similarly, retain, hold, and be attentive to it in the correct manner?”

21.15 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, there are individuals following the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who have honored the lord buddhas in other buddhafi elds, and then have passed away to be reborn in this [human world], where they hear this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and immediately after hearing it, form aspirations toward it, and, having formed aspirations, commit it to writing, have it committed to writing, and similarly, retain, hold, master, and are attentive to it in the correct manner. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas have previously heard this profound transcendent-

ent perfection of wisdom from the lord buddhas in other buddhahelds, and similarly, have retained, held, mastered, and been attentive to it in the correct manner, and so forth. Through these roots of virtuous action, after they passed away, they have been reborn in this [human world].

21.16 “Moreover, Subhūti, there are individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who have heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom among the god realms of Tuṣita, [and so forth], and who have been attentive to it in the correct manner, and so forth. You should know that henceforth, by putting an end to the accumulation of non-virtuous actions, and by means of these roots of virtuous action, which are associated with hearing the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and by cultivating the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they have been reborn therein, with fortune equal to that of humankind, and they are also endowed with those same attributes. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who have been born in the abode of Tuṣita have questioned and counter-questioned the great bodhisattva being Maitreya concerning this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.

21.17 “Subhūti, there are individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who, in former lives, heard and received clear instruction in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who have been reborn in this [human world], without having had an opportunity to pose questions and counter-questions, and who, when they now hear this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, harbor doubts, hesitation and disillusionment with regard to this same profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

21.18 “Similarly, there are individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who, in former lives, have heard and received clear instruction in this profundity of the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity, and who have been reborn in this [human world], without having had an opportunity to pose questions and counter-questions, and who, when they now hear this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, harbor doubts, hesitation and disillusionment with regard to it.”

21.19 “Moreover, Subhūti, there are individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who, in former lives, have heard and received clear instruction on the emptiness of internal phenomena, and similarly on the emptiness of external phenomena, and [on all the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, and who have been reborn in this [human world], without having had an opportunity to pose questions and counter-questions, and who, when they now hear this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, harbor doubts, hesitation and disillusionment with regard to it.”

21.20 “Moreover, Subhūti, there are individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who, in former lives, have heard and received clear instruction on the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative absorption, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and so forth, and who have been reborn in this [human world], without having had an opportunity to pose questions and counter-

questions, and who, when they now hear this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, harbor doubts, dullness, hesitation, and disillusionment with regard to this same profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.

21.21 “Moreover, Subhūti, there are individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who, in former lives, have heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and even experientially cultivated it and meditated upon it for a single day, or for two days, or for three, four, or five days, but who were not captivated by this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and indeed subsequently succumbed to hesitation. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those individuals who lack an earnest focus, without cultivating those sacred doctrines and without earnestly applying them, will turn out like that.

21.22 “Subhūti, those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who have embarked on this vehicle, but who, not long after, were not accepted by a spiritual mentor and did not revere many buddhas, do not commit this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing; nor do they retain, hold, and master it; nor do they read it aloud, recite it, confer its transmission, or be attentive to it in the correct manner. You should know that they have not even trained in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, nor have they trained in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, they have not trained in the emptiness of internal phenomena, and they have not trained in [the other aspects of emptiness]—the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of external and internal phenomena, and so forth, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Similarly, they have not trained in the applications of mindfulness, and they have not trained in the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, the noble [eightfold] path, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative absorption, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and so forth.

21.23 “Subhūti, if those followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas do not commit this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or do not have it committed to writing, if they do not retain, hold, and master it; and if they do not read it aloud, recite it, confer its transmission, and are not attentive to it in the correct manner, but instead benefit no sentient beings through this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom and fail to encourage sentient beings to acquire [the attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, then you should know that they will be restricted to two levels—the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas. If you ask why, it is because those who did not commit this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing; who did not have it committed to writing; who neither retained, held, nor mastered it; and who neither read it aloud nor recited it, and who did not confer its transmission and were not attentive to it in the correct manner, have not applied themselves earnestly, as instructed, in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.

21.24 “Subhūti, one should know that this is like when an ocean-going vessel or a great ship is wrecked at sea. The people on board who wish to save their lives, but who do not catch and hold on to a wooden plank, log, leather bag, or human corpse, will surely encounter death without reaching the ocean shore. Subhūti, it is like when an ocean-going vessel or a great ship is wrecked at sea, and the people on board who wish to save their lives do catch and

hold on to a wooden plank, log, leather bag, or human corpse, and will safely and securely stand upon the ocean shore, uninjured and unharmed. In the same way, Subhūti, those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who have a modicum of faith and a modicum of joy with regard to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, but who do not commit this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing; do not have it committed to writing; do not retain, hold, or master it; who do not read it aloud or recite it, confer its transmission or be attentive to it in the correct manner; and who do not apply themselves earnestly, as instructed, in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, will actualize the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas without reaching the maturity of the bodhisattvas. However, Subhūti, if those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who are endowed with faith, tolerance, serene joy, confidence, higher aspiration, volition, and renunciation; who relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained; and who commit this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, and similarly retain, hold, and master it; read it aloud and recite it; confer its transmission; are attentive to it in the correct manner; and apply themselves earnestly, as instructed, in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, then that faith, that tolerance, that confidence, that higher aspiration, that willingness, that volition, that renunciation, and that unrelenting perseverance until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, will increase and flourish since they have been accepted by the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They will not degenerate from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, omniscience, and so forth. Having brought sentient beings to maturity and having even refined the buddhafi elds, they will swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

21.25 “Moreover, Subhūti, you should know that this is like when a man or woman thinks of fetching water in a clay jar that has not been fired, that man or woman would be unskilled in nature. The unfired jar could not last long and would swiftly disintegrate into common clay. If you ask why, it is because the jar is unfired, and because it is soft. In the same way, Subhūti, when other individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspiration, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and who relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, but who, nonetheless, lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom, are unskilled, they will similarly be unskilled with respect to the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, being unskilled, they will be without the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of external phenomena, and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Similarly, being unskilled, they will be without the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path; in the same vein, being unskilled, they will not have cultivated [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Since such individuals, being unskilled, do not become familiar with omniscience, they will degenerate from those [superior] attributes due to their inappropriate actions, which are only associated with interim states. Subhūti, what are the interim states with which those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who have degenerated from those [superior] attributes due to their inappropriate actions are only associated? They are the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas.

21.26 “Subhūti, just as when a man or a woman fetches water from a river, waterfall, lake, pool, pond, or well with

a clay jar that has been fired, this man or woman who is fetching the water should be known as skillful in nature. That jar will not disintegrate, even though it is often immersed in water, and it can be used to fetch water whenever the man or woman wishes. In the same way, Subhūti, individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspiration, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and who relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, are not separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and engage in the conduct of a bodhisattva without lacking skillful means. Subhūti, other bodhisattvas apart from them should know that those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have been favored by the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration; similarly, they should know that those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have been favored by the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity, and in the same vein, by [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. Those great bodhisattva beings will not, owing to inappropriate actions, degenerate from those [superior] attributes only to the interim states—the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas. Uninjured and unharmed, they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

21.27 “Subhūti, it is like when an ocean-going ship that has not been well constructed sets out to cross the ocean, filled with merchandise. Subhūti, apart from the maritime merchant, others who are skilled in means should know that, because of that, this ship will not safely and securely cross to the other shore of the ocean, but will just disintegrate halfway across, and that the ship, the cargo, and the merchant who is unskilled in means will be separated, and, owing to inappropriate conduct, a catastrophe will ensue. Subhūti, those merchants who act accordingly, unskilled in means, will incur great misfortune and suffer a decline in their prosperity. In the same way, Subhūti, when individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspiration, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, but nonetheless lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom, being without skill in means, other great bodhisattva beings should know that, for that reason, those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have not been favored by the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity, and in the same vein, that those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have not been favored by [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience. Those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas will only achieve an interim state, and owing to inappropriate conduct, they will incur great misfortune and suffer a decline with respect to the doctrine. That is to say, they will experience a decline in the prosperity of the precious jewel of the sacred doctrine of the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect buddhas. Subhūti, if you ask in which interim state those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas suffer a decline with respect to the doctrine, it comprises the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas.

21.28 “Subhūti, it is like when a maritime merchant who is skilled in means embarks on the ocean, having properly constructed, caulked, repaired, and swept clean his ocean-going ship and loaded it so that it is full of various merchandise—Subhūti, others apart from that maritime merchant who are skilled in means should know that, for that rea-

son, this ship will not disintegrate in the ocean and will safely and securely reach the destination which that skilled merchant intends. In the same way, Subhūti, when individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspiration, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and who relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, are not separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and engage in the conduct of a bodhisattva without lacking skill in means, then, Subhūti, other great bodhisattva beings should know that those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have been favored by the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and similarly, by the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity, and in the same vein, that those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have been favored by [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. Those great bodhisattva beings will not, owing to inappropriate actions, degenerate from those [superior] attributes to the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas. Uninjured and unharmed, you should know that they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

21.29 “Subhūti, if, for example, the body of an aged and decrepit old man who had reached the age of two thousand were to succumb to some illness due to wind, bile, or phlegm disorder, or to a combination of these, do you think, Subhūti, that this man would be able to rise from his bed unaided?” “No, Venerable Lord! Even if he were capable of standing up, Venerable Lord, he would not be able to walk for more than one, two, or three krośa. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because that man would be wasted by old age and illness.”

21.30 The Blessed One replied, “In the same way, Subhūti, when those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspiration, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, but nonetheless lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom, being without skill in means, other bodhisattvas should know that, alas, for this reason those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have not been favored by the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and similarly, by the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity, and in the same vein, that those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have not been favored by [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. Those great bodhisattva beings will, owing to inappropriate actions, simply regress from those [superior] attributes to the interim states, which comprise the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas. If you ask why, it is because they are without the transcendent perfection of wisdom and they are without skill in means.

21.31 “Subhūti, it is just as when the body of that same aged and decrepit old man who had reached the age of two thousand has succumbed to some illness due to wind, bile, or phlegm disorder, or to a combination of these, but he still wishes to rise from his bed, and two strong men then arrive and support him on his left and right sides, saying, ‘Come here, man! Wherever you wish to go, whatever your mind seeks and wherever it wishes to go, with our support, you should not have the slightest fear of falling down, however far you go!’ In the same way, Subhūti, when individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspira-

tion, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, but are not separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and are not without skill in means, for this reason other bodhisattvas, apart from them, should know that those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have been favored by the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and similarly, by the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity, and in the same vein, that those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have been favored by [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. Such great bodhisattva beings will exclusively not regress from those [superior] attributes in the interim, until they attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because they are not separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they are not without skill in means.

21.32 “Subhūti, if you ask how individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas can lack skill in means, there are, Subhūti, some individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who, from the very beginning, dispense gifts while they lack skill in means, and similarly, who maintain ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, and become equipoised in meditative concentration while they lack skill in means, and who cultivate wisdom while they lack skill in means, and who then think, ‘I am giving gifts! I should give these gifts! I should give gifts to them!’ and similarly, ‘I am maintaining ethical discipline! I possess ethical discipline! I am cultivating tolerance! I possess tolerance! I am undertaking perseverance! I possess perseverance! I am absorbed in meditative concentration! I possess meditative concentration! I am cultivating wisdom! I possess wisdom!’ They make assumptions that the gifts are theirs, they make assumptions on account of those gifts, and they make assumptions about those gifts. Similarly, they make assumptions that ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom are theirs. They make assumptions on account of that wisdom [and so forth], and they make assumptions about wisdom [and so forth].

21.33 “Through their generosity, ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom, which resort to notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ they augment the round of cyclic existence itself, and they are not liberated from the sufferings associated with birth and so forth. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because in the transcendent perfection of generosity there are no such concepts. If you ask why, it is because the transcendent perfection of generosity is not a transcendent perfection. Similarly, in the transcendent perfections of ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom there are no such concepts. If you ask why, it is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest] are not transcendent perfections.

21.34 “Subhūti, when individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas dispense gifts, if they do not understand the limitations of perception, they have not been favored by the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, when they maintain ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, become equipoised in meditative concentration, and cultivate wisdom, if they do not understand the limitations of perception, they have not been favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom, [and so forth]. If they have not been favored by those six transcendent perfections, they have not been favored by omniscience and they will regress to the level of the śrāvākas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas. Subhūti, such are the individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisatt-

vas who lack skill in means.

21.35 “Then, if you ask how unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained without regressing to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas, in this regard, Subhūti, there are individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who, owing to their skill in means, from the very beginning give gifts with a mind that does not resort to notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’ Similarly, there are those who, owing to their skill in means, cultivate wisdom, and so forth, with a mind that does not resort to notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’ When they give gifts they do not think, ‘I am giving gifts! I should give these gifts! These are the recipients to whom I should give the gifts!’ and similarly, ‘I am maintaining ethical discipline! I possess ethical discipline! I am cultivating tolerance! I possess tolerance! I am undertaking perseverance! I possess perseverance! I am absorbed in meditative concentration! I possess meditative concentration! I am cultivating wisdom! I possess wisdom!’ They do not make assumptions with regard to those gifts, they do not make assumptions on account of those gifts, they do not make assumptions on account of the act of generosity, and they do not make assumptions about the act of generosity. Similarly, they do not make assumptions with regard to that ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom. They do not make assumptions on account of that wisdom, [and so forth]. They do not make assumptions on account of the act of wisdom, [and so forth], and they do not make assumptions about the act of wisdom, [and so forth]. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because in the transcendent perfection of generosity there are no such concepts and so they do not make assumptions. Similarly, in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline there are no such concepts and so they do not make assumptions. If you ask why, it is because the transcendent perfection of generosity is not a transcendent perfection. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of wisdom and the rest are not transcendent perfections.

21.36 “So it is that those [bodhisattvas] have the prescience to know that these are not transcendent perfections, and they are [consequently] favored by the transcendent perfection of generosity, and also, in the same way, by the [other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Because they are excellently favored by those six transcendent perfections, they are excellently favored by omniscience. Excellently favored in this way, they also attain omniscience, without regressing to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas. Accordingly, Subhūti, those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas are skilled in means. Without regressing to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas, they will indeed attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

21.37 “Venerable Lord! How should those great bodhisattva beings who are beginners train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom? How should they train in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity?” The Blessed One then replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, beginner bodhisattvas who wish to train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly, those who wish to train in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity should rely upon and venerate spiritual mentors who can confer instruction in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly those who can confer instruction in the transcendent perfec-

tion of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity. These spiritual mentors will grant instruction in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom to those bodhisattvas, saying, ‘Come, son of enlightened heritage or daughter of enlightened heritage! You should dedicate whatever gifts you have offered to all sentient beings, making common cause with all sentient beings and without apprehending anything, toward the attainment of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. You should not misconstrue the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment as physical forms! Similarly, you should not misconstrue it as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions or consciousness! Similarly, whatever ethical discipline you keep, whatever tolerance you cultivate, whatever perseverance you undertake, whatever meditative concentration you are equipped in, and whatever wisdom you cultivate, you should dedicate all these, making common cause with all sentient beings and without apprehending anything, toward the attainment of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’”

21.38 “Similarly, you should not misconstrue unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment as physical forms! Similarly, you should not misconstrue it as feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, or consciousness! You should not misconstrue unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment as the transcendent perfection of generosity! You should not misconstrue it as the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, or the transcendent perfection of wisdom! Similarly, you should not misconstrue unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment as the emptiness of internal phenomena, as the emptiness of external phenomena, as the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, or [as the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities! Similarly, you should not misconstrue unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment as the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the paths! You should not misconstrue unsurpassed, genuinely perfect buddhahood as the five extrasensory powers, and in the same vein as before, as omniscience!’ Subhūti, beginner bodhisattvas should train accordingly in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

21.39 *This completes the twenty-first chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Early Indications.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE:

EARLY INDICATIONS

21.A This transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of {the four} great deeds {of (1) genuinely perfect buddhahood, (2) the nature of the tathāgata, (3), self-origination, and (4) omniscience}. Accordingly ... this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of unappraisable deeds, innumerable deeds, and deeds that are equal to the unequalled ... because the five [other] transcendent perfections ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the four applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are subsumed within this transcendent perfection of wisdom ... Just as a king of the royal class who has been empowered through coronation delegates all the royal functions and royal duties that he exercises concerning the citizens to his obedient subjects and senior ministers—delegating re-

sponsibility so that he has few concerns—in the same way ... all the doctrines of the śrāvakas, or all the doctrines of the pratyekabuddhas, or all the doctrines of the bodhisattvas, or all the doctrines of the genuinely perfect buddhas, as many as they are, are subsumed within the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and it is the transcendent perfection of wisdom which implements them. So, for these reasons ... this transcendent perfection of wisdom is established by means of {the four} great deeds ... by means of deeds that are equal to the unequaled {singular nature of phenomena}, and so forth, in order that one might not appropriate or become fixated on physical forms {as ultimately real} ... up to and including omniscience ... {For} I ... do not consider those [physical forms] {up to and including omniscience} that the transcendent perfection of wisdom could appropriate or become fixated upon {as ultimately real} ... So it is that the bodhisattvas who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should not appropriate or become fixated on {them}.

21.B This transcendent perfection of wisdom is profound, hard to discern, and hard to realize! It cannot be investigated and it is not within the range of sophistry. It can {only} be known by the wise and by those skilled in examining its subtlety {who spiritually discern and accept the truth without formal investigation} ... Great bodhisattva beings who have heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom and formed aspirations regarding it include those who fulfilled their higher deeds in the presence of former conquerors, those who have planted the roots of virtuous action, and those who have been accepted by spiritual mentors ... Compared to the cognition and exertion of all those sentient beings ... who have become followers through faith, and similarly those who have become followers of the sacred doctrine, {from the stream-entrant up to and including those} who have reached the eighth level {of the pratyekabuddhas}, who have entered the stream, who are tied to one more rebirth, who are no longer subject to rebirth, who have attained arhatship, and who have become pratyekabuddhas—when any who accept this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom for but a single day, wishing for it, appraising it, or {even} investigating it, it is their cognition and exertion that will be greater, not the cognition and exertion of those who have become followers through faith ... {or of those} who have become pratyekabuddhas, and so forth ... because, in contrast ... great bodhisattva beings have accepted that phenomena are non-arising.

21.C When any sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who have heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom; who, having heard it, aspire toward it; who, having aspired toward it, commit it to writing, or have it committed to writing; or who, after similarly holding and teaching it, are attentive in the correct manner to the pristine cognition of genuinely perfect buddhahood ... {they} will more swiftly attain final nirvāṇa by means of the pristine cognition of genuinely perfect buddhahood, not those sons or daughters who are followers of the vehicle of the śrāvakas, and who practice according to other sūtras apart from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, for an eon or longer than an eon ... because those perfect doctrines associated with the attainment of manifestly perfect buddhahood ... are extensively revealed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, consequent on the doctrines {of the Great Vehicle} in which followers through faith, and so on, up to and including those who have attained arhatship and those who have become pratyekabuddhas, should train, and the doctrines in which great bodhisattva beings have trained.

21.D Having trained in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, those who have become followers through faith {or followers of the sacred doctrine}, {from the stream-entrant up to} those who have reached the eighth level {of the

pratyekabuddhas}, {beginning with} those who have entered the stream, those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, those who have attained arhatship, and those who have become pratyekabuddhas will all {eventually} attain emancipation {as great bodhisattva beings} in the expanse of nirvāṇa {in relative reality}, in which no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates is left behind. Having trained therein, great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and they will attain final nirvāṇa {in ultimate reality}, in which no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates is left behind. Yet this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom will neither be diminished nor replenished.

21.E Those individuals who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas immediately having heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, form aspirations toward it, and, as before, commit it to writing, retain, hold, and master it, and are always attentive to it in the correct manner. They will always follow in pursuit {to hear it} ... just as a milch cow follows after her new-born calf ... {and} will exclusively pass away among humankind and be reborn among humankind ... Because those individuals who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas in this way after hearing, retaining, holding, mastering, and being attentive to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom in the correct manner in their former lives—and having, in the above manner, committed it to writing, compiled it as a book, and then honored, revered, and respected it with flowers, garlands, unguents, powders, butter lamps, incense, clothing, parasols, victory banners, and ribbons—will, through these roots of virtuous action, abandon the eight unfavorable conditions {of being reborn (1) as a denizen of the hells, (2) as an anguished spirit, (3) as an animal, (4) as a long-lived god, (5) as a tribesman beyond the pale of civilization, (6) where the Dharma is not being taught, (7) with extreme mental or physical disablement, and (8) with wrong views}, and be reborn among humankind.

21.F There are individuals following the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who have honored the lord buddhas in other buddhafiels, and then have passed away to be reborn in this [human world], where they hear this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and immediately after hearing it ... commit it to writing, {and so forth} ... {This is} because ... {they} have previously heard {it} ... from the lord buddhas in other buddhafiels, and similarly have retained, held, mastered, and been attentive to it in the correct manner, and so forth ... {and} through these roots of virtuous action ... have been reborn in this [human world]. Moreover ... there are individual followers of the {Great} vehicle of the bodhisattvas who have heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom among the god realms of Tuṣita, [and so forth], and who have been attentive to it in the correct manner, and so forth. You should know that henceforth, by putting an end to the accumulation of non-virtuous actions, and by means of these roots of virtuous action, which are associated with hearing the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and by cultivating {it} ... they have been reborn therein, with fortune equal to that of humankind, and they are also endowed with those same attributes ... {This} is because those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who have been born in the abode of Tuṣita have questioned and counter-questioned the great bodhisattva being Maitreya concerning this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.

21.G There are individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who, in former lives, heard and received clear instruction in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom {as well as the other transcendent perfections}, ... {or who} have heard and received clear instruction on the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... {or who} have heard and received clear instruction on the

four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative absorption, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and so forth, and who have been reborn in this [human world], without having had an opportunity to pose questions and counter-questions {to Lord Maitreya}, and who, when they now hear this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, harbor doubts, dullness, hesitation, and disillusionment with regard to {it} ... Moreover ... there are individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who, in former lives, have heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and even experientially cultivated it and meditated upon it for a single day, or for two ... three, four, or five days, but who were not captivated by {it} ... and indeed subsequently succumbed to hesitation. If you ask why ... it is because those individuals who lack an earnest focus, without cultivating those sacred doctrines and without earnestly applying them, will turn out like that.

21.H Those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who have embarked on this vehicle, but who, not long after, were not accepted by a spiritual mentor and did not revere many buddhas, do not commit this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing; nor do they retain, hold, and master it; nor do they read it aloud, recite it, confer its transmission, or be attentive to it in the correct manner. You should know that they have not even trained in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, nor have they trained in the {other transcendent perfections up to and including} ... the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and so forth ... If those followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas do not commit this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or do not have it committed to writing, if they do not retain, hold, and master it; and if they do not read it aloud, recite it, confer its transmission, and are not attentive to it in the correct manner, but instead benefit no sentient beings through this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom and fail to encourage sentient beings to acquire [the attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, then you should know that they will be restricted to two levels—the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas ... because {they} ... have not applied themselves earnestly, as instructed, in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.

21.I One should know that this {lack of earnest focus} is like when an ocean-going vessel or a great ship is wrecked at sea. The people on board who wish to save their lives, but who do not catch and hold on to a wooden plank, log, leather bag, or human corpse {or in this case the transcendent perfection of wisdom}, will surely encounter death without reaching the ocean shore ... {Conversely} it is like when an ocean-going vessel or a great ship is wrecked at sea, and the people on board who wish to save their lives do catch and hold on to a wooden plank, log, leather bag, or human corpse {or in this case the transcendent perfection of wisdom}, and will safely and securely stand upon the ocean shore, uninjured and unharmed. In the same way ... those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who have a modicum of faith and ... joy with regard to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, but who do not commit {it} ... to writing; do not have it committed to writing; do not retain, hold, or master it; who do not read it aloud or recite it, confer its transmission or be attentive to it in the correct manner; and who do not apply themselves earnestly, as instructed ... will actualize the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas without reaching the maturity of the bodhisattvas. However ... if those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who are endowed with faith, tolerance, serene joy, confidence, higher aspiration, volition, and renunciation; who relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained; and who commit this

profound transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, and similarly retain, hold, and master it; read it aloud and recite it; confer its transmission; are attentive to it in the correct manner; and apply themselves earnestly, as instructed, in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, then that faith, that tolerance, that confidence, that higher aspiration, that willingness, that volition, that renunciation, and that unrelenting perseverance until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, will increase and flourish since they have been accepted by the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They will not degenerate from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, omniscience, and so forth. Having brought sentient beings to maturity and having even refined the buddhahood, they will swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

21.J Moreover ... you should know that this {lack of earnest focus} is like when a man or woman thinks of fetching {life-giving} water in a clay jar that has not been fired {in this case by the transcendent perfection of wisdom}, that man or woman would be unskilled in nature. The unfired jar could not last long and would swiftly disintegrate into common clay ... because the jar is unfired, and because it is soft. In the same way ... when other individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspiration, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and who relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, but who, nonetheless, lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom, are unskilled, they will similarly be unskilled with respect to the {other} transcendent perfection{s} ... Similarly, being unskilled, they will be without the emptiness of internal phenomena {and the other aspects of emptiness} ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Since such individuals, being unskilled, do not become familiar with omniscience, they will degenerate from those [superior] attributes due to their inappropriate actions, which are only associated with interim states ... {of} the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas ... {However} just as when a man or a woman fetches {life-giving} water ... with a clay jar that has been fired {in this case by the transcendent perfection of wisdom}, this man or woman ... should be known as skillful in nature. That jar will not disintegrate, even though it is often immersed in water ... In the same way ... individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspiration, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and who relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, {who} are not separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and engage in the conduct of a bodhisattva without lacking skillful means {are thus not without the aspects of emptiness up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and being skilled, do become familiar with omniscience} ... Other bodhisattvas apart from them should know ... {they} have been favored by the transcendent perfection{s} ... {and} by [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience ... {and} will not, owing to inappropriate actions, degenerate from those [superior] attributes ... {to} the level of the śrāvakas and ... pratyekabuddhas. Uninjured and unharmed, they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

21.K {This lack of earnest focus} is like when an ocean-going ship that has not been well constructed {in this case by the transcendent perfection of wisdom} sets out to cross the ocean, filled with merchandise ... Apart from the maritime merchant, others who are skilled in means should know that, because of that, this ship will not safely and securely cross to the other shore of the ocean, but will just disintegrate halfway across, and that the ship, the cargo, and the merchant who is unskilled in means will be separated, and, owing to inappropriate conduct, a catastrophe will ensue ... {and this merchant} will incur great misfortune ... In the same way ... when individual followers of the

vehicle of the bodhisattvas are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspiration, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, but nonetheless lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom, being without skill in means, other great bodhisattva beings should know that, for that reason ... {they} have not been favored by the transcendent perfection{s} ... {and} [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience. Those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas will only achieve an interim state {of the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas}, and owing to inappropriate conduct, they will incur great misfortune and ... experience a decline in the prosperity of the precious jewel of the sacred doctrine of the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect buddhas ... {However} when a maritime merchant who is skilled in means embarks on the ocean, having properly constructed, caulked, repaired, and swept clean his ocean-going ship {in this case by the transcendent perfection of wisdom} and loaded it so that it is full of various merchandise ... others apart from that maritime merchant who are skilled in means should know that, for that reason, this ship will not disintegrate in the ocean and will safely and securely reach the destination ... In the same way ... when individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspiration, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and who relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, {who} are not separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and engage in the conduct of a bodhisattva without lacking skill in means, then ... other great bodhisattva beings should know ... {they} have been favored by the transcendent perfection{s} ... {and} by [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience ... {and} will not, owing to inappropriate actions, degenerate from those [superior] attributes to the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas. Uninjured and unharmed, you should know that they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

21.L If, for example, the body of an aged and decrepit old man who had reached the age of two thousand were to succumb to some illness due to wind, bile, or phlegm disorder, or to a combination of these ... this man would {not} be able to rise from his bed unaided ... because that man would be wasted by old age and illness ... In the same way ... when those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspiration, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, but nonetheless lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom, being without skill in means, other bodhisattvas should know that, alas, for this reason ... {they} have not been favored by the transcendent perfection{s} ... {and} by [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. Those great bodhisattva beings will, owing to inappropriate actions, simply regress from those [superior] attributes to the interim states, which comprise the level of the śrāvakas and ... pratyekabuddhas ... because they are without the transcendent perfection of wisdom and they are without skill in means ... {However} when the body of that same aged and decrepit old man ... has succumbed to some illness due to wind, bile, or phlegm disorder, or to a combination of these ... but he still wishes to rise from his bed, and two strong men then arrive and support him on his left and right sides, saying, 'Come here, man! Wherever you wish to go, whatever your mind seeks and wherever it wishes to go, with our support, you should not have the slightest fear of falling down, however far you go!' In the same way ... when individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas are endowed with faith, tolerance, confidence, higher aspiration, willingness, volition, and renunciation, and relentlessly persevere until unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained, but are not separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and are not without skill in mea-

ns, for this reason other bodhisattvas, apart from them, should know that ... {they} have been favored by the transcendent perfection{s} ... {and} by [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. Such great bodhisattva beings will exclusively not regress from those [superior] attributes in the interim, until they attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... because they are not separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they are not without skill in means.

21.M If you ask how individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas can lack skill in means, there are ... some individual followers ... who, from the very beginning, dispense gifts while they lack skill in means, and similarly, who maintain ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, and become equipoised in meditative concentration while they lack skill in means, and who cultivate wisdom while they lack skill in means, and who then think, 'I am giving gifts! I should give these gifts! I should give gifts to them!' and similarly, 'I am maintaining ethical discipline! I possess ethical discipline! I am cultivating tolerance! I possess tolerance!' {and so forth} ... They make assumptions that the gifts are theirs, they make assumptions on account of those gifts, and they make assumptions about those gifts. Similarly, they make assumptions that ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom are theirs. They make assumptions on account of that wisdom [and so forth], and they make assumptions about wisdom [and so forth]. Through their generosity, ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom, which resort to notions of 'I' and 'mine,' they augment the round of cyclic existence itself, and they are not liberated from the sufferings associated with birth and so forth. If you ask why ... it is because in the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom there are no such concepts {of 'I' and 'mine'} ... because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} the transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest] are not transcendent perfections.

21.N When individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas dispense gifts, if they do not understand the limitations of {dualistic} perception, they have not been favored by the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, when they maintain ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, become equipoised in meditative concentration, and cultivate wisdom, if they do not understand the limitations of {dualistic} perception, they have not been favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom, [and so forth]. If they have not been favored by those six transcendent perfections, they have not been favored by omniscience and they will regress to the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas ... Such are the individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who lack skill in means.

21.O If you ask how unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is attained without regressing to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas ... there are individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas who, owing to their skill in means, from the very beginning give gifts ... {and} who, owing to their skill in means, cultivate wisdom, and so forth, with a mind that does not resort to notions of 'I' and 'mine.' When they give gifts they do not think, 'I am giving gifts! I should give these gifts! These are the recipients to whom I should give the gifts!' and similarly, 'I am maintaining ethical discipline! I possess ethical discipline! I am cultivating tolerance! I possess tolerance!' {and so forth} ... They do not make assumptions with regard to those gifts ... on account of those gifts ... on account of the act of generosity, and ... about the act of generosity. Similarly, they do not make assumptions with regard to that ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom ... on account of that

wisdom, [and so forth] ... on account of the act of wisdom, [and so forth], and ... about the act of wisdom, [and so forth]. If you ask why ... it is because in the transcendent perfection of generosity {and the rest} there are no such concepts {of 'I' and 'mine,' and so forth} and so they do not make assumptions ... because the transcendent perfection of generosity ... and the rest are not transcendent perfections.

21.P So it is that those [bodhisattvas] have the prescience to know that these are not transcendent perfections, and they are [consequently] favored by the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Because they are excellently favored by those six transcendent perfections, they are excellently favored by omniscience. Excellently favored in this way, they also attain omniscience, without regressing to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas. Accordingly ... those individual followers of the vehicle of the bodhisattvas are skilled in means. Without regressing to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas, they will indeed attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

21.Q Beginner bodhisattvas who wish to train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and {the other transcendent perfections} ... should rely upon and venerate spiritual mentors who can confer instruction in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and {so forth}. These spiritual mentors will grant instruction in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom to those bodhisattvas, saying, 'Come, son ... or daughter of enlightened heritage! You should dedicate whatever gifts you have offered to all sentient beings {as well as whatever ethical discipline you keep, whatever tolerance you cultivate, whatever perseverance you undertake, whatever meditative concentration you are equipoised in, and whatever wisdom you cultivate}, making common cause with all sentient beings and without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}, toward the attainment of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. You should not misconstrue the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment as physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions or consciousness ... {or as} the transcendent perfection of generosity ... {up to and including} the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment ... the paths ... the five extra-sensory powers, and ... omniscience!' ... Beginner bodhisattvas should train accordingly in the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

COMMENTARY

The great illusionist Vajradhara—who can be likened to a king of the royal class—has delegated responsibility of this transcendent perfection of wisdom to the five dhyani wisdom buddhas—in order that He has few concerns. These Five Wisdom Tathāgatas are His obedient subjects and senior ministers—who in “oneness” with this transcendent perfection of wisdom, are the singular Spirit of the Holy Spirit. These wisdom buddhas are the ‘teaching mechanism’ of the Great Vehicle of the path of omniscience, which reach into the minds of every citizen, conjured by the king of the royal class. Here the Buddha reveals (above): *“All the doctrines of the śrāvakas, or all the doctrines of the pratyekabuddhas, or all the doctrines of the bodhisattvas, or all the doctrines of the genuinely perfect buddhas ... are subsumed within the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and it is the transcendent perfection of wisdom which implements them.”*



The Saṅgha is that which is comprised of the community of those who follow the sacred doctrine of attaining manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. As such there is only the ‘one and only’ Saṅgha within the realm of ‘relative’ existence. Naturally the Saṅgha extends *far* beyond this human world into the world systems of the great trichilocosm ~ which includes the Tuṣita heavenly realm of the great bodhisattva Maitreya. For those on the path of omniscience who aspire to the community of like-minded ones—who reach *far* beyond this human world in considering the nature of the Saṅgha—they in turn will be accepted by a spiritual mentor from the likes of the Tuṣita heavenly realm, and will in turn be taken in by a spiritual mentor of the likes of the great bodhisattva Maitreya. **Yet before they are accepted by these ‘heavenly mentors’ they are vetted by the transcendent perfection of wisdom ~ who makes the decision, with utter precision, upon peering into their heart.** Here they must follow *completely* in their heart this Holy Spirit of the transcendent perfection of wisdom—as a milch cow follows after her new-born calf ~ for it is the unsurpassed Teacher, sent by the Father, that must be our ‘one and only’ Guiding Staff. Here the Buddha states in chapter seventeen of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: *“Just as they abide alongside the Teacher, and just as they pay homage to the Teacher, so they should do the same with respect to the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... because this transcendent perfection of wisdom is itself the Teacher.”*



The great illusionist, Vajradhara, has made a particular effort to expound ‘self-origination’ as one of the four great deeds ~ alongside genuinely perfect buddhahood, the nature of the tathāgata, and omniscience. It is the nature of the unawakened mind of the conjured individuated being to fortify and make real the ‘separate sense of self’. Here even the Creator of all beings, the great Vajradhara, can be used by the minds of the unawakened ones to reinforce the mind of duality. Thus it is the intention of the great being Vajradhara—through the five wisdom buddhas—to reveal to those minds of the awakening ones their real and true nature: that their natural luminosity of mind—free from all contaminants, free from all conceptions, free from all identification with a separate sense of self—is the One True Self of Our undivided mind. As the awakening mind on the path of omniscience fully accepts its natural luminosity of mind is undivided, free from all contaminants, free from all conceptions, and free from all notion of a separate sense of self, it can then come to accept its real and true nature is *every* mind of every sentient being, including the mind of the great Vajradhara. Then it dawns on the mind of the awakening one—***“I have originated from the mind of Vajradhara!*** *For Our undivided mind—the natural luminosity of mind—is the same mind of the great being Vajradhara! And as all conjuring is unreal, and as all duality is unreal, and as all names are unreal—there is no “I” at all, there is no Vajradhara at all! ~ only that which is Our natural luminosity of mind ... which is Our undivided mind, Our singularity in God.”*

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: CULTIVATION

22.1 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Since beginner bodhisattvas wish to train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly, since they wish to train in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity, why should they rely on and

venerate spiritual mentors who genuinely offer instruction in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who similarly offer instruction in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity, saying, ‘Come, son of enlightened heritage or daughter of enlightened heritage! You should dedicate whatever gifts you have offered to all sentient beings, making common cause with all sentient beings and without apprehending anything, toward the attainment of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. You should not misconstrue this unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment as the transcendent perfection of generosity! You should not misconstrue this unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment as the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, or the transcendent perfection of wisdom! Similarly, you should not misconstrue this unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment as the emptiness of internal phenomena, as the emptiness of external phenomena, as the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, and [as the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities! Similarly, you should not misconstrue this unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment as the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the paths! In the same vein as before, you should not misconstrue this unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment as [the fruitional attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.’?”

22.2 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, if in that manner they have not misconstrued physical forms, they will subsequently attain this omniscience. Similarly, if they have not misconstrued feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, they will subsequently attain this omniscience. Similarly, if they have not misconstrued the transcendent perfection of generosity, and if they have not misconstrued the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will subsequently attain this omniscience. Similarly, if they have not misconstrued the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, they will subsequently attain this omniscience. Similarly, if they have not misconstrued the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the paths, they will subsequently attain this omniscience. In the same vein, if they have not misconstrued [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, they will subsequently attain this omniscience.

22.3 “Moreover, Subhūti, bodhisattvas should grant instruction and admonition as follows to those [beginner] bodhisattvas who wish to train in the demonstration of this transcendent perfection of wisdom: ‘O child of enlightened heritage! When you conduct yourselves in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, do not generate desire for physical forms! Do not generate desire for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness! If you ask why, O child of enlightened heritage, it is because physical forms are without desire and are not an object of desire. So too are feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness.

22.4 ““Similarly, O child of enlightened heritage, when you practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom,

om, do not generate desire for the transcendent perfection of generosity! Do not generate desire for the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom! Do not generate desire for the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of external phenomena, and the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities! Do not generate desire for the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and the five extrasensory powers! Do not generate desire for the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, do not generate desire for [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas; again, in the same vein, O child of enlightened heritage, do not generate desire for [the attainments], up to and including omniscience! If you ask why, O child of enlightened heritage, it is because omniscience [and so forth] are without desire, and are not an object of desire.

22.5 “O child of enlightened heritage, do not generate desire for the fruit of entering the stream! Similarly, do not generate desire for the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, and individual enlightenment! O child of enlightened heritage, do not generate desire for the maturity of the bodhisattvas, and for unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment! If you ask why, O child of enlightened heritage, it is because unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment [and those other fruits] are without desire and are not an object of desire. If you ask why that is the case, O child of enlightened heritage, it is because all things are empty of inherent existence.”

22.6 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Those great bodhisattva beings who strive toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and who wish to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, are engaged in a difficult task inasmuch as all things are empty of their own defining characteristics.” The Blessed One replied, “It is so, Subhūti! It is just as you have said. Even so, Subhūti, having understood that all things are like a magical display and dreamlike, great bodhisattva beings embark on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the benefit, well-being, and happiness of the worlds [of sentient beings]. So they set out for unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, saying, ‘Let us become a sanctuary for the worlds—a protector, a refuge, an ally, an island, a torch-bearer, a lamp, a helmsman, a guide, and a support!’

22.7 “If you ask, Subhūti, how bodhisattvas embark on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the benefit of the worlds, in this regard, Subhūti, the bodhisattvas bestow all their gifts in order to release all sentient beings from suffering. Similarly, it is in order to release all sentient beings from suffering that they engage in all the ethical disciplines that they keep, all the tolerance that they cultivate, all the perseverance that they undertake, all the meditative concentrations in which they are equipoised, and all the wisdom that they cultivate. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings set out sentient beings for the benefit of the worlds.

22.8 “If you ask, Subhūti, how great bodhisattva beings embark sentient beings for the well-being of the worlds, in this regard, Subhūti, while they themselves practice the six transcendent perfections, they also encourage all sentient beings, establishing them in the acquisition of the six transcendent perfections. It is in this way, Subhūti, that

great bodhisattva beings set out sentient beings for the well-being of the worlds.

22.9 “If you ask, Subhūti, how great bodhisattva beings embark sentient beings for the happiness of the worlds, in this regard, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings themselves abide on the paths of the ten virtuous actions, and subsequently establish other sentient beings, too, on the paths of the ten virtuous actions. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings set out sentient beings for the happiness of the worlds.

22.10 “If you ask, Subhūti, how great bodhisattva beings become a sanctuary for the worlds, it is because sentient beings deserve to be offered sanctuary and because [the bodhisattvas] escort them to the citadel of fearlessness. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings become a sanctuary for the worlds.

22.11 “If you ask, Subhūti, how great bodhisattva beings act as a protector of the worlds, in this regard, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings behold those sentient beings who are born in the three lower realms, and protect them from those lower realms, establishing them also in the acquisition of calm abiding. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings act as a protector of the worlds.

22.12 “If you ask, Subhūti, how great bodhisattva beings are worthy to act as a refuge for the worlds, in this regard, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings teach the sacred doctrine that is without support. That is to say, they do not depend on physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and they release those sentient beings who have heard this doctrine from birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, discomfort, and agitation. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings are worthy to act as a refuge for the worlds.

22.13 “If you ask, Subhūti, how great bodhisattva beings act as an ally of the worlds, in this regard, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings teach the sacred doctrine, as follows, to those sentient beings who are skilled in the aspects of the path and to those who have embarked on negative paths: The transcendence of physical forms is always without fear. Similarly, the transcendence of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is always without fear. Similarly, the transcendence of the eyes is always without fear. Similarly, the transcendence of the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty is always without fear. Similarly, the transcendence of sights is always without fear, and similarly, the transcendence of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena is always without fear. Similarly, the transcendence of the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness is always without fear. Similarly, the transcendence of the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness; the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness; the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness; the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness; and the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness is always without fear.

22.14 “Similarly, the transcendence of fundamental ignorance is always without fear, and in the same vein, the transcendence of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, is always with-

out fear. Similarly, the transcendence of the applications of mindfulness is always without fear. Similarly, the transcendence of [all other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, is always without fear. Similarly, the transcendence of the ten powers of the tathāgatas is always without fear, and in the same vein, the transcendence of [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is always without fear. Similarly, the transcendence of the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, and omniscience is always without fear.

22.15 “The transcendence of physical forms is not physical forms. Similarly, the transcendence of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is not consciousness [and the other aggregates]. Similarly, the transcendence of the eyes is not the eyes. Similarly, the transcendence of the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty is not the mental faculty [and the other sense organs]. Similarly, the transcendence of sights is not sights, and similarly, the transcendence of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena is not mental phenomena [and the other sense objects]. Similarly, the transcendence of the sensory element of the eyes is not the eyes. Similarly, the transcendence of the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness is not the sensory element of visual consciousness [and the other sensory elements of vision]. Similarly, the transcendence of the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness is not the sensory element of auditory consciousness [and the other sensory elements of hearing]. Similarly the transcendence of the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness; the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness; the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness; and the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness is not the sensory element of mental consciousness [and the rest].

22.16 “Similarly, the transcendence of fundamental ignorance is not fundamental ignorance, and in the same vein, the transcendence of [all the other links of dependent origination], up to and including aging and death, is not aging and death [and the rest]. Similarly, the transcendence of the applications of mindfulness is not the applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, the transcendence of [all other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, is not the noble eightfold path [and the rest]. Similarly, the transcendence of the ten powers of the tathāgatas is not the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, the transcendence of [all the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is not the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas [and the rest]. Similarly, the transcendence of the understanding of all phenomena, the understanding of the aspects of the path, and omniscience is not omniscience [and the rest]. Subhūti, all things indeed accord with this transcendence of all things.”

22.17 “Venerable Lord! If all things indeed accord with the transcendence of all things, then, Venerable Lord, is it not the case that great bodhisattva beings would not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all phenomena? If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because in the transcendence of physical forms there is no conceptual notion, and similarly, in the transcendence of feelings, the transcendence of perceptions, the transcendence of formative predispositions, and the transcendence of consciousness there is no conceptual notion; likewise in the

transcendence [of all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, there is no conceptual notion that these are physical forms, these are feelings, these are perceptions, these are formative predispositions, these are consciousness, and, in the same vein, that these are [attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

22.18 The Blessed One replied, “It is so, Subhūti! It is just as you have said. This, Subhūti, is the most difficult task of great bodhisattva beings. Although they indeed ascertain how calm and how profound these phenomena all are, they do not become discouraged, but think, ‘Let us attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to these phenomena! Then, after we have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment in that manner, let us reveal these profound sacred doctrines to sentient beings!’ It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings act as an ally of the worlds.

22.19 “If you ask, Subhūti, how great bodhisattva beings are an island unto the worlds, just as, Subhūti, islands consist of land that is confined by water on all sides—whether by rivers, lakes, seas, or oceans—in the same way, Subhūti, physical forms are confined by the limit of past time and the limit of future time. Great bodhisattva beings, after manifestly and perfectly comprehending just that alone, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are confined by the limit of past time and the limit of future time. Great bodhisattva beings, after manifestly and perfectly comprehending just that alone, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings. In the same vein, [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are confined by the limit of past time and the limit of future time. Great bodhisattva beings, after manifestly and perfectly comprehending that alone, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings.

22.20 “Subhūti, all things are confined by these delimiting phenomena, comprising the limits of the past and the limits of the future. Subhūti, that which confines all things by the limits of the past and the limits of the future is definitively calm and excellent. That is to say, it is also known as emptiness, non-apprehension, the termination of the path, the exhaustion of craving, the non-residual [state], dispassion, cessation, and nirvāṇa. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings are an island unto the worlds.

22.21 “If you ask, Subhūti, how great bodhisattva beings act as a torch-bearer and lamp of the worlds, after actually realizing those very truths [imparted] by the lord buddhas, they maintain them just as they are, and also teach them to sentient beings, encouraging sentient beings to maintain them authentically as well, and establishing them securely therein. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings act as a torch-bearer and lamp of the worlds.

22.22 “If you ask, Subhūti, how great bodhisattva beings act as a helmsman and guide of the worlds, in this regard, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings reveal to sentient beings who have gone astray on mistaken paths, or who are bound for inferior realms, the sole path by traversing which sentient beings will achieve purification, on which suffering and discomfort will subside, and where sublime attributes will be realized, and nirvāṇa actualized. Similarly, after attaining manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, they reveal to sentient beings the sacred doctrine that physical forms neither arise nor cease, and that they are neither defiled nor purified. In the same way, they reveal to sentient beings the sacred doctrine that feelings, perceptions, formative

predispositions, and consciousness neither arise nor cease, and that they are neither defiled nor purified. Similarly, they reveal to sentient beings the sacred doctrine that the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and omniscience all neither arise nor cease, and that they are neither defiled nor purified. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings act as a helmsman and guide of the worlds.

22.23 “If you ask, Subhūti, how great bodhisattva beings act as a support of the worlds, in this regard, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings engage in the conduct of a bodhisattva, they attract sentient beings by means of the four attractive qualities of a bodhisattva, namely, generosity, pleasant speech, purposeful activity, and harmony. Then they teach those same sentient beings the sacred doctrine that physical forms have the modality of space. Similarly, they teach the sacred doctrine that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness have the modality of space. In the same vein as before, they teach the sacred doctrine that [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, have the modality of space.

22.24 “Moreover, they teach sentient beings the sacred doctrine that future physical forms are emptiness, that they will arise from nowhere, and that they will proceed to nowhere. Similarly, they teach sentient beings the sacred doctrine that future feelings, perceptions and formative predispositions, along with future consciousness, are all emptiness, that they will arise from nowhere, and that they will proceed to nowhere. In the same vein, they teach sentient beings the sacred doctrine that future [attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are all emptiness, that they will arise from nowhere, and that they will proceed to nowhere. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings act as a support of the worlds. If you ask why, it is because all things have the modality of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness; great bodhisattva beings, too, do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because in emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, going or coming is non-apprehensible. Subhūti, all things have the modality of non-conditioning; great bodhisattva beings, too, do not transgress this modality.

22.25 “Subhūti, in that which neither arises nor ceases, and is neither defiled nor purified, going or coming is non-apprehensible. In the same vein as before, Subhūti, all things have a modality that neither arises nor ceases, and is neither defiled nor purified; great bodhisattva beings, too, do not transgress this modality. Subhūti, in things which neither arise nor cease, and are neither defiled nor purified, going or coming is non-apprehensible.

22.26 “Subhūti, all things have the modality of a magical display, the reflection of the moon in water, a dream, an optical aberration, an echo, and a phantom; great bodhisattva beings, too, do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because in a magical display, the reflection of the moon in water, a dream, an optical aberration, an echo, and a phantom, going or coming is non-apprehensible.

22.27 “Subhūti, all things have a modality that is neither diminished nor enhanced; great bodhisattva beings, too, do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because in a modality that is neither diminished nor enhanced, going or coming is non-apprehensible. Subhūti, all things have a modality that does not arise; great bodhisattva beings, too, do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because in a modality that does not ar-

ise, going or coming is non-apprehensible. In the same vein, Subhūti, all things have a modality that is neither to be adopted nor to be forsaken, and so forth; great bodhisattva beings, too, do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because in [a modality] that is neither to be adopted nor to be forsaken, going or coming is non-apprehensible.

22.28 “Subhūti, all things have a modality of disassociation; great bodhisattva beings, too, do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because in [a modality] that is not disassociated, going or coming is non-apprehensible.

22.29 “Subhūti, all things have a modality that is without a self; great bodhisattva beings, too, do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because in [a modality without] a self, going or coming is non-apprehensible. In the same vein as before, Subhūti, all things have a modality free from sentient beings, free from living creatures, free from living organisms, free from lives, free from individuals, free from humankind, free from human beings, free from petitioners, free from instigators, free from actors, free from agents, free from knowers and free from viewers; great bodhisattva beings, too, do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because [in this modality] a self never exists, and it is non-apprehensible; similarly, this [modality] is free from sentient beings, living creatures, living organisms, lives, individuals, humankind, human beings, petitioners, instigators, actors, agents, knowers, and viewers, and these are non-apprehensible.

22.30 “Moreover, Subhūti, all things have a modality that is permanent and impermanent. Similarly, Subhūti, all things have a modality that is imbued with happiness and a modality that is imbued with suffering, a modality that is a self and a modality that is not a self, a modality that is empty and a modality that is not empty, a modality that is with signs and a modality that is signless, a modality that has aspirations and a modality that lacks aspirations, a modality that is calm and a modality that is void, a modality that is afflicted and a modality that is purified, a modality that arises and a modality that is non-arising, a modality that ceases and a modality that is unceasing, a modality that is an entity and a modality that is non-entity, and a modality that is attractive and a modality that is unattractive; [great bodhisattva beings, too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because permanence, happiness, self, and [all those attributes], up to and including attractiveness, never exist and they are non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could they possibly come and go!

22.31 “Subhūti, all things have the basis of desire, the basis of hatred, and the basis of delusion; [great bodhisattva beings, too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the basis of desire, the basis of hatred, and the basis of delusion never exist and are non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could they possibly come and go?

22.32 “Subhūti, all things have the basis of the variety of false views; [great bodhisattva beings, too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the basis of the variety of false views never exists and is non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could they possibly come and go?

22.33 “Similarly, Subhūti, all things have the modality of real nature, they have the modality of the expanse of rea-

lity, they have the modality of the finality of existence, they have the modality of sameness, and they have the modality of the inconceivable expanse; [great bodhisattva beings, too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the real nature, the expanse of reality, the finality of existence, sameness, and the inconceivable expanse never exist and they are non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could they possibly come and go?

22.34 “Subhūti, all things have a modality that is unmoving; [great bodhisattva beings, too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the motion that would enable anything to go or to come does not at all exist and is non-apprehensible.

22.35 “Subhūti, all things have the modality of physical forms. Similarly, Subhūti, all things have the modality of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness; [great bodhisattva beings, too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because physical forms do not exist and are non-apprehensible. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness do not exist and are non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could they possibly come and go?

22.36 “Similarly, Subhūti, all things have the modality of generosity; [great bodhisattva beings, too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because generosity never exists and is non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could there possibly be a transcendent perfection of this generosity? Similarly, Subhūti, all things have the modality of ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom; [great bodhisattva beings, too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom never exist and are non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could there possibly be a transcendent perfection of this ethical discipline, a transcendent perfection of this tolerance, a transcendent perfection of this perseverance, a transcendent perfection of this meditative concentration, and a transcendent perfection of this wisdom?

22.37 “Similarly, Subhūti, all things have the modality of the emptiness of internal phenomena; [great bodhisattva beings, too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the emptiness of internal phenomena never exists and is non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could they possibly come or go? Similarly, Subhūti, all things have the modality of the emptiness of external phenomena, and the modality of the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities; [great bodhisattva beings too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities [and the rest] never exist and are non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could they possibly come or go?

22.38 “Subhūti, all things have the modality of the applications of mindfulness and in the same vein, Subhūti, all things have the modality of the [other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path; [great bodhisattva beings, too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the noble eightfold path [and the rest] never exist and are non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could they possibly come or go? Similarly, Subhūti, all things have the modality of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, Subhūti, all things have the modality of the [other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the budd-

has; [great bodhisattva beings too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, it is because the [other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, never exist and are non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could they possibly come or go?

22.39 “Subhūti, all things have the modality of the fruit of entering the stream. Similarly, Subhūti, all things have the modality of the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, and individual enlightenment; [great bodhisattva beings too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the fruit of entering the stream never exists and is non-apprehensible. Similarly, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, and individual enlightenment do not exist and are non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could they possibly come or go?

22.40 “Subhūti, all the attributes of the buddhas have the modality of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment; [great bodhisattva beings, too,] do not transgress this modality. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment never exists and is non-apprehensible. This being the case, how could they possibly come or go?”

22.41 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Who will have conviction in and concur with this transcendent perfection of wisdom, which is so profound?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings who formerly worked toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, who have maintained purity of conduct in the presence of the genuinely perfect buddhas of the past, who have cultivated the roots of virtuous action, and who have been accepted by a spiritual mentor will have conviction in and concur with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

22.42 “Venerable Lord! What will be the essential nature of the minds of those great bodhisattva beings who have conviction in and concur with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom? What will be the indications of those great bodhisattva beings? What will be their signs and what will be their forms?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, the essential nature of the minds of those great bodhisattva beings who have conviction in and concur with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom will be disciplined with respect to desire, hatred, and delusion. Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings who have conviction in and concur with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom will be free from the indications, signs, and forms of desire, hatred, and delusion.”

22.43 “Venerable Lord! What will be the modality of those great bodhisattva beings who have conviction and concur with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings who have conviction in and concur with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom will have the modality of omniscience.”

22.44 “Venerable Lord! Those great bodhisattva beings who undertake non-acquisitive cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom will have the modality of omniscience. Venerable Lord, is this cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom the non-cultivation of all things; and, Venerable Lord, is this non-cultivation of all things indeed the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” “In that case, Subhūti, with regard to which things

is the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom a non-cultivation?”

22.45 “[Venerable Lord], the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, consciousness, the six inner sense fields, the six outer sense fields, and the eighteen sensory elements. Similarly, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of a self, sentient beings, living creatures, living organisms, lives, individuals, humankind, human beings, actors, agents, petitioners, instigators, experiencers, experiencing subjects, knowers, and viewers. Similarly, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of external phenomena, and of all the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities.

22.46 “Similarly, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the aspects of the path. In the same vein, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, and individual enlightenment. Similarly, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

22.47 “The Blessed One then replied, “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have said. The cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of physical forms. Similarly, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. The cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the eyes. Similarly, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty. The cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of sights. Similarly, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena.

22.48 “The cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the sensory element of the eyes. Similarly, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness. The cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness. The cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness. The cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness. The cultivation of the

transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness. The cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness.

22.49 “The cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the applications of mindfulness; in the same vein, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. The cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the ten powers of the tathāgatas; in the same vein, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, the cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the non-cultivation of the understanding of all phenomena and the understanding of the aspects of the path.”

22.50 Then the Blessed One further addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti! In terms of this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, those bodhisattvas of irreversible realization should investigate the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and, in the same vein, [all the other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.

22.51 “Some great bodhisattva beings are not fixated on this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom; similarly, they are not fixated on the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity. In the same vein, they are not fixated on [attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.

22.52 “Some great bodhisattva beings, when they practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, comprehend that the words spoken by others are pointless and contrary to the truth. They will not proceed through faith in others, and they will not be captivated by desire, hatred, delusion, or by the mind with its [five aspects of] concomitance, and its afflicted mental states. Some great bodhisattva beings, when they practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, will not be separated from the transcendent perfection of generosity, and they will not be separated from the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Some great bodhisattva beings, when they practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, will not be afraid and terrified, they will not grow fearful, and they will not be cowed and intimidated when they hear this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. Their minds will not be averted from the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, they will delight in hearing this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and having studied it, they will retain it, hold it, master it and be attentive to it in the appropriate manner.”

22.53 “Similarly, you should know that when these great bodhisattva beings are successful in their practice, their [realization] will be irreversible. Those same great bodhisattva beings in their former lives, too, will have studied this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, asked questions and counter-questions about it, retained it, mastered it, and been attentive to it in the appropriate manner. If you ask why, it is because, when those great bodhisattva beings hold this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will not be afraid and terrified, they will not grow fearful, and they will not be cowed and intimidated. Their minds will not be averted from the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in addition to which they will hold, retain, master and be attentive in the appropriate manner to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

22.54 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How, when maintaining this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, should those great bodhisattva beings practice this transcendent perfection of wisdom—those who will not be afraid and terrified, who will not grow fearful, who will not be cowed and intimidated, whose minds will not be averted from the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and who additionally will hold and be attentive in the appropriate manner, and so forth, to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom?” The Blessed One replied, “They should conduct themselves with their minds intent on omniscience.”

22.55 “How should their minds be intent on omniscience?” The Blessed One replied, “They should conduct themselves with their minds intent on emptiness, and similarly, with their minds intent on signlessness and aspirationlessness. Similarly, they should practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom with their minds intent on the real nature, and likewise with their minds intent on the [unaltered] real nature, intent on the expanse of reality, intent on the finality of existence, and intent on the sameness of [all] things, intent on the inconceivable expanse, and similarly, with their minds intent on [the similes of] a magical display, a mirage, the moon’s reflection in water, a dream, an optical aberration, an echo, and a phantom.”

22.56 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When those great bodhisattva beings practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom with their minds intent on emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, and in the same vein, when they practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom with their minds intent on [the similes of a] magical display, mirage, moon’s reflection in water, dream, optical aberration, echo, phantom [and so forth], Venerable Lord, do those great bodhisattva beings engage with physical forms, or similarly, do they engage with feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness? In the same vein, do they engage with [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience?”

22.57 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom do not engage with physical forms, and they do not engage with feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. In the same vein, Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom do not engage with [any attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. Subhūti, this omniscience has not been created by anyone, nor has it been transformed. It has not come from anywhere and it will not go anywhere. It does not abide in anything, nor does it abide in any place, nor does it abide in any direction. Therein neither number nor calculations are apprehensible, and there is no one indeed who can attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to that in which number and calculations are non-

apprehensible!

22.58 “Manifestly perfect buddhahood cannot be attained by means of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, consciousness, generosity, ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, or wisdom, or, in the same vein, even by means of [all attributes and attainments], up to and including the pristine cognition of omniscience. If you ask why, it is because the nature of physical forms is omniscience, and similarly, the nature of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is omniscience. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the real nature of physical forms and the real nature of omniscience are one and the same real nature. Similarly, the real nature of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and the real nature of omniscience, are one and the same real nature. Similarly, the real nature of omniscience, along with the real nature of the understanding of the aspects of the path and [the real nature] of the understanding of all phenomena, are all one and the same real nature.”

22.59 *This completes the twenty-second chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Cultivation.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO:
CULTIVATION

22.A Beginner bodhisattvas {who} wish to train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {should} rely on and venerate spiritual mentors who genuinely offer instruction in this transcendent perfection of wisdom ... If in that manner they have not misconstrued {as ultimately real} physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the paths, ... {and} [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, they will subsequently attain this omniscience. Moreover ... bodhisattvas should grant instruction and admonition as follows to those [beginner] bodhisattvas who wish to train in the demonstration of this transcendent perfection of wisdom: ‘O child of enlightened heritage! When you conduct yourselves in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, do not generate desire for physical forms! Do not generate desire for feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness! ... up to and including omniscience! If you ask why, O child of enlightened heritage, it is because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} omniscience [and so forth] are without desire, and are not an object of desire ... {Also} do not generate desire for the fruit of entering the stream! ... {or} for the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, and individual enlightenment! ... Do not generate desire for the maturity of the bodhisattvas, and for unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment! If you ask why ... it is because unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment [and those other fruits] are without desire and are not an object of desire ... because {from the perspective of ultimate reality} all things are empty of inherent existence.’

22.B Great bodhisattva beings who strive toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and who wish to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, are engaged in a difficult ta-

sk inasmuch as all things are empty of their own defining characteristics ... Even so ... having understood that all things are like a magical display and dreamlike, great bodhisattva beings embark on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the benefit, well-being, and happiness of the worlds [of sentient beings] ... saying, 'Let us become a sanctuary for the worlds—a protector, a refuge, an ally, an island, a torch-bearer, a lamp, a helmsman, a guide, and a support!' If you ask ... how bodhisattvas embark ... {they} bestow all their gifts in order to release all sentient beings from suffering. Similarly, it is in order to release all sentient beings from suffering that they engage in all the ethical disciplines that they keep, all the tolerance that they cultivate, all the perseverance that they undertake, all the meditative concentrations in which they are equipoised, and all the wisdom that they cultivate. It is in this way ... that great bodhisattva beings set out sentient beings for the benefit of the worlds.

22.C If you ask ... how great bodhisattva beings embark sentient beings for the **well-being** of the worlds, in this regard ... while they themselves practice the six transcendent perfections, they also encourage all sentient beings, establishing them in the acquisition of the six transcendent perfections ... If you ask ... how great bodhisattva beings embark sentient beings for the **happiness** of the worlds, in this regard ... great bodhisattva beings themselves abide on the paths of the ten virtuous actions, and subsequently establish other sentient beings, too, on the paths of the ten virtuous actions ... If you ask ... how great bodhisattva beings become a **sanctuary** for the worlds, it is because sentient beings deserve to be offered sanctuary and because [the bodhisattvas] escort them to the citadel of fearlessness ... If you ask ... how great bodhisattva beings act as a **protector** of the worlds, in this regard ... great bodhisattva beings behold those sentient beings who are born in the three lower realms {as animals, denizens of the hells, and anguished spirits}, and protect them from those lower realms, establishing them also in the acquisition of calm abiding ... If you ask ... how great bodhisattva beings are worthy to act as a **refuge** for the worlds, in this regard ... great bodhisattva beings teach the sacred doctrine that is without support. That is to say, they do not depend on physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {which being empty of inherent existence, are internally without support, and externally without support, and nor do they have any support in between these two}, and they release those sentient beings who have heard this doctrine from birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, discomfort, and agitation ... If you ask ... how great bodhisattva beings act as an **ally** of the worlds, in this regard ... great bodhisattva beings teach the sacred doctrine, as follows, to those sentient beings who are skilled in the aspects of the path and to those who have embarked on negative paths: The transcendence of physical forms is always without fear ... {up to and including} the transcendence of ... omniscience is always without fear. The transcendence of physical forms is not physical forms ... {up to and including} the transcendence of ... omniscience is not omniscience [and the rest] ... All things indeed accord with this transcendence of all things ... {in which case} great bodhisattva beings would not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all phenomena ... because in the transcendence of physical forms {in ultimate reality} ... {and} [of all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, there is no {dualistic} conceptual notion that these are physical forms, these are feelings, these are perceptions, these are formative predispositions, these are consciousness ... up to and including {these are} omniscience ... This ... is the most difficult task of great bodhisattva beings. Although they indeed ascertain {in relative reality} how calm* and how profound these phenomena all are {*owing to the non-apprehension of mental images of these non-existent phenomena in ultimate reality}, they do not become discouraged, but think, 'Let us attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to these phenomena! Then, after we have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment in that manner, let us reveal these profound sacred doctri-

nes to sentient beings!’ It is in this way ... that great bodhisattva beings act as an ally of the worlds.

22.D If you ask ... how great bodhisattva beings are an island unto the worlds, just as ... islands consist of land that is confined by water on all sides—whether by rivers, lakes, seas, or oceans—in the same way ... physical forms are confined by the limit of past time and the limit of future time. Great bodhisattva beings, after manifestly and perfectly comprehending just that alone, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {and} [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are confined by the limit of past time and the limit of future time. Great bodhisattva beings, after manifestly and perfectly comprehending that alone, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings ... All things are confined by these delimiting phenomena, comprising the limits of the past and the limits of the future ... That {natural luminosity of mind of Our singularity} which confines all things by the limits of the past and the limits of the future is definitively calm and excellent {in ultimate reality, owing to the non-apprehension of mental images}. That is to say, it is also known as {the} emptiness {of all things}, {the} non-apprehension {of all things}, the termination of the path {that never was}, the exhaustion of craving {that never was}, the non-residual [state] {of nirvāna that never was}, dispassion {that never was}, cessation {that never was}, and {final} nirvāṇa {that never was}. It is in this way ... that great bodhisattva beings are an island unto the worlds.

22.E If you ask ... how great bodhisattva beings act as a **torch-bearer and lamp** of the worlds, after actually realizing those very truths [imparted] by the lord buddhas, they maintain them just as they are, and also teach them to sentient beings, encouraging sentient beings to maintain them authentically as well, and establishing them securely therein ... If you ask ... how great bodhisattva beings act as a **helmsman and guide** of the worlds, in this regard ... great bodhisattva beings reveal to sentient beings who have gone astray on mistaken paths, or who are bound for inferior realms, the sole path {of genuinely perfect enlightenment} by traversing which sentient beings will achieve purification, on which suffering and discomfort will {then} subside, and where sublime attributes will {then} be realized, and nirvāṇa actualized. Similarly, after attaining manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, they reveal to sentient beings the sacred doctrine that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and omniscience all neither arise nor cease, and that they are neither defiled nor purified.

22.F If you ask ... how great bodhisattva beings act as a **support** of the worlds, in this regard ... when great bodhisattva beings engage in the conduct of a bodhisattva, they attract sentient beings by means of the four attractive qualities of a bodhisattva, namely, generosity, pleasant speech, purposeful activity, and harmony. Then they teach those same sentient beings the sacred doctrine that physical forms ... up to and including omniscience, have the modality of space. Moreover, they teach sentient beings the sacred doctrine that future physical forms ... up to and including {future} omniscience, are all emptiness, that they will arise from nowhere, and that they will proceed to nowhere ... because all things have the modality of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness; great bodhisattva beings, too, do not transgress this modality. If you ask why ... it is because in emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, going or coming is non-apprehensible ... {Great bodhisattva beings also do not transgress the modalities} ... {that} all things have the modality of non-conditioning ... {because} in that which neither arises nor ceases, and is

neither defiled nor purified {in a conditioning manner}, going or coming is non-apprehensible ... {that} all things have the modality of a magical display, the reflection of the moon in water, a dream, an optical aberration, an echo, and a phantom ... because in a magical display, the reflection of the moon in water, a dream, an optical aberration, an echo, and a phantom, going or coming is non-apprehensible ... {that} all things have a modality that is neither diminished nor enhanced ... because in a modality that is neither diminished nor enhanced, going or coming is non-apprehensible ... {that} all things have a modality that does not arise ... because in a modality that does not arise, going or coming is non-apprehensible ... {that} all things have a modality that is neither to be adopted nor to be forsaken ... because in [a modality] that is neither to be adopted nor to be forsaken, going or coming is non-apprehensible ... {that} all things have a modality of disassociation ... because in [a modality] that is not disassociated, going or coming is non-apprehensible ... {that} all things have a modality that is without a self ... because in [a modality without] a self, going or coming is non-apprehensible ... {that} all things have a modality free from sentient beings {as well as living creatures, living organisms, lives, individuals, humankind, human beings, petitioners, instigators, actors, agents, knowers, and viewers ... because [in this modality] a self never exists, and it is non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}; similarly, this [modality] is free from sentient beings, {and so forth} ... and these {also} are non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}.

22.G Moreover {great bodhisattva beings do not transgress the modalities} ... {that} all things have a modality that is permanent and impermanent ... imbued with happiness and ... imbued with suffering ... is a self and ... not a self ... is empty and ... not empty ... is with signs and ... is signless ... has aspirations and ... lacks aspirations ... is calm and ... is void ... is afflicted and ... is purified ... arises and ... is non-arising ... ceases and ... is unceasing ... is an entity and ... is non-entity ... is attractive and ... is unattractive ... because permanence {and impermanence}, happiness {and suffering}, self {and not a self}, and [all those attributes], up to and including attractiveness {and unattractiveness}, never exist and they are non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}. This being the case, how could they possibly come and go! ... {that} all things have the basis of desire, the basis of hatred, and the basis of delusion ... because the basis of desire ... hatred, and ... delusion never exist and are non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}. This being the case, how could they possibly come and go? ... {that} all things have the basis of the variety of false views ... because the basis of the variety of false views never exists and is non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}. This being the case, how could they possibly come and go? ... {that} all things have the modality of {the} real nature {of phenomena} ... the expanse of {relative} reality ... the finality of {relative} existence ... the modality of sameness, and ... the modality of the inconceivable expanse {of relative existence} ... because the real nature {of phenomena, and the rest} ... never exist and they are non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}. This being the case, how could they possibly come and go? ... {that} all things have a modality that is unmoving ... because the motion that would enable anything to go or to come does not ... exist and is non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}. This being the case, how could they possibly come and go? ... {that} all things have the modality of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... because physical forms {and the rest} ... do not exist and are non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}. This being the case, how could they possibly come and go? ... {that} all things have the modality of generosity ... ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom ... because {generosity and the rest} never exist and are non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}. This being the case, how could there possibly be a transcendent perfection of this {generosity} ... this ethical discipline ... this tolerance ... this perseverance ... this meditative concentration, and ... this wisdom? ... {that} all things have the modality of the emptiness of internal

phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities ... because the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities [and the rest] never exist and are non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}. This being the case, how could they possibly come or go? ... {that} all things have the modality of the applications of mindfulness and ... the [other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... {as well as} the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and ... the [other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... because ... the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas {and the rest}, never exist and are non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}. This being the case, how could they possibly come or go? ... {that} all things have the modality of the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, and individual enlightenment ... {as well as} the modality of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... because unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment {and the rest} never exists and is non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}. This being the case, how could they possibly come or go?

22.H Those great bodhisattva beings who formerly worked toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, who have maintained purity of conduct in the presence of the genuinely perfect buddhas of the past, who have cultivated the roots of virtuous action, and who have been accepted by a spiritual mentor will have conviction in and concur with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom ... The essential nature of the minds of those great bodhisattva beings who have conviction in and concur with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom will be disciplined with respect to desire, hatred, and delusion ... {and thus} will be free from the indications, signs, and forms of {all these} ... Those great bodhisattva beings who have conviction in and concur with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom ... who undertake non-acquisitive cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom will have the modality of omniscience.

22.I The cultivation of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is {from the perspective of ultimate reality} the non-cultivation of physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, consciousness, the six inner sense fields, the six outer sense fields, and the eighteen sensory elements ... a self, sentient beings, living creatures, living organisms, lives, individuals, humankind, human beings, actors, agents, petitioners, instigators, experiencers, experiencing subjects, knowers, and viewers ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the aspects of the path {of enlightenment} ... [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, and individual enlightenment ... {and} unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment {which are ultimately non-existent}.

22.J In terms of this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, those bodhisattvas of irreversible realization should investigate the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration ... {and} wisdom, and ... [all the other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. Some great bodhisattva beings are not fixated on this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom {as ultimately real}; similarly, they are not fixated on the transcendent perfection{s} of meditative concentration ... perse-

verance ... tolerance ... ethical discipline, and ... generosity ... up to and including omniscience {as ultimately real}. Some great bodhisattva beings, when they practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, comprehend that the words spoken by others are pointless and contrary to the truth. They will not proceed through faith in others, and they will not be captivated by desire, hatred, delusion, or by the mind with its [five aspects of] concomitance {concerning (i) location or support of things, (ii) object-referral, (iii) sense-data, (iv) time, and (v) the substance of things}, and its afflicted mental states. Some great bodhisattva beings, when they practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, will not be separated from the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom. Some great bodhisattva beings, when they practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, will not be afraid and terrified, they will not grow fearful, and they will not be cowed and intimidated when they hear this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. Their minds will not be averted from the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, they will delight in hearing this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and having studied it, they will retain it, hold it, master it and be attentive to it in the appropriate manner ... You should know that when these great bodhisattva beings are successful in their practice, their [realization] will be irreversible. Those same great bodhisattva beings in their former lives, too, will have studied this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, asked questions and counter-questions about it, retained it, mastered it, and been attentive to it in the appropriate manner.

22.K {Great bodhisattva beings} should conduct themselves with their minds intent on omniscience ... {In this manner} they should conduct themselves with their minds intent on emptiness ... signlessness and aspirationlessness ... with their minds intent on the real nature {of phenomena}, and likewise with their minds intent on the {abiding of phenomena in the} real nature, intent on the expanse of {relative} reality, intent on the finality of {relative} existence, and intent on the sameness of [all] things, intent on the inconceivable expanse {of relative existence}, and similarly, with their minds intent on [the similes of] a magical display, a mirage, the moon's reflection in water, a dream, an optical aberration, an echo, and a phantom ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom {in this manner} do not engage with physical forms, and ... with [any attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience {as ultimately real} ... {Because from the perspective of ultimate reality} this omniscience has not been created by anyone, nor has it been transformed. It has not come from anywhere and it will not go anywhere. It does not abide in anything, nor does it abide in any place, nor does it abide in any direction. Therein neither number nor calculations are apprehensible, and there is no one indeed who can attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to that in which number and calculations are non-apprehensible! Manifestly perfect buddhahood cannot be attained by means of physical forms ... {or} even by means of [all attributes and attainments], up to and including the pristine cognition of omniscience. If you ask why, it is because the {non-existent} nature of physical forms is omniscience {and so forth} ... If you ask why ... it is because the real nature of physical forms and the real nature of omniscience are one and the same real nature {in that from the perspective of ultimate reality they are utterly non-apprehensible!} ... Similarly, the real nature of omniscience, along with the real nature of the understanding of the aspects of the path and [the real nature] of the understanding of all phenomena, are all one and the same real nature.

COMMENTARY

Within the confines of the realm of relativity the great illusionist, Vajradhara, is like a great magician who has con-

jured all worlds and sentient beings through the aid of His obedient subjects and senior ministers. Yet how can the great Vajradhara be without being? And how can the great Vajradhara act without acting? And how can the great Vajradhara conjure without conjuring ... in this magical display that is but a dream? Only in the illusion of space and time can the illusion of relativity be played out in time, where a multitude of players are refracted in light as a collection of sound bytes of the One Streaming Light. **Yet beyond this illusion of space and time—that is a *spatial* manifestation within Our singularity, that is a *temporal* manifestation within Our singularity—is spacelessness and timelessness.** For in the absence of space, there is no time; and in the absence of space, there is no relativity. Thus can the mind of Our singularity continue in the absence of space and time, which is shielded from all illusion of ‘relative’ existence. Thus does the Buddha state in chapter thirteen of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: “One should know ... that space is non-existent because sentient beings are non-existent. One should know that the Great Vehicle is non-existent because space is non-existent.”



So we can see this illusion of relativity is just like an island, confined by the limit of the dimension of time, which is confined by the limit of the dimension of space. For beyond this dimension of space and time is Our ‘undivided’ singularity in God, which is not confined by the limits of space, and is not confined by the limits of time. Yet suppose in this non-dual state of spacelessness and suppose in this non-dual state of timelessness that a small part of Our singularity—in the shape of a sphere—were to withdraw into a point as a Creator God, leaving a sphere of space behind. And suppose this Creator were to conjure worlds and a multitude of beings to inhabit those worlds, enlisting the aid of His obedient subjects and senior ministers, so that He had few concerns. And suppose this Creator devised a plan, and enlisted those aids to execute that plan, to awaken those conjured individuated beings to the reality of self-origination. And suppose this Creator put in place a ‘diamond structure’ to keep in place His senior ministers to guide and instruct those conjured individuated beings through the guidance of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas. And suppose in time, after many eons of time, every conjured individuated being were to unite as “one” with their Father Creator, the Diamond-Holder. And suppose in time that in this uniting as “one”, every conjured individuated being, in extinguishing their individual selves, had attained and passed into final nirvāna. And suppose in time that in this uniting as “one”, that the whole sphere was filled with a great expanse of light, identical to that of Our singularity. And suppose in time that in the filling of the sphere with the great expanse of light that all space was now gone and all time was now gone ~ and the Creator God who had withdrawn into a point, was now fully remerged with Our singularity. And suppose upon hearing this myriad of suppositions, one were to ask, “Has there ever been any time at all? Has there ever been any space at all in the ultimate reality of Our singularity?” For Our singularity can never be confined by the ‘dimension of time’ or the ‘dimension of space’—which is purely the place for the illusion of relativity—where in ultimate reality it can never move about, conceptualize or relate, or be anything other than Our singularity! **Thus it must be that this space that never was, that this time that never was, has ended before it ever begun, from the perspective of ultimate reality!** For as the Buddha states in the chapter (above): “Just as ... islands consist of land that is confined by water on all sides—whether by rivers, lakes ... or oceans—in the same way ... [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are confined by the limit of past ... {and} future time. Great bodhisattva beings, after manifestly and perfectly comprehending that alone, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings.”

23.1 Then all the gods inhabiting the world system of desire and all the gods inhabiting the world system of form scattered divine sandalwood powders, incense, palm leaf powders, divine blue lotuses, night lotuses, and white lotuses toward the Lord Buddha. Coming into the presence of the Blessed One, they prostrated with their heads at his feet, and took their place to one side. Having taken their place to one side, those gods then said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is hard to realize, it cannot be scrutinized, it is not within the range of sophistry, and it may be known by the wise and by those who are skilled in investigating subtle quiescence. Venerable Lord, the enlightenment of the lord buddhas revealed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is incompatible with all mundane [phenomena].

23.2 “Thus, physical forms are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is physical forms. Similarly, feelings, and likewise of perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is consciousness [and the other aggregates]. For the real nature of physical forms, and similarly the real nature of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible.

23.3 “Thus, the eyes are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is the eyes. Similarly, the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is the mental faculty [and the aforementioned sense organs]. For the real nature of the eyes is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible. Similarly, the real nature of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible.

23.4 “Thus, sights are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is sights. Similarly, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is mental phenomena [and the aforementioned sense objects]. For the real nature of sights is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible.

23.5 “Similarly, the sensory element of the eyes is itself omniscience, and omniscience is the sensory element of the eyes. For the real nature of the [sensory element of] the eyes is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible. Likewise, the sensory element of sights, the sensory element of visual consciousness, the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, the sensory element of auditory consciousness, the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, the sensory element of olfactory consciousness, the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, the sensory element of gustatory consciousness, the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, the sensory element of tactile consciousness, the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is the sensory element of mental consciousness [and the rest]. For the real nature of mental consciousness [and the rest] is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible.

23.6 “Similarly, the applications of mindfulness are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is the applications

of mindfulness. Similarly, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and, in the same vein, the noble eightfold path are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is the noble eightfold path, [and so forth]. For the real nature of the noble eightfold path [and so forth] is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible.

23.7 “Similarly, the ten powers of the tathāgatas are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and so on in the same vein. For the real nature of [all the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible.”

23.8 The Blessed One then addressed those gods as follows: “O gods, it is so! It is just as you have said. Physical forms are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is physical forms. Similarly, feelings and likewise of perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is consciousness [and the aforementioned aggregates]. For the real nature of physical forms is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible. Similarly, the real nature of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible, and so on in the same vein. The real nature of [all causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible.

23.9 “O gods! The mind of the tathāgatas who genuinely consider this objective is one that is inclined toward care-free inaction, and not toward the teaching of the sacred doctrine. If you ask why, O gods, it is because this doctrine is profound, hard to discern, and hard to realize; it cannot be scrutinized and it may be known by the wise and by those skilled in subtle investigation. This being the case, the enlightenment of the lord buddhas, revealed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, is incompatible with all mundane [activities]. Manifestly perfect buddhahood has not been attained by anyone. Manifestly perfect buddhahood has not been attained from any quarter. Manifestly perfect buddhahood has not been attained anywhere. O gods, this is the profundity of all things, in which the habitual ideas of duality do not at all exist.

23.10 “O gods! This doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of space. Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of real nature, owing to the profundity of the expanse of reality, owing to the profundity of the finality of existence, owing to the profundity of the inconceivable expanse, owing to the profundity of the limitless and infinite [reality], owing to the profundity of non-motion, and owing to the profundity of non-arising, non-cessation, non-affliction, and non-purification.

23.11 “Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the self, and owing to the profundity of viewers, knowers, and so forth. Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of physical forms, and similarly this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the eyes. Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental

faculty. O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of sights, and similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena. Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness. O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness. Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness. Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness. O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness. O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness.

23.12 “Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the emptiness of internal phenomena, and owing to the profundity of the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, the emptiness of non-apprehension, the emptiness of non-entities, the emptiness of essential nature, and the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities.

23.13 “Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the applications of mindfulness, and likewise owing to the profundity of the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path. Similarly, O gods, this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of the [fruitful attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and owing to the [attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

23.14 Then the gods said to the Blessed One, “O, the Blessed One has revealed this sacred doctrine which is incompatible with mundane things. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because this doctrine has not been revealed so that physical forms might be grasped or not grasped. It has not been revealed so that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the eyes might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty might be grasped or not grasped. It has not been revealed so that sights might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. Sim-

ilarly, it has not been revealed so that the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles and the sensory element of tactile consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness might be grasped or not grasped.

23.15 “Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the transcendent perfection of generosity might be grasped or not grasped, and it has not been revealed so that the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom might be grasped or not grasped.

23.16 “Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the emptiness of internal phenomena might be grasped or not grasped, and it has not been revealed so that the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, the emptiness of non-apprehension, the emptiness of non-entities, the emptiness of essential nature, and the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities might be grasped or not grasped.

23.17 “Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the applications of mindfulness might be grasped or not grasped, and it has not been revealed so that the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the ten powers of the tathāgatas might be grasped or not grasped, and in the same vein, it has not been revealed so that [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, Venerable Lord, this doctrine has not been revealed so that the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and omniscience might be grasped or not grasped.

23.18 “Venerable Lord, the world indulges in notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ saying ‘I identify with physical forms.’ Similarly, ‘I identify with feelings. I identify with perceptions. I identify with formative predispositions.’ ‘I possess formative predispositions.’ ‘I identify with consciousness.’ Similarly, ‘I identify with the eyes.’ ‘I possess eyes.’ ‘I identify with the ears.’ ‘I possess ears,’ and so with the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty. Similarly, ‘I identify with sights, and likewise with sounds, odors, tastes, and tangibles.’ ‘I identify with mental phenomena.’ ‘I possess mental phenomena, and the same goes also for the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness.’

23.19 “Similarly, ‘I identify with the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness; the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness; the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness; the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness; the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness.’ ‘I possess [the sensory elements up to that of] mental consciousness.’

23.20 “Similarly, ‘I identify with the transcendent perfection of generosity. I possess the transcendent perfection of generosity.’ Similarly, ‘I identify with the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration,’ and so on, down to ‘I possess the transcendent perfection of wisdom.’ Similarly, ‘I possess the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, the emptiness of non-apprehension, the emptiness of non-entities, and the emptiness of essential nature. I identify with the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. I possess the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities [and the rest].’

23.21 “Similarly, [the world indulges in notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ saying] ‘I identify with the applications of mindfulness. I possess the applications of mindfulness.’ Similarly, ‘I identify with the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path.’ Similarly, ‘I identify with the ten powers of the tathāgatas,’ and so on in the same vein, down to ‘I possess the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas,’ and so forth. Similarly, ‘I identify with the fruit of entering the stream. I possess the fruit of entering the stream. I identify with the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, and arhatship. I identify with individual enlightenment. I identify with omniscience. I possess omniscience.’”

23.22 The Blessed One then addressed those gods as follows: “It is so, O gods! It is just as you have said. O gods! This sacred doctrine has not been revealed so that physical forms might be grasped or not grasped. It has not been revealed so that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the eyes might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty might be grasped or not grasped. It has not been revealed so that sights might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, and the sensory element of auditory consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. It has not been revealed so that the sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, and the sensory element of olfactory consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. It has not been revealed so that the sensory element of

the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, and the sensory element of gustatory consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. It has not been revealed so that the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, and the sensory element of tactile consciousness might be grasped or not grasped. It has not been revealed so that the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness might be grasped or not grasped.

23.23 “Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, the emptiness of non-apprehension, the emptiness of non-entities, the emptiness of essential nature, and the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities might be grasped or not grasped.

23.24 “Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the applications of mindfulness might be grasped or not grasped, and likewise it has not been revealed so that the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path might be grasped or not grasped. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the ten powers of the tathāgatas might be grasped or not grasped, and in the same vein, it has not been revealed so that [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, might be grasped or not grasped. O gods! This sacred doctrine has not been revealed so that the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, and individual enlightenment might be grasped or not grasped. In the same vein, it has not been revealed so that omniscience might be grasped or not grasped.

23.25 “O gods! Those persons who practice in order that they might grasp or reject physical forms, and similarly, who practice in order that they might grasp or reject feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness cannot cultivate the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They cannot cultivate the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly, they cannot cultivate the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

23.26 “Similarly, those who practice in order that they might grasp or reject the eyes; and similarly, who practice in order that they might grasp or reject the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty; and similarly, who practice in order that they might grasp or reject sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena; and similarly, who practice in order that they might grasp or reject the sensory element of the eyes, the sensory element of sights, and the sensory element of visual consciousness; and similarly, who practice in order that they might grasp or reject the sensory element of the ears, the sensory element of sounds, the sensory element of auditory consciousness, the

sensory element of the nose, the sensory element of odors, the sensory element of olfactory consciousness, the sensory element of the tongue, the sensory element of tastes, the sensory element of gustatory consciousness, the sensory element of the body, the sensory element of tangibles, the sensory element of tactile consciousness, the sensory element of the mental faculty, the sensory element of mental phenomena, and the sensory element of mental consciousness; and similarly, those who practice in order that they might grasp or reject the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom; and similarly, those who practice in order that they might grasp or reject the emptiness of internal phenomena, the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, the emptiness of non-apprehension, the emptiness of non-entities, the emptiness of essential nature, and the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities; and similarly, those who practice in order that they might grasp or reject the applications of mindfulness, and likewise the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path; and similarly, those who practice in order that they might grasp or reject the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, those who practice in order that they might grasp or reject [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas—none of these can cultivate the four applications of mindfulness. Similarly, all of these cannot cultivate the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, and the branches of enlightenment. They cannot cultivate the noble eightfold path. Similarly, they cannot cultivate the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, they cannot cultivate [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. They cannot cultivate [the attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

23.27 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This sacred doctrine is compatible with all things. If one were to ask how this sacred doctrine is compatible with all things, this sacred doctrine is compatible with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. This sacred doctrine is compatible with the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. Similarly, this sacred doctrine is compatible with the transcendent perfection of perseverance. This sacred doctrine is compatible with the transcendent perfection of tolerance. This sacred doctrine is compatible with the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline. This sacred doctrine is compatible with the transcendent perfection of generosity. This sacred doctrine is compatible with the emptiness of internal phenomena. This sacred doctrine is compatible with [all the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. This sacred doctrine is compatible with the applications of mindfulness. This sacred doctrine is compatible with [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, this sacred doctrine is compatible with the ten powers of the tathāgatas; in the same vein, this sacred doctrine is compatible with [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, this sacred doctrine is compatible with the fruit of entering the stream. This sacred doctrine is compatible with the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth. This sacred doctrine is compatible with the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth. This sacred doctrine is compatible with the fruit of arhatship. This sacred doctrine is compatible with the fruit of indi-

vidual enlightenment. This sacred doctrine is compatible with omniscience.

23.28 “Nowhere is this sacred doctrine obstructed. If you ask how it is unobstructed, it is unobstructed with regard to physical forms. Similarly, it is unobstructed with regard to feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. In the same vein, Venerable Lord, it has the defining characteristic of being unobstructed with regard [to all phenomena, causal and fruitional attributes, and attainments], up to and including omniscience, owing to its sameness with space; and similarly, owing to its sameness with the abiding nature of all things, the finality of existence, and the inconceivable expanse; and similarly, owing to its sameness with emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness; and owing to its sameness with non-arising, non-cessation, non-affliction, and non-purification.

23.29 “Venerable Lord! This sacred doctrine is non-arising, owing to the non-apprehension of the arising of physical forms, and similarly, owing to the non-apprehension of the arising of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and in the same vein, owing to the non-apprehension of the arising of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.

23.30 “Venerable Lord! This sacred doctrine is groundless, owing to the non-apprehension of the ground of physical forms, and similarly, owing to the non-apprehension of the ground of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and in the same vein, owing to the imperceptibility of the ground of [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

23.31 Then, the gods inhabiting the world system of desire and those inhabiting the world system of form said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! The śrāvaka Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Blessed One. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because whatever the Elder Subhūti is teaching, he demonstrates that all things are endowed with emptiness and that they are connected to emptiness.”

23.32 Then Senior Subhūti addressed the gods as follows: “O gods! When you say that the śrāvaka Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Blessed One, [this implies that] the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata because he is an emulator of something. If the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata because he is the emulator of the real nature, since the real nature arises from nowhere, and departs for nowhere, so the real nature of the Elder Subhūti also arises from nowhere and departs for nowhere, in which case the Elder Subhūti is indeed the emulator of the Tathāgata.

23.33 “The real nature of the Tathāgata is also the real nature of all things. The real nature of all things is also the real nature of the Tathāgata. Yet, the real nature of the Tathāgata is without real nature, in which case, too, the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata. That which is the real nature of the Tathāgata is also the real nature of the Elder Subhūti, in which case, too, the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata.

23.34 “Just as the real nature of the Tathāgata is unobstructed in all respects, the real nature of all things is also unobstructed in all respects. The real nature of the Tathāgata and the real nature of all things is one and the same real nature. They are not two but indivisible.

23.35 “This real nature is uncreated. It is never not the real nature, for which reason it always is the real nature. Therefore they are not two but indivisible. In this case, too, the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata.

23.36 “Just as the real nature of the Tathāgata is undifferentiated, non-particular, and without duality, in the same way the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata. The real nature of the Tathāgata is not distinct from the real nature of all things. It is never not the real nature. In this case, too, the Elder Subhūti is undifferentiated and therefore he is the emulator of the Tathāgata.

23.37 “The real nature of the Tathāgata is not the past, it is not the future, and it is not the present. Similarly, the real nature of all things is also not the past, not the future, and not the present. In this case, too, the Elder Subhūti is said to be the emulator of the Tathāgata. The real nature of the past is the real nature of the Tathāgata, and the real nature of the Tathāgata is the real nature of the past. The real nature of the future is the real nature of the Tathāgata, and the real nature of the Tathāgata is the real nature of the future. The real nature of the present is the real nature of the Tathāgata, and the real nature of the Tathāgata is the real nature of the present. The real nature of the past, future, and present and the real nature of the Tathāgata are one and the same real nature. They are not two but indivisible.

23.38 “Similarly, the real nature of physical forms and the real nature of the Tathāgata, and likewise the real nature of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness and the real nature of the Tathāgata, are one and the same real nature. They are not two but indivisible.

23.39 “Similarly, the real nature of the self and so on, up to and including the real nature of the knower and the viewer, and the real nature of the Tathāgata [are one and the same] real nature. They are not two but indivisible.

23.40 “Similarly, the real nature of the transcendent perfection of generosity and the real nature of the Tathāgata, and similarly, the real nature [of the other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and the real nature of the Tathāgata, are one and the same real nature. They are not two but indivisible.

23.41 “Similarly, the real nature of the applications of mindfulness and the real nature of the Tathāgata, and similarly, the real nature of [all causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and the real nature of the Tathāgata, are one and the same real nature. They are not two but indivisible.

23.42 “Similarly, the real nature of the fruit of entering the stream and the real nature of the Tathāgata, and in the same vein, the real nature of [the other attainments], up to and including omniscience, and the real nature of the Tathāgata, are one and the same real nature. They are not two but indivisible.

23.43 “O gods! This is the real nature of all things, through which great bodhisattva beings, after attaining manifestly perfect buddhahood with regard to the real nature, acquire the title ‘tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha.’”

23.44 When Subhūti had delivered the exegesis of this chapter on the real nature, the mighty earth of the world systems of the great trichiliocosm quaked, quaked more intensely, and quaked with utmost intensity; it shook, shook more intensely, and shook with utmost intensity; it vibrated, vibrated more intensely, and vibrated with utmost intensity; and it did so in six ways, namely, when the eastern side was ascendant the western side was low, when the western side was ascendant the eastern side was low, when the southern side was ascendant the northern side was low, when the northern side was ascendant the southern side was low, when their extremes were ascendant their center was low, and when the center was ascendant the extremes were low.

23.45 Then the gods inhabiting the world system of desire and the gods inhabiting the world system of form scattered, scattered more vigorously, and scattered with utmost vigor divine sandalwood powders, divine incense, palm leaf powders, divine blue lotuses, divine day lotuses, night lotuses, and white lotuses toward the Lord Śākyamuni and the Elder Subhūti, and said, “It is wonderful that this Elder Subhūti is an emulator of the Tathāgata, being endowed with the real nature of the Tathāgata!”

23.46 Then Senior Subhūti, picking up the thread of this conversation, addressed the gods as follows: “O gods! The Elder Subhūti does not emulate physical forms. He does not emulate the real nature of physical forms. He does not emulate feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. He does not emulate the real nature of consciousness [and the aforementioned aggregates]. He does not emulate anything other than consciousness [and the aforementioned aggregates]. He does not emulate anything other than the real nature of consciousness [and the aforementioned aggregates]. In the same vein, he does not emulate [any other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. He does not emulate the real nature of omniscience. He does not emulate anything other than omniscience. He does not emulate anything other than the real nature of omniscience. He does not emulate unconditioned phenomena. Nor does he emulate the real nature of unconditioned phenomena. He does not emulate anything other than unconditioned phenomena. He does not emulate anything other than the real nature of unconditioned phenomena. If you ask why, O gods, it is because all those things which one might emulate, from which emulation might arise, and into which emulation might subside, are non-existent and non-apprehensible.”

23.47 Thereupon Senior Śāradvatīputra said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This real nature of all things, the unmistakable real nature, the abiding nature of all things, the maturity of all things, is profound! Therein physical forms, omniscience and the real nature are non-apprehensible!” The Blessed One replied, “Śāradvatīputra, it is so! It is just as you have said. This real nature of all things, the unmistakable real nature, the abiding nature of all things, the maturity of all things, is profound. Therein physical forms and the real nature of physical forms are non-apprehensible. Therein, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions and consciousness, and the real nature of consciousness [and the aforementioned aggregates], are non-apprehensible. In the same vein, [other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, and the real nature of omniscience [and the rest], are non-apprehensible. If you ask why, Śāradvatīputra, it is because when even physical forms are themselves non-apprehensible in the real nature, how could one possibly apprehend the real nature of physical forms? Similarly, when even feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are themselves non-apprehensible, how could one possibly apprehend the real nature of consciousness [and the aforementioned aggregates]? In the same vein, when [even other attributes and attainments themselves], up to and including omniscience, are non-apprehensible, how could one possibly

apprehend the real nature of omniscience [and the rest]?”

23.48 While this exegesis on the real nature was being delivered, the minds of twelve thousand fully ordained monks were liberated from contaminants, without further grasping [that would lead to subsequent rebirth]. Five hundred fully ordained nuns cultivated the eye of the sacred doctrine, unsullied and untainted with respect to all things. Five thousand gods and humans accepted that phenomena are non-arising. The minds of sixty great bodhisattva beings were also liberated from contaminants, without further grasping [that would lead to subsequent rebirth].

23.49 Then the Blessed One addressed Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra! These great bodhisattva beings have venerated five hundred buddhas, and they have made offerings to all the tathāgatas. They have become renunciants, maintained ethical discipline, cultivated tolerance, undertaken perseverance, and achieved meditative concentration, and yet, Śāradvatīputra, these great bodhisattva beings have not been favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they are without skill in means. For these reasons, they have diverse perceptions and different modes of conduct, harboring notions such as, ‘This is a gift,’ and similarly, ‘This is the giver, and this is the recipient. Gifts should be offered to this recipient.’ Likewise, ‘This is ethical discipline. I possess such ethical discipline. I should maintain such ethical discipline.’ Likewise, ‘This is tolerance. I possess such tolerance. I should cultivate such tolerance.’ Likewise, ‘This is perseverance. I possess such perseverance. I should undertake such perseverance.’ Likewise, ‘These are the meditative concentrations. I possess such meditative concentrations. I should be equipoised in such meditative concentrations.’ Without being favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom and without being favored by skill in means, these bodhisattvas give gifts, maintain ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, and become equipoised in meditative concentration. They have not attained the non-differentiation of perception which works toward the maturity of the bodhisattvas. They have not entered into the maturity of the bodhisattvas, but have merely entered the stream and similarly attained [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship. Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, although the path of enlightenment followed by those great bodhisattva beings does possess the [three] gateways to liberation—emptiness, signlessness and aspirationlessness—they are still not favored by wisdom and by skill in means, for which reasons, after they have actualized the finality of existence, they will become śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas.”

23.50 Senior Śāradvatīputra then asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Why is it that those persons who follow the vehicles of the śrāvakas or the pratyekabuddhas cultivate the nature of things that is emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, but, without being favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom and without skill in means, merely actualize the finality of existence and become śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas, whereas great bodhisattva beings who also cultivate the nature of things that is emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness are favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom and are endowed with skill in means, in consequence of which they actualize the finality of existence, and attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?”

23.51 The Blessed One then replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Śāradvatīputra, in this regard, there are some persons whose minds are without omniscience, who have not been favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who are without skill in means, and who, when cultivating the nature of things that is emptiness, sign-

lessness, and aspirationlessness become śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas. Again, Śāradvatīputra, there are great bodhisattva beings whose minds are not without omniscience, who have been favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who are not without skill in means, and who consequently have actualized great compassion, and who, when cultivating the nature of things that is emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas and attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. For example, Śāradvatīputra, suppose there were a wingless bird with a body one hundred fathoms or three hundred fathoms in size dwelling amidst the gods of the Trāyastriṃśa realm, which considered migrating from there to this Jambudvīpa, thinking, ‘I should dwell in Jambudvīpa!’ and having set out had second thoughts on the way down, wishing, ‘Now I should stay among the gods of the Trāyastriṃśa realm, without descending to Jambudvīpa!’ do you think, Śāradvatīputra, that this wingless bird would be able to resettle among the gods of the Trāyastriṃśa realm?”
“No, Venerable Lord!”

23.52 The Blessed One replied, “Again, Śāradvatīputra, suppose this wingless bird while descending from there were to think, ‘O! May I land in Jambudvīpa without being wounded or injured!’ do you think, Śāradvatīputra, that this wingless bird would land in Jambudvīpa without being wounded or injured?” “No, Venerable Lord! It would descend to Jambudvīpa absolutely wounded and injured, and die or experience mortal sufferings. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because this is just what would happen to any bird whatsoever, with a large body and no wings, falling from on high.”

23.53 The Blessed One replied, “It is so, Śāradvatīputra! It is just as you have said. Similarly, Śāradvatīputra, when persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, even after dispensing generosity, and similarly maintaining their ethical discipline, cultivating tolerance, undertaking perseverance, achieving meditative concentration, and cultivating wisdom over many eons, then cultivate the nature of things that is emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness while lacking the transcendent perfection of wisdom and lacking skill in means, they will actualize the finality of existence and then descend to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas. If you ask why, it is because the minds of those persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas are without omniscience. When they meditate on these things over many eons, dispensing generosity, and similarly maintaining their ethical discipline, cultivating tolerance, undertaking perseverance, achieving meditative concentration, and cultivating wisdom, inasmuch as they are not favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom and are without skill in means, they will descend to the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas.

23.54 “Moreover, Śāradvatīputra, when persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas consider, conceptualize, and grasp the meditative stabilities of the lord buddhas of the past, future, and present, as well as their wisdom, ethical discipline, liberation, and their perception of liberating pristine cognition, even though they meditate, they will not understand even a fraction of the ethical discipline of the tathāgatas. Similarly, they will not understand even a fraction of the liberation of the tathāgatas, or of their liberating pristine cognition. Also, while they lack understanding and perception, they will hear talk about the path of enlightenment, regarding the nature of things that is emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness. They will be attentive to that talk, conceptualize it, and having done so, they will even dedicate this toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Those persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, making such dedications, will settle into the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyeka-

buddhas. If you ask why, Śāradvatīputra, it is because those who have not been favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom and are without skill in means will incur this very outcome.

23.55 “Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who, from the time when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment, dispense generosity, maintain ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, and are equipoised in meditative concentration, without being separated from the mental cultivation of omniscience, will not be without the transcendent perfection of wisdom and skill in means. Consequently, they will not conceptualize the ethical discipline of the lord buddhas of the past, future, and present, nor their meditative stability, wisdom, liberation, and perception of liberating pristine cognition. They will not conceptualize the meditative stability of emptiness. They will not conceptualize the meditative stability of signlessness or the meditative stability of aspirationlessness. One should know that they are approaching unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because even though those great bodhisattva beings may have dispensed generosity from the time when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment, they have not conceptualized it. Even though they may have maintained ethical discipline, they have not conceptualized it. Even though they may have cultivated tolerance, they have not conceptualized it. Even though they may have undertaken perseverance, they have not conceptualized it. Even though they may have become equipoised in meditative concentration, they have not conceptualized it. Even though they may have cultivated wisdom, they have not conceptualized it. Indeed, they have not conceptualized the ethical discipline of the lord buddhas of the past, future, and present, nor their meditative stability, wisdom, liberation, or perception of liberating pristine cognition. Śāradvatīputra, those who, with a mind free from conceptualization, dispense generosity, maintain ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, become equipoised in meditative concentration, and, in the same vein, practice in accordance with omniscience, are skilled in the means of great bodhisattva beings.”

23.56 [Śāradvatīputra] then said, “As I understand the meaning of the words spoken by the Blessed One, there is no doubt that those great bodhisattva beings who, from the time when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment, have not been without the transcendent perfection of wisdom and skill in means, will attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because those great bodhisattva beings, from the time when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment, have never apprehended anything which would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, or through which they would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, or on the basis of which they would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, from physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness up to and including omniscience.

23.57 “Venerable Lord! Those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, and who are not separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom and skill in means, will undoubtedly attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because those who are not separated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom and skill in means have not conceptualized the generosity which they have dispensed. Similarly, they have not conceptualized the ethical discipline which they have maintained, nor have they conceptualized the tolerance which they have cultivated, the perseverance which they have undertaken, the meditative concentration in which they have become equipoised, or the wisdom which they have cultivated. This being the case, it is for these reasons that those sons of enlightened heritage

or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas will undoubtedly attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

23.58 “This being the case, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings who would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, through their higher aspiration are favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom and are not without skill in means. Abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom and endowed with skill in means, with a mind that is free from conceptualization, they should dispense their generosity, and similarly, maintain their ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, become equipoised in meditative concentration, and cultivate wisdom. In the same vein as before, they should engage with [all the other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.”

23.59 Then the gods inhabiting the world system of desire and the gods inhabiting the world system of form said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is hard to manifest! It is astonishing that great bodhisattva beings should indeed attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all things, without exception, while, Venerable Lord, all those things are indeed non-existent and non-apprehensible!”

23.60 The Blessed One replied, “O gods! It is so. It is just as you have said. Unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is hard to manifest. O gods! I have indeed attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all things and in all ways. Ultimately, however, there is nothing apprehended with respect to which I would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, or nothing by which I would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, or nothing on the basis of which I would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood. If you ask why, it is because all things are utterly pure on account of the emptiness of conditioned phenomena and the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena.”

23.61 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When the Blessed One just said ‘O gods! Unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is hard to manifest,’ as I understand and ponder the meaning of the words spoken by the Lord, it seems that unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is easy to manifest, and it is easy to attain manifestly perfect enlightenment. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because all things are empty of all things. Manifestly perfect buddhahood will not be attained with respect to anything at all, or indeed by anything at all. All things being empty, anything with respect to which manifestly perfect buddhahood would be attained, anything by which manifestly perfect buddhahood would be attained, and anything on the basis of which manifestly perfect buddhahood would be attained is non-existent and non-apprehensible. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because all things are empty of all things, and things are non-existent and non-apprehensible—even those which great bodhisattva beings seek to reduce or enhance, while they dispense generosity, and similarly, maintain ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, become equipoised in meditative concentration, cultivate wisdom, and in the same vein, engage with omniscience, and so forth. Venerable Lord! For these reasons, the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment of great bodhisattva beings is easy to bring forth, and it is easy to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood! If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because physical forms are empty of their own essential nature. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of their own essential nature. In the same vein, [all other phenomena, causal and fruitional attributes, and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are empty of their own essential nature.”

23.62 Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, it is for this very reason that the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment of the bodhisattvas is extremely hard to bring forth, and it is extremely hard to attain manifestly perfect enlightenment. Just as space does not entertain the thought, ‘I must attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment,’ in the same way, Senior Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings also do not entertain the thought, ‘I should attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’ If you ask why, Senior Subhūti, it is because all things are equal to space. Once great bodhisattva beings accept that all things resemble space, they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Senior Subhūti, if, once great bodhisattva beings accept that all things resemble space, it were easy for them to bring forth unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and it were easy to attain manifestly perfect enlightenment, and it were not hard to bring this forth, and not hard to attain manifestly perfect enlightenment, then great bodhisattva beings, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, who don the armor, would not regress from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. For this reason, Senior Subhūti, it is clear that unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is extremely hard to bring forth, and it is hard to attain manifestly perfect enlightenment.”

23.63 *This completes the twenty-third chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Non-acceptance and Non-rejection.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE:
NON-ACCEPTANCE AND NON-REJECTION

23.A This profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is hard to realize, {for} it cannot be scrutinized {by the dualistic mind}, it is not within the range of sophistry {of the dualistic mind}, and it may {only} be known by the wise and by those who are skilled in investigating subtle quiescence ... The enlightenment of the lord buddhas revealed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is incompatible with all mundane {perception, which perceives as real a definitive distinction between the subject, the object, and their interaction}. Thus, physical forms are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is physical forms. Similarly, feelings ... perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are themselves omniscience, and omniscience is consciousness {and the rest}. For the real nature of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible. Thus, the eyes ... ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty ... sights ... sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... the sensory element{s} of the eyes ... sights ... visual consciousness ... the ears ... sounds ... auditory consciousness ... the nose ... odors ... olfactory consciousness ... the tongue ... tastes ... gustatory consciousness ... the body ... tangibles ... tactile consciousness ... the mental faculty ... mental phenomena, and ... mental consciousness ... the applications of mindfulness ... the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and ... the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {and} [all the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, is one and the same real nature as the real nature of omniscience. They are not two but indivisible ... The mind of the tathāgatas who genuinely consider this objective is one that is inclined toward carefree inaction, and not toward the teaching of the sacred doctrine. If you ask why ... because this doctrine is profound, hard to discern, and hard to realize; it cannot be scrutinized {by the dualistic mind} and it may {only} be known by the wise and by those skilled in subtle investigation. This being the case, the enlightenment of

the lord buddhas, revealed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, is incompatible with all mundane {perception, which perceives as real a definitive distinction between the subject, the object, and their interaction— as opposed to supramundane perception, which perceives the purity of the three spheres as empty of ultimate existence}. Manifestly perfect buddhahood {the object} has not been attained by anyone {the subject}. Manifestly perfect buddhahood {the object} has not been attained from any quarter {the object location}. Manifestly perfect buddhahood {the object} has not been attained anywhere {within the expanse of the illusion of relative reality}. O gods, this is the profundity of all things, in which the habitual ideas of duality do not at all exist.

23.B This doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of space. Similarly ... this doctrine is profound owing to the profundity of {the} real nature {of phenomena} ... the profundity of the expanse of {relative} reality ... the profundity of the finality of {relative} existence ... the profundity of the inconceivable expanse {of relative existence} ... the profundity of the limitless and infinite {nature of inherently non-existent phenomena, which are naturally empty of any limits and empty of beginning and end} ... the profundity of non-motion ... the profundity of non-arising, non-cessation, non-affliction, and non-purification ... the profundity of the self ... the profundity of viewers, knowers, and so forth ... the profundity of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the profundity of the eyes ... the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty ... the profundity of sights ... sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... the profundity of the sensory element{s} of the eyes ... sights, and ... visual consciousness ... the ears ... sounds, and ... auditory consciousness ... the nose ... odors, and ... olfactory consciousness ... the tongue ... tastes, and ... gustatory consciousness ... the body ... tangibles, and ... tactile consciousness ... the mental faculty ... mental phenomena, and ... mental consciousness ... the profundity of the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the profundity of the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {up to and including} the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the profundity of the applications of mindfulness ... the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path ... the profundity of the [fruition attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and ... the {profundity of the attainments}, up to and including omniscience.

23.C The Blessed One has revealed this sacred doctrine which is incompatible with {all} mundane {perception of} things. If one were to ask why ... it is because this doctrine has not been revealed so that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {all being non-existent} might be grasped or not grasped {as ultimately real}. Similarly, it has not been revealed so that the eyes ... ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty ... sights ... sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... the sensory element{s} of the eyes ... sights, and ... visual consciousness ... {up to and including} the mental faculty ... mental phenomena, and ... mental consciousness ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {up to and including} the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and omniscience {all being non-existent} might be grasped or not grasped {as ultimately real}.

23.D The world indulges in {dualistic} notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ saying ‘I identify with physical forms.’ Similarly, ‘I identify with feelings. I identify with perceptions. I identify with formative predispositions.’ ‘I possess formative predispositions.’ ‘I identify with consciousness.’ Similarly, ‘I identify with the eyes.’ ‘I possess eyes.’ ‘I identify with the ears.’ ‘I possess ears,’ and {so forth} ... Similarly, ‘I identify with the transcendent perfection of generosity. I possess the transcendent perfection of generosity.’ ... and so on, down to ‘I possess the transcendent perfection of wisdom.’ Similarly, ‘I possess the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {up to and including} I identify with ... {and} I possess the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities [and the rest].’ ... Similarly ... ‘I identify with ... {and} I possess the applications of mindfulness ... the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path.’ Similarly, ‘I identify with the ten powers of the tathāgatas,’ and so on ... down to ‘I possess the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas,’ ... Similarly, ‘I identify with ... {and} I possess the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, and arhatship ... individual enlightenment ... {and} omniscience.’ ... Those persons who practice in order that they might grasp or reject {as ultimately existent} physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {up to and including omniscience} cannot cultivate the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They cannot cultivate the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom.

23.E Similarly, those who practice in order that they might grasp or reject {as ultimately existent} the eyes ... ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty ... sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... the sensory element{s} of the eyes ... sights, and ... visual consciousness ... {up to and including} the mental faculty ... mental phenomena, and ... mental consciousness ... the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {up to and including} the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and ... [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas—none of these can cultivate the {supramundane phenomena of the} four applications of mindfulness ... the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, and the branches of enlightenment ... the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and ... [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {as well as} [the attainments], up to and including omniscience.

23.F This {non-existent} sacred doctrine is compatible with all {non-existent} things ... {because} this {non-existent} sacred doctrine is compatible with the {non-existent nature of the} transcendent perfection{s} of wisdom ... meditative concentration ... perseverance ... tolerance ... ethical discipline ... {and} generosity ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... the applications of mindfulness ... {and} [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... {and} [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth ... the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth ... the fruit of arhatship ... the fruit of individual enlightenment ... {and} omniscience. Nowhere is this {non-existent} sacred doctrine obstructed. If you ask how it is unobstructed, it is unobstructed with regard to {non-existent}

ent} physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {and all other phenomena} up to and including omniscience, owing to its sameness with space; and similarly, owing to its sameness with the abiding nature* of all things {*which is that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence}, the finality of {relative} existence, and the inconceivable expanse {of relative existence}; and similarly, owing to its sameness with emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness; and owing to its sameness with non-arising, non-cessation, non-affliction, and non-purification ... This {non-existent} sacred doctrine is non-arising, owing to the non-apprehension of the arising of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and ... [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience ... This {non-existent} sacred doctrine is groundless, owing to the non-apprehension of the ground of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and ... [all other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.

23.G Then, the gods ... said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! The śrāvaka Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Blessed One ... because whatever the Elder Subhūti is teaching, he demonstrates that all things are endowed with emptiness and that they are connected to emptiness.” Then Senior Subhūti addressed the gods as follows: “O gods! When you say that the śrāvaka Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Blessed One, [this implies that] the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata because he is an emulator of something {ultimately real}. If the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata {it is} because he is the emulator of the real nature {of phenomena}, since the real nature arises from nowhere, and departs for nowhere, so the real nature of the Elder Subhūti also arises from nowhere and departs for nowhere, in which case the Elder Subhūti is indeed the emulator of the Tathāgata. The real nature of the Tathāgata {which is inherently non-existent} is also the real nature of all things. The real nature of all things is also the real nature of the Tathāgata. Yet, the real nature of the {non-existent} Tathāgata is {naturally} without {any} real nature {at all}, in which case, too, the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata. That which is the real nature of the Tathāgata {in relative reality} is also the real nature of the Elder Subhūti, in which case, too, the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata. Just as the real nature of the {non-existent} Tathāgata is unobstructed in all respects {just like space}, the real nature of all {non-existent} things is also unobstructed in all respects. The real nature of the Tathāgata and the real nature of all things is one and the same real nature. They are not two but indivisible. This real nature {of phenomena, being inherently non-existent} is uncreated. It is never not the real nature, for which reason it always is the real nature. Therefore they are not two but indivisible. In this case, too, the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata. Just as the real nature of the Tathāgata is undifferentiated, non-particular, and without duality, in the same way the Elder Subhūti is the emulator of the Tathāgata. The real nature of the Tathāgata is not distinct from the real nature of all things ... In this case, too, the Elder Subhūti is undifferentiated and therefore he is the emulator of the Tathāgata. The real nature of the Tathāgata ... {and} the real nature of all things is ... not the past ... future, and ... present. In this case, too, the Elder Subhūti is ... the emulator of the Tathāgata. The real nature of the past {future and present} is the real nature of the Tathāgata, and the real nature of the Tathāgata is the real nature of the past {future and present} ... The real nature of the past, future, and present and the real nature of the Tathāgata are one and the same real nature. They are not two but indivisible. Similarly, the real nature of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the self and so on, up to and including ... the knower and the viewer ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the applications of mindfulness and ... [all causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the fruit of entering the stream and ... [the other attainments], up to

and including omniscience, and the real nature of the Tathāgata, are one and the same real nature. They are not two but indivisible. O gods! This is the real nature of all things, through which great bodhisattva beings, after attaining manifestly perfect buddhahood with regard to the real nature {of all phenomena}, acquire the title ‘tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha.’”

23.H When Subhūti had delivered the exegesis of this chapter on the real nature {of phenomena}, the mighty earth of the world systems of the great trichiliocosm quaked ... shook ... and vibrated with utmost intensity ... Then the gods ... said, “It is wonderful that this Elder Subhūti is an emulator of the Tathāgata, being endowed with the real nature of the Tathāgata!” Then Senior Subhūti ... addressed the gods as follows: “O gods! The Elder Subhūti does not emulate physical forms. He does not emulate the real nature of physical forms ... In the same vein, he does not emulate [any other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. He does not emulate the real nature of omniscience. He does not emulate anything other than omniscience. He does not emulate anything other than the real nature of omniscience. He does not emulate unconditioned phenomena ... {up to and including} the real nature of unconditioned phenomena. If you ask why, O gods, it is because all those things which one might emulate, from which emulation might arise, and into which emulation might subside, are non-existent and non-apprehensible {in ultimate reality}.

23.I This real nature of all things, the unmistakable real nature, the abiding nature of all things, the maturity of {understanding with respect to} all things, is profound. Therein physical forms and the real nature of physical forms ... {and the} [other attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, and the real nature of omniscience [and the rest], are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}. If you ask why ... it is because when even physical forms are themselves non-apprehensible {as ultimately existent} in the real nature {of phenomena}, how could one possibly apprehend the real nature of {non-existent} physical forms? Similarly, when ... {even all other attributes and attainments}, up to and including omniscience, are {themselves} non-apprehensible {as ultimately existent in the real nature of phenomena}, how could one possibly apprehend the real nature of {non-existent} omniscience [and the rest]? While this exegesis on the real nature {of phenomena} was being delivered, the minds of twelve thousand fully ordained monks ... and the minds of sixty great bodhisattva beings were also liberated from contaminants, without further grasping [that would lead to subsequent rebirth] ... These great bodhisattva beings have venerated five hundred buddhas ... They have become renunciants, maintained ethical discipline, cultivated tolerance, undertaken perseverance, and achieved meditative concentration, and yet ... these great bodhisattva beings have not been favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they are without skill in means. For these reasons, they have diverse perceptions and different modes of conduct, harboring notions such as, ‘This is a gift,’ ... ‘This is the giver, and this is the recipient.’ ... Likewise, ‘These are the meditative concentrations. I possess such meditative concentrations. I should be equipoised in such meditative concentrations.’ Without being favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom and without being favored by skill in means, these bodhisattvas give gifts, maintain ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, and become equipoised in meditative concentration. They have not attained the non-differentiation of perception {of perceiving indivisibly the purity of the three spheres—of the subject, the object, and their interaction—as empty of ultimate existence} which works toward the maturity of the bodhisattvas. They have not entered into the maturity of the bodhisattvas, but have merely entered the stream and similarly attained [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship. Furthermore ... although the path of enlightenment

followed by those great bodhisattva beings does possess the [three] gateways to liberation—emptiness, signlessness and aspirationlessness—they are still not favored by wisdom and by skill in means, for which reasons, after they have actualized the finality of {relative} existence {within their own minds}, they will become śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas.

23.J There are some persons whose minds are without omniscience, who have not been favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who are without skill in means, and who, when cultivating the nature of things that is emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness become śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas {due to their belief in the reality of the individual self}. Again ... there are great bodhisattva beings whose minds are not without omniscience, who have been favored by the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who are not without skill in means, and who consequently have actualized great compassion {for all sentient beings, who are perceived as the ‘one and only’ natural luminosity of mind}, and who, when cultivating the nature of things that is emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas and attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. For example ... suppose there were a wingless bird with a body one hundred fathoms or three hundred fathoms in size dwelling amidst the gods of the Trāyastriṃśa realm, which considered migrating from there to this Jambudvīpa, thinking, ‘I should dwell in Jambudvīpa!’ and having set out had second thoughts on the way down, wishing, ‘Now I should stay among the gods of the Trāyastriṃśa realm, without descending to Jambudvīpa!’ ... This wingless bird would {not} be able to resettle among the gods of the Trāyastriṃśa realm{!} ... Suppose this wingless bird while descending from there were to think, ‘O! May I land in Jambudvīpa without being wounded or injured!’ ... This wingless bird ... would descend to Jambudvīpa absolutely wounded and injured, and die or experience mortal sufferings ... because this is just what would happen to any bird whatsoever, with a large body and no wings, falling from on high ... Similarly ... when persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, even after dispensing generosity ... maintaining their ethical discipline, cultivating tolerance, undertaking perseverance, achieving meditative concentration, and cultivating wisdom over many eons, then cultivate the nature of things that is emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness while lacking the transcendent perfection of wisdom and lacking skill in means, they will actualize the finality of {relative} existence {within their own minds} and then descend to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas. If you ask why, it is because the minds of those persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas are without {the wings of} omniscience ... Moreover ... when persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas consider, conceptualize, and grasp the meditative stabilities of the lord buddhas of the past, future, and present, as well as their wisdom, ethical discipline, liberation, and their perception of liberating pristine cognition, even though they meditate, they will not understand even a fraction of the ethical discipline of the tathāgatas ... {and} will not understand even a fraction of the liberation of the tathāgatas, or of their liberating pristine cognition. Also, while they lack understanding and {this non-dual} perception, they will hear talk about the path of enlightenment, regarding the nature of things that is emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness. They will be attentive to that talk, conceptualize it, and having done so, they will even dedicate this toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment {as though it were a secondary ‘thing’}. Those persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, making such dedications, will settle into the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas.

22.K Great bodhisattva beings who, from the time when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment, dispense generosity, maintain ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, and are equipoised in

meditative concentration, without being separated from the mental cultivation of omniscience, will not be without the transcendent perfection of wisdom and skill in means. Consequently, they will not conceptualize the ethical discipline of the lord buddhas of the past, future, and present, nor their meditative stability, wisdom, liberation, and perception of liberating pristine cognition. They will not conceptualize the meditative stability of emptiness ... the meditative stability of signlessness or the meditative stability of aspirationlessness. One should know that they are approaching unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because even though those great bodhisattva beings may have dispensed generosity from the time when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment, they have not conceptualized it. Even though they may have maintained ethical discipline ... cultivated tolerance ... undertaken perseverance ... become equipoised in meditative concentration ... {and} cultivated wisdom, they have not conceptualized it ... {and} are skilled in the means of great bodhisattva beings ... There is no doubt {they} ... will attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... because those great bodhisattva beings, from the time when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment, have never apprehended anything {as ultimately existent} which would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, or through which they would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, or on the basis of which they would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, from physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness up to and including omniscience.

23.L The Blessed One replied, “O gods! It is so ... Unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is hard to manifest ... I have indeed attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all things and in all ways. Ultimately, however, there is nothing apprehended with respect to which I would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, or nothing by which I would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, or nothing on the basis of which I would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood. If you ask why, it is because all things are utterly pure {which is indicative that all things are non-arising and unceasing, neither afflicted nor purified and are without apprehension—where all such non-existent things are unconditioned} on account of the emptiness of conditioned phenomena and the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena.” Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When the Blessed One just said ‘O gods! Unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is hard to manifest,’ as I understand and ponder the meaning of the words spoken by the Lord, it seems that unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is easy to manifest ... because all things are empty of all things. Manifestly perfect buddhahood will not be attained with respect to anything at all, or indeed by anything at all ... For these reasons, the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment of great bodhisattva beings is easy to bring forth ... because physical forms ... up to and including omniscience, are empty of their own essential nature. Then, Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, it is for this very reason that the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment of the bodhisattvas is extremely hard to bring forth ... Just as space does not entertain the thought, ‘I must attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment,’ in the same way ... great bodhisattva beings also do not entertain the thought, ‘I should attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’ If you ask why ... it is because all things are equal to space. Once great bodhisattva beings accept that all things resemble space, they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... If, once great bodhisattva beings accept that all things resemble space, it were easy for them to bring forth unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... then great bodhisattva beings, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, who don the armor, would not regress from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. For this reason ... it is clear that unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is extremely hard to bring forth, and it is hard to attain manifest-

ly perfect enlightenment.”

COMMENTARY

The ‘real nature’ of phenomena denotes that which is inherently non-existent ~ and this is the singular and thus indivisible nature of all non-existent phenomena within the confines of ‘relative’ existence. The real nature of phenomena—whether unconditioned or conditioned—is that which exists in the confines of the expanse of ‘relative’ reality, and as the expanse of relative reality is also a phenomena, it too is inherently non-existent and not apart from this singular indivisible nature, which is classified as the real nature of phenomena. It must be understood this is *not* the singular nature of Our natural luminosity of mind ~ which *does* exist in ultimate reality as Our singularity in God. **Thus the bodhisattva, with skill in means, discerns the unity of all non-existent phenomena as distinct from the unity of Our natural luminosity of mind, which *does* exist in ultimate reality.** Thus does the Buddha reveal in chapter eighteen of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: *“The nature of phenomena is without duality ... {and} is entirely singular ... This singular nature of phenomena is without inherent existence ... So it is that when great bodhisattva beings know that the lack of inherent existence with respect to all phenomena is unconditioned {and thus entirely singular}, they abandon all the limits of attachment.”*

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The clear realization pertaining to all phenomena is the omniscient pristine cognition ~ where the mind of the awakening conjured individuated being transcends all grasping of signs and indications of phenomena—which include sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, mental phenomena, the gateways of mnemonic incantation and all meditative experiences up to and including the gateways of meditative stability—and puts on the mind of the non-dual mind of the pristine cognition of the omniscient mind to receive all ‘clear’ realizations. **Here in the mind there is no conceptualization of phenomena as this or that or the other—for all knowledge pertaining to all phenomena is received through direct clear realization. Only when the mind of the awakening being lets go of all reliance on signs and indications as ‘genuine’ realization—which are indicative of the mind still trapped in duality—will it transcend all reliance on the mind of duality and begin to rely on the non-dual cognition.** Here on the path of omniscience does the awakening being see the real nature of phenomena as that which is without inherent existence and as that which is utterly non-apprehensible. And in accepting that all things resemble space, the omniscient mind does not grasp or not grasp at that which is utterly non-apprehensible. In accepting that all things resemble a phantom, the omniscient mind does not reject or grasp at that which is without inherent existence. Thus does the Buddha reveal (above): *“When persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas consider, conceptualize, and grasp the meditative stabilities of the lord buddhas of the past, future, and present, as well as their wisdom, ethical discipline, liberation, and their perception of liberating pristine cognition, even though they meditate, they will not understand even a fraction of the ethical discipline of the tathāgatas ... {and} will not understand even a fraction of the liberation of the tathāgatas, or of their liberating pristine cognition.”* And this is because they grasp and take hold of a “secondary” thing, entering into the state of duality thinking, and they grasp and take hold of that which is non-existent and is utterly non-apprehensible.

24.1 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! In what should great bodhisattva beings who seek emancipation in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment abide?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti, “Great bodhisattva beings who wish to attain emancipation in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should abide in a state of equanimity with respect to all sentient beings. They should cultivate a state of equanimity with respect to all sentient beings, and having established this even-mindedness, they should offer benedictions and greetings to all sentient beings with a benevolent attitude. They should cultivate loving kindness with respect to all sentient beings. They should minimize pride with respect to all sentient beings. They should cultivate the notion that they are teaching all sentient beings. They should offer benedictions and greetings to all sentient beings with sweet and gentle words. They should cultivate an attitude that is free from enmity with respect to all sentient beings. They should cultivate an attitude that is free from harming with respect to all sentient beings. They should cultivate an attitude that regards all sentient beings as their parents, brothers, and sisters. They should cultivate an attitude that regards all sentient beings as their friends, peers, and kinsmen. They should offer benedictions and greetings with an attitude that regards all sentient beings as their parents, brothers, sisters, friends, peers, and kinsmen. They should also abstain from killing living creatures and they should encourage others to adhere to the genuine path by abstaining from killing living creatures. They should always praise abstention from the killing of living creatures. They should praise and rejoice in others who abstain from the killing of living creatures. In the same vein as before, they themselves should abstain from wrong views, and so forth, and they should encourage others also to adhere to the genuine path by abstaining from wrong views. They should praise abstention from wrong views and they should praise and rejoice in others who abstain from wrong views. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who seek to attain emancipation in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should maintain these doctrines, and do so without apprehending anything.

24.2 “Similarly, they themselves should become equipoised in the first meditative concentration, and they should become equipoised in the [other meditative concentrations], up to and including the fourth meditative concentration. They should also encourage others to acquire the meditative concentrations, up to and including the fourth. They should praise those who have attained the meditative concentrations, up to and including the fourth. They should also praise and rejoice in others who have become equipoised in the meditative concentrations, up to and including the fourth. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who seek to abide in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should maintain these doctrines, and do so without apprehending anything.

24.3 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings should be equipoised in the attitude of loving kindness, and then they should also praise and rejoice in others who are equipoised in the attitude of loving kindness. Similarly, they themselves should be equipoised in the attitude of compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity, and they should also praise and rejoice in others who are equipoised in the meditative stabilities, and so forth, associated with the attitudes of compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity. They themselves should be equipoised in the meditative absorption of the sense field of infinite space, in the meditative absorption of the sense field of infinite consciousness, in the meditative absorption of the sense field of nothing-at-all, and in the meditative absorption of the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. They should also praise and rejoice in others who are equipoised in the meditative absorptions of the sense fields, up to and including the sense field of neither perception nor non-per-

ception.

24.4 “They themselves should perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity. They should encourage others also to acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity. They should praise the transcendent perfection of generosity. They should also praise and rejoice in others who perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, as in the case of the transcendent perfection of generosity, the same goes for the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

24.5 “Similarly, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings should themselves cultivate the emptiness of internal phenomena. They should also encourage others to acquire the cultivation of the emptiness of internal phenomena. They should praise the cultivation of the emptiness of internal phenomena. They should also praise and rejoice in others who cultivate the emptiness of internal phenomena, and in the same vein as before, the same goes for [all the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities.

24.6 “Similarly, they themselves should cultivate the four applications of mindfulness, and they should also encourage others to acquire the cultivation of the four applications of mindfulness. They should also praise the cultivation of the applications of mindfulness. They should also praise and rejoice in others who cultivate the four applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, they themselves should cultivate [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. They should also encourage others to acquire the cultivation of the noble eightfold path, [and so forth]. They should also praise and rejoice in others who cultivate the noble eightfold path, [and so forth].

24.7 “Similarly, they themselves should be equipoised in the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness. They should also encourage others to acquire the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness. They should praise those meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness. They should also praise and rejoice in others who are equipoised in the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness.

24.8 “They themselves should be equipoised in the eight aspects of liberation and the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise. They should also encourage others to acquire the eight aspects of liberation and the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise. They should praise the eight aspects of liberation and the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise. They should also praise and rejoice in others who are equipoised in the eight aspects of liberation and the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise.

24.9 “They themselves should perfect the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. They should also encourage others to acquire those [fruitful attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. They should praise those [fruitful attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. They should also praise and rejoice in others who perfect those [fruitful attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

24.10 “They themselves should investigate the twelve links of dependent origination in their sequential and reverse modalities. They should also praise and encourage others to investigate the twelve links of dependent origination in their sequential and reverse modalities. They should also praise and rejoice in others who investigate the twelve links of dependent origination in their sequential and reverse modalities. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who seek to attain emancipation in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should cultivate these sacred [doctrines], and do so without apprehending anything.

24.11 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings should themselves comprehend the noble truth of suffering. They should abandon the noble truth of the origin of suffering. They should actualize the noble truth of the cessation of suffering. They should cultivate the noble truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. They should also encourage others to comprehend suffering, to abandon the origin of suffering, to actualize the cessation of suffering, and to acquire the cultivation of the path [that leads to the cessation of suffering]. They should praise the four noble truths. They should praise and rejoice in others who comprehend the noble truth of suffering, abandon the noble truth of the origin of suffering, actualize the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, and cultivate the noble truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering.

24.12 “They themselves should also cultivate the understanding through which the fruit of entering the stream is actualized, but through which the finality of existence is not actualized. They should also encourage others to acquire the understanding through which the fruit of entering the stream is actualized. They should praise the actualization of the fruit of entering the stream. They should praise and rejoice in others who cultivate the understanding through which the fruit of entering the stream is actualized. Just as in the case of the fruit of entering the stream, this same refrain should also be applied in the case of the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth and the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, up to and including [the fruit] of arhatship.

24.13 “They themselves should also cultivate the understanding through which individual enlightenment is actualized, but through which the finality of existence is not actualized. They should also encourage others to acquire the actualization of individual enlightenment. They should praise the actualization of individual enlightenment. They should praise and rejoice in others who cultivate the understanding through which individual enlightenment is actualized.

24.14 “They themselves should enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas. They should also encourage others to acquire the maturity of the bodhisattvas. They should praise the maturity of the bodhisattvas. They should praise and rejoice in others who enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who seek to attain emancipation in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should abide in these sacred [doctrines], and do so without apprehending anything.

24.15 “Furthermore, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings should themselves bring sentient beings to maturation. They should also praise and rejoice in others who act in order to bring sentient beings to maturation. They themselves should refine the buddhafiels. They should also praise and rejoice in others who act in order to refine the buddhafiels. They themselves should cultivate the extrasensory powers of the bodhisattvas, and they should also praise and

rejoice in others who act in order to cultivate the extrasensory powers of the bodhisattvas. They themselves should attain omniscience, manifestly perfect enlightenment, and they should also praise and rejoice in others who attain omniscience, manifestly perfect buddhahood. They themselves should abandon involuntary reincarnation through propensities and all afflicted mental states. They should encourage others to relinquish involuntary reincarnation through propensities and all afflicted mental states. They should also praise the relinquishing of involuntary reincarnation through propensities and all afflicted mental states, and they should also praise and rejoice in others who relinquish involuntary reincarnation through propensities and all afflicted mental states. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who seek to attain emancipation in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should abide in these sacred [doctrines], and do so without apprehending anything.

24.16 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings should themselves acquire an excellent life span. They should encourage others to acquire an excellent life span. They should also praise an excellent life span, and they should also praise and rejoice in others who acquire an excellent life span. They themselves should turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine. They should also praise and rejoice in others who turn or will turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine. It is in this way, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who seek to attain emancipation in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should abide in these sacred [doctrines], and do so without apprehending anything.

24.17 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings should train accordingly in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they should maintain their skill in means. The physical forms of those who train in this manner and abide in this manner will be unobscured. Their feelings will be unobscured. Their perceptions will be unobscured. Their formative predispositions will be unobscured. Their consciousness will be unobscured, and in the same vein, they will be unobscured with regard to the sacred doctrine, and so forth. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those great bodhisattva beings from the limits of past time have not grasped physical forms, and similarly, they have not grasped feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. In the same vein, from the limits of past time, they have not grasped [any other attribute or attainment], up to and including omniscience. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those physical forms that have not been grasped are not physical forms. Similarly, those feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions and consciousness that have not been grasped are not consciousness [and the rest]; and in the same vein, [all other attributes or attainments] that have not been grasped, up to and including omniscience, do not constitute omniscience [and so forth].” When he explained this status of the bodhisattvas, twelve thousand bodhisattvas accepted that phenomena are non-arising.

24.18 “Moreover, Subhūti,” he continued, “When great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of generosity see sentient beings who are hungry and thirsty, lacking food, drink, and bedding, they should reflect that, ‘When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield, all such faults arising from the miserliness of these sentient beings will not occur and will be non-existent. I will ensure that their resources and possessions resemble those enjoyed by the gods of the Caturmahārājā-kāyika realm, and the gods of the Trayastriṃśā, Yāma, Tuṣita, Nirmāṇarata, and Paranirmitavaśavartin realms. I will practice the transcendent perfection of generosity by any means until the resources and possessions enjoyed by those sentient beings in this buddhafiield resemble those [of the gods].’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of generosity accordingly will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of gene-

rosity.

24.19 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline see persons who kill living creatures, and [commit other non-virtuous actions], up to and including the holding of wrong views; who are short-lived, severely afflicted, sallow, feeble, under-resourced, or born into a bad family; or people who are mutilated, or debased in virtue, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafield I will practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline by any means until such faults arising from the degenerate morality of sentient beings no longer occur and are non-existent.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline accordingly will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.

24.20 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of tolerance see sentient beings acting vindictively toward one another, or those who frequently get angry, whose minds are disturbed, or who harbor ill-will for one another, striking out with clods of earth, with clubs and swords, depriving others of their lives, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafield I will practice the transcendent perfection of tolerance by any means until such faults arising from the malice of these sentient beings no longer occur and are non-existent, and until all sentient beings, like the gods of the Ābhāsvara realms, invariably maintain loving kindness, treating others as if they were their own parents and siblings.’ Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of tolerance accordingly they will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance.

24.21 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of perseverance see sentient beings who are indolent, who turn away from the higher realms and emancipation from cyclic existence, and who regress from the three vehicles, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafield I will practice the transcendent perfection of perseverance by any means until such faults arising from the indolence of these sentient beings no longer occur and are non-existent, and until all sentient beings indeed begin striving for definitive excellence, dependent on virtuous actions, and attain final nirvāṇa through whichever of the three vehicles is appropriate.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of perseverance accordingly will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of perseverance.

24.22 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration see sentient beings who are indolent, or who are clouded by the five obscurations, lacking the four meditative concentrations, and lacking the four formless absorptions, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafield I will practice the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration by any means until such faults arising from the five obscurations of these sentient beings no longer occur and are non-existent, and until all sentient beings indeed resort to the eight aspects of liberation and the meditative concentrations.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration accordingly will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration.

24.23 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom see sentient beings whose conceptual notions are perverse, who lack genuine views, whether mundane or supramundane, who habitually indulge in non-virtuous actions, and who propound inaction, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom by any means until such faults arising from the delusion of these sentient beings no longer occur and are non-existent, and until all sentient beings indeed possess the three degrees of awareness.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

24.24 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see those sentient beings who possess the three provisions—provisions that are definitely authentic, provisions that are definitely erroneous, and provisions that are of indefinite provenance—they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections by any means until sentient beings resort only to provisions that are definitely authentic, and even the names of the other two provisions—the provisions that are definitely erroneous and the provisions which are of indefinite provenance—are no longer heard.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will swiftly perfect the six transcendent perfections and approach omniscience.

24.25 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see those sentient beings who have been born in the hells, or as animals, and those in the worlds under the sway of Yama, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections by any means until even the names of the three inferior realms are no longer heard, not even to mention the possibility that they might arise. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will swiftly perfect the six transcendent perfections and approach omniscience.

24.26 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see that this earth is scarred with tree stumps, thorn bushes, ravines, precipices, sewage, and cesspits, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections until such demonic actions of sentient beings do not arise, and even this buddhafiield is fashioned of the seven precious things, level like the palms of the hands [in meditation], and replete with diverse young trees, diverse flowers, diverse fruits, diverse birds sweetly chirping, and with an abundance of diverse rivers, wells, waterfalls, pools, ponds, and reservoirs. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.27 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see that this great earth is made of clay, covered with stones and sand, and full of dust, gravel, pebbles and boulders, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enli-

ghtenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections by any means until this great earth is fashioned of blue beryl and strewn with sands of gold. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.28 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see beings indulging in acquisitiveness and practicing the five negative actions which arise on account of it, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections by any means until even the name of the acquisitiveness of those sentient beings—from their acquisitiveness regarding physical forms to their acquisitivenesss regarding consciousness—is no longer heard. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.29 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see the four social classes, namely, the royal class, the priestly class, the mercantile class, and the laboring class, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections by any means until even the names of the four social classes are no longer heard, and, distinct from them, only the term “human being” has currency. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.30 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see sentient beings of different colors, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield, I will practice the six transcendent perfections by any means until these sentient beings can no longer be distinguished by their color, and, distinct from them, they acquire a golden hue, beautiful to behold, with a fine and splendid physique, and the finest of complexions. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.31 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see [enslaved beings with] feudal masters, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections until the master of sentient beings is none other than the unrivalled king of the sacred doctrine, the tathāgata, arhat, and genuinely perfect buddha. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice six transcendent perfections accordingly will perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.32 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see the different realms of sentient beings, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections by any means until the denizens of the hells, the animals, the worlds of Yama, the worlds of the gods, or the worlds of humankind are non-existent, and, distinct from those, all sentient beings partake of a singular course of action with respect to the four applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eight-fold path. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.33 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see the four modes of birth of which sentient beings partake, namely, oviparous birth, viviparous birth, birth from heat and moisture, and miraculous birth, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections by any means until the three [lower] modes of birth of sentient beings—oviparous birth, viviparous birth, and birth from heat and moisture—are no longer existent, and, distinct from those modes of birth, all sentient beings resort exclusively to miraculous birth. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.34 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see sentient beings debased and lacking the five extrasensory powers, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections by any means until all sentient beings are endowed with the five extrasensory powers. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.35 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see the excrement and urine of sentient beings, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections until the excrement and urine of sentient beings is totally non-existent, and until all sentient beings indeed partake of the nourishment of delight, as do, for example, the gods of the Ābhāsvara realms. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.36 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see sentient beings lacking luminosity, they should reflect, in the same vein as before, [with the words, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections] until luminosity emerges from sentient beings themselves. [I will even refi-

ne the buddhafiels. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will perfect the six transcendent perfections and] also approach omniscience.

24.37 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see among sentient beings the temporal divisions of month, fortnight, season, and year, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafielf I will practice the six transcendent perfections until even the names of the temporal divisions of month, fortnight, season, and year, as employed by sentient beings, are no longer existent. I will even refine the buddhafiels. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity,’ and so on, in the same vein as before, down to, ‘[they will] also approach omniscience.’

24.38 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings, who practice the six transcendent perfections see sentient beings lacking an excellent life span, they should reflect, in the same vein as before, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafielf I will practice the six transcendent perfections until] they possess an inestimable life span,’ and so on, in the same vein as before, down to ‘[they will] also approach omniscience.’

24.39 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see sentient beings lacking the major marks, they should reflect, in the same vein as before. ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafielf I will practice the six transcendent perfections until] all sentient beings possess the thirty-two major marks of a superior man,’ and so on, in the same vein as before, down to ‘[they will] also approach omniscience.’

24.40 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see sentient beings lacking the roots of virtuous action, they should reflect, in the same vein as before, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafielf I will practice the six transcendent perfections until] all sentient beings in this buddhafielf possess all the roots of virtuous action and honor the lord buddhas with the roots of their virtuous actions,’ and so on, in the same vein as before, down to ‘they will also approach omniscience.’

24.41 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see sentient beings afflicted by disease, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafielf I will practice the six transcendent perfections until the four kinds of disease that afflict sentient beings, namely, wind disorders, bile disorders, phlegm disorders, and combined humoral disorders, no longer arise, and the three kinds of afflicted mental state, namely, desire, hatred, and delusion, also no longer arise. I will even refine the buddhafiels. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity,’ and so on, in the same vein as before, down to ‘they will also approach omniscience.’

24.42 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see sentient beings correctly embarking on the vehicle of the śrāvakas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, and the vehicle

of the bodhisattvas, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections by any means until even the names of the two [lower] vehicles—the vehicle of the śrāvakas and the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas—are no longer heard. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity,’ and so on, in the same vein as before, down to ‘they will also approach omniscience.’

24.43 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see sentient beings with overweening conceit, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections by any means until even the name of the pride of those sentient beings is no longer heard. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity,’ and so on, in the same vein as before, down to ‘they will also approach omniscience.’

24.44 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see sentient beings of finite life span and feeble luminosity, who belong to the finite monastic community of śrāvakas who follow the lord buddhas, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections until sentient beings have an inestimable life span and an inestimable luminosity, and there is an inestimable monastic community of śrāvakas. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity,’ and so on, in the same vein as before, down to ‘they will also approach omniscience.’

24.45 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see finite buddhafiields, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the six transcendent perfections until my buddhafiield has become one with as many buddhafiields as there are in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will swiftly perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.46 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections should reflect, ‘Alas! This cyclic existence is long lasting. Alas! This world system is long lasting’. Also, they should reflect, ‘Alas! This cyclic existence is limitless like space. Alas! This world system of sentient beings is limitless like space, and yet, apart from the conventional designations ‘sentient being,’ ‘cyclic existence,’ and ‘liberation,’ there are no sentient beings at all who are trapped within cyclic existence or who attain nirvāṇa. There are no sentient beings at all who attain final liberation.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will swiftly perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.47 “Subhūti, when certain great bodhisattva beings, lacking the transcendent perfection of wisdom, make offerings to the three precious jewels, namely, to the Buddha, the sacred doctrine, and the monastic community, over eons as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and also when they make donations to other sentient beings, do

you think that those great bodhisattva beings would generate many merits on this basis?" "Venerable Lord! There would be many merits."

24.48 The Blessed One continued, "When anyone enters into union with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been revealed, they will generate many merits, greater than those. If you ask why, it is because this vehicle of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the vehicle of great bodhisattva beings and it is through this vehicle that they pursue omniscience.

24.49 "Subhūti, when certain great bodhisattva beings, lacking the transcendent perfection of wisdom, offer donations to those who have entered the stream over eons equal in number to the sands of the River Ganges, and similarly, when they offer donations to those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, those who are arhats, and those who are pratyekabuddhas, do you think that they would generate many merits on this basis?" "Venerable Lord! There would be many merits. They would be immeasurable, Venerable Sugata!"

24.50 The Blessed One replied, "When anyone enters into union with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been revealed, they will generate many merits, greater than those. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because great bodhisattva beings who practice this transcendent perfection of wisdom transcend the levels of the śrāvākas and the pratyekabuddhas, and after transcending the maturity of the bodhisattvas, they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

24.51 "Subhūti, when certain great bodhisattva beings, lacking the transcendent perfection of wisdom, over eons equal in number to the sands of the River Ganges, offer their generosity, maintain their ethical discipline, practice tolerance, cultivate perseverance, become equipoised in meditative concentration, and cultivate wisdom, do you think that they would generate many merits on this basis?" "Venerable Lord! There would be many merits. They would be immeasurable, Venerable Sugata!"

24.52 The Blessed One replied, "When anyone enters into union with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been revealed, for just a few days, and dispenses generosity, maintains ethical discipline, practices tolerance, cultivates perseverance, becomes equipoised in meditative concentration, and cultivates wisdom, they will generate many merits, greater than those. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the [great bodhisattva beings] who act accordingly are engaged in perfection.

24.53 "Subhūti, when certain great bodhisattva beings, lacking the transcendent perfection of wisdom, over eons equal in number to the sands of the River Ganges, offer their gifts of the sacred doctrine to all sentient beings, do you think that they would generate many merits on this basis?" "Venerable Lord! There would be many merits. They would be immeasurable, Venerable Sugata!"

24.54 The Blessed One replied, "When anyone abides in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been revealed, and offers the gift of the sacred doctrine for only one day, they will generate many merits, greater than those. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because great bodhisattva beings who lack the transcendent perfection of

wisdom also lack omniscience, and great bodhisattva beings who do not lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom also do not lack omniscience.

24.55 “So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who wish to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should not lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

24.56 “Subhūti, when certain great bodhisattva beings, lacking the transcendent perfection of wisdom, over eons equal in number to the sands of the River Ganges, enter into union with the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and the three gateways to liberation, do you think that they would generate many merits on this basis?” “Venerable Lord! There would be many merits. They would be immeasurable, Venerable Sugata!”

24.57 The Blessed One replied, “When anyone abides in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and enters into [those causal attributes], from the four applications of mindfulness up to and including the three gateways to liberation, [for only a single day], they will generate many merits, greater than those. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because they will lack certain circumstances and lack certain opportunities—that is to say, there are no circumstances in which great bodhisattva beings who do not lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom will turn away from omniscience. As for those who are prone to such circumstances and opportunities, this concerns the circumstances in which great bodhisattva beings, lacking the transcendent perfection of wisdom, might turn away from omniscience. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings should never lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

24.58 “Subhūti, when certain great bodhisattva beings, lacking the transcendent perfection of wisdom, over eons equal in number to the sands of the River Ganges, offer their worldly gifts and their gifts of the sacred doctrine, and then, through non-analytical attention, dedicate their merits toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, do you think that they would generate many merits on this basis?” “Venerable Lord! There would be many merits. They would be immeasurable, Venerable Sugata!”

24.59 The Blessed One replied, “When anyone abides in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and even for a single day offers gifts of the sacred doctrine and worldly gifts, and through non-analytical attention dedicates these merits toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, that one will generate many merits, greater than those. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because dedication [in this context] denotes this dedication of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Subhūti, that [bodhisattva] should realize that there is no dedication of merit lacking the dedication of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the precursor of all aspects of enlightenment. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings should never lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They should be skilled in dedicating the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

24.60 “Subhūti, when certain great bodhisattva beings, lacking the transcendent perfection of wisdom, over eons equal in number to the sands of the River Ganges, rejoice in all the roots of virtuous actions of the lord buddhas of

the past, future, and present, along with their monastic community of śrāvakas, and dedicate their merits toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, do you think that they would generate many merits on this basis?" "Venerable Lord! There would be many such merits. They would be immeasurable, Venerable Sugata!"

24.61 The Blessed One replied, "When anyone abides in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been revealed, and even for a single day rejoices in all these roots of virtuous actions, and then dedicates the merits toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, that one will generate many merits, greater than those. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom precedes all dedications of merit. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings should be skilled in dedicating the transcendent perfection of wisdom."

24.62 *This completes the twenty-fourth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled "Initial Engagement."*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR:
INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

24.A Great bodhisattva beings who wish to attain emancipation in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should abide in a state of equanimity with respect to all sentient beings ... {and} cultivate a state of equanimity with respect to all sentient beings, and having established this even-mindedness, they should offer benedictions and greetings to all sentient beings with a benevolent attitude. They should cultivate loving kindness ... {and} minimize pride with respect to all sentient beings. They should cultivate the notion that they are teaching all sentient beings ... {and} offer benedictions and greetings to all sentient beings with sweet and gentle words. They should cultivate an attitude that is free from enmity ... {and} is free from harming with respect to all sentient beings ... They should offer benedictions and greetings with an attitude that regards all sentient beings as their parents, brothers, sisters, friends, peers, and kinsmen. They should also abstain from killing living creatures ... encourage others to adhere to the genuine path by abstaining from killing living creatures ... praise abstention from the killing of living creatures ... {and} praise and rejoice in others who abstain from the killing of living creatures ... {They} should abstain from {the sixty-two} wrong views, and ... encourage others also to adhere to the genuine path by abstaining from wrong views. They should praise abstention from wrong views and ... praise and rejoice in others who abstain from wrong views. It is in this way ... that great bodhisattva beings who seek to attain emancipation in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should maintain these doctrines, and do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

24.B Similarly ... {great bodhisattva beings} should become equipoised in the first meditative concentration ... up to and including the fourth meditative concentration ... be equipoised in the attitude of loving kindness ... compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity ... be equipoised in the meditative absorption{s} of the sense field of infinite space ... the sense field of infinite consciousness ... the sense field of nothing-at-all, and ... the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception ... perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity ... {and} the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... cultivate the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {and} [all the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-

entities ... cultivate the four applications of mindfulness, and ... [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... be equipoised in the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness ... be equipoised in the eight aspects of liberation and the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise ... perfect the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... investigate the twelve links of dependent origination in their sequential and reverse modalities ... comprehend the noble truth of suffering ... abandon the noble truth of the origin of suffering ... actualize the noble truth of the cessation of suffering ... cultivate the noble truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering ... cultivate the understanding through which the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth ... the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, up to and including [the fruit] of arhatship ... {and} individual enlightenment is actualized, but through which the finality of {relative} existence is not actualized ... enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas ... bring sentient beings to maturation ... refine the buddhafi elds ... cultivate the extrasensory powers of the bodhisattvas ... attain omniscience, manifestly perfect enlightenment ... abandon involuntary reincarnation through propensities and all afflicted mental states ... acquire an excellent life span ... {and} turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine. They should also praise {all of these attributes} and {praise and} rejoice in others who {investigate, cultivate, perfect and attain all of these attributes, up to and including those who} turn or will turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine. It is in this way ... that great bodhisattva beings who seek to attain emancipation in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should abide in these sacred [doctrines], and do so without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}.

24.C The physical forms of those who train in this manner and abide in this manner will be unobscured ... {as well as} their feelings ... perceptions ... formative predispositions ... {and} consciousness will be unobscured, and ... they will be unobscured with regard to the sacred doctrine, and so forth. If you ask why ... it is because those great bodhisattva beings from the limits of past time {up to the limits of future time, and the limits of in between} have not grasped physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {or} [any other attribute or attainment], up to and including omniscience {as ultimately real}. If you ask why ... it is because those physical forms that have not been grasped {as ultimately real within the confines of the limits of space and time} are not physical forms {in ultimate reality, beyond all illusion of space and time}. Similarly, those feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions and consciousness ... {and} [all other attributes or attainments] that have not been grasped {as ultimately real within the confines of the limits of space and time}, up to and including omniscience, do not constitute omniscience [and so forth] {in ultimate reality, beyond all illusion of space and time}.

24.D Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings who practice the **transcendent perfection of generosity** see sentient beings who are hungry and thirsty, lacking food, drink, and bedding, they should reflect that, ‘When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafi eld, all such faults arising from the miserliness of these sentient beings will not occur and will be non-existent. I will ensure that their resources and possessions resemble those enjoyed by the gods ... I will practice the transcendent perfection of generosity by any means until the resources and possessions enjoyed by those sentient beings in this buddhafi eld resemble those [of the gods].’ ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice ... accordingly will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity. Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings who practice the **transcendent perfection of ethical discipline** see persons who kill living creatures ... up to and including the holding of {the sixty-two} wr-

ong views; who are short-lived, severely afflicted, sallow, feeble, under-resourced, or born into a bad family; or people who are mutilated, or debased in virtue, they should reflect, 'Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline by any means until such faults arising from the degenerate morality of sentient beings no longer occur and are non-existent.' ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice ... accordingly will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline. Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings who practice the **transcendent perfection of tolerance** see sentient beings acting vindictively toward one another, or those who frequently get angry, whose minds are disturbed, or who harbor ill-will for one another, striking out with clods of earth, with clubs and swords, depriving others of their lives, they should reflect, 'Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the transcendent perfection of tolerance by any means until such faults arising from the malice of these sentient beings no longer occur and are non-existent, and until all sentient beings, like the gods of the Ābhāsvara realms, invariably maintain loving kindness, treating others as if they were their own parents and siblings.' ... When great bodhisattva beings practice ... accordingly they will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance. Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings who practice the **transcendent perfection of perseverance** see sentient beings who are indolent, who turn away from the higher realms and emancipation from cyclic existence, and who regress from the three vehicles, they should reflect, 'Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the transcendent perfection of perseverance by any means until such faults arising from the indolence of these sentient beings no longer occur and are non-existent, and until all sentient beings indeed begin striving for definitive excellence, dependent on virtuous actions, and attain final nirvāṇa through whichever of the three vehicles is appropriate {for their level of understanding}.' ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice ... accordingly will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of perseverance. Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings who practice the **transcendent perfection of meditative concentration** see sentient beings who are indolent, or who are clouded by the five obscurations {which include (1) longing for sensual pleasure, (2) harmful intention, (3) dullness and sleepiness, (4) agitation and regret, and (5) hesitation}, lacking the four meditative concentrations, and lacking the four formless absorptions, they should reflect, 'Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration by any means until such faults arising from the five obscurations of these sentient beings no longer occur and are non-existent, and until all sentient beings indeed resort to the eight aspects of liberation and the meditative concentrations.' ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice ... accordingly will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings who practice the **transcendent perfection of wisdom** see sentient beings whose conceptual notions are perverse, who lack genuine views, whether mundane or supramundane, who habitually indulge in non-virtuous actions, and who propound inaction, they should reflect, 'Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafiield I will practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom by any means until such faults arising from the delusion of these sentient beings no longer occur and are non-existent, and until all sentient beings indeed possess the three degrees of awareness {comprising the awareness of clairvoyance, the awareness that recollects past abodes, and the awareness of the cessation of contaminants}.' ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice ... accordingly will swiftly perfect the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

24.E Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections {1} see those sentient beings who possess the three provisions—provisions that are definitely authentic, provisions that are definitely erroneous, and provisions that are of indefinite provenance ... {2} see those sentient beings who have been born in the hells, or as animals, and those in the worlds under the sway of Yama ... {3} see that this earth is scarred with tree stumps, thorn bushes, ravines, precipices, sewage, and cesspits ... {4} see that this great earth is made of clay, covered with stones and sand, and full of dust, gravel, pebbles and boulders ... {5} see beings indulging in acquisitiveness and practicing the five negative actions which arise on account of it ... {6} see the four social classes, namely, the royal class, the priestly class, the mercantile class, and the laboring class ... {7} see sentient beings of different colors ... {8} see {enslaved sentient beings with} feudal masters ... {9} see the different realms of sentient beings ... {10} see the four modes of birth of which sentient beings partake, namely, oviparous birth {from an egg}, viviparous birth {from the womb, seeds or buds}, {sporal} birth from heat and moisture, and miraculous birth ... {11} see sentient beings debased and lacking the five extrasensory powers ... {12} see the excrement and urine of sentient beings ... {13} see sentient beings lacking luminosity ... {14} see among sentient beings the temporal divisions of month, fortnight, season, and year ... {15} see sentient beings lacking an excellent life span ... {16} see sentient beings lacking the major marks ... {17} see sentient beings lacking the roots of virtuous action ... {18} see sentient beings afflicted by disease ... {19} see sentient beings correctly embarking on the vehicle{s} of the śrāvakas ... the pratyekabuddhas, and ... the bodhisattvas ... {20} see sentient beings with overweening conceit ... {21} see sentient beings of finite life span and feeble luminosity, who belong to the finite monastic community of śrāvakas who follow the lord buddhas [and] ... {22} see finite buddhafiels, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafielf I will practice the six transcendent perfections ... {1} by any means until sentient beings resort only to provisions that are definitely authentic, and even the names of the other two provisions—the provisions that are definitely erroneous and the provisions which are of indefinite provenance—are no longer heard ... {2} by any means until even the names of the three inferior realms {of the denizens of the hells, the animals and the worlds of Yama} are no longer heard, not even to mention the possibility that they might arise ... {3} until such demonic actions of sentient beings do not arise, and even this buddhafielf is fashioned of the seven precious things, level like the palms of the hands, and replete with diverse young trees, diverse flowers, diverse fruits, diverse birds sweetly chirping, and with an abundance of diverse rivers, wells, waterfalls, pools, ponds, and reservoirs ... {4} by any means until this great earth is fashioned of blue {hexagonal} beryl and strewn with sands of gold ... {5} by any means until even the name of the acquisitiveness of those sentient beings—from their acquisitiveness regarding physical forms to their acquisitiveness regarding consciousness—is no longer heard ... {6} by any means until even the names of the four social classes are no longer heard, and, distinct from them, only the term “human being” has currency ... {7} by any means until these sentient beings can no longer be distinguished by their color, and, distinct from them, they acquire a golden hue, beautiful to behold, with a fine and splendid physique, and the finest of complexions ... {8} until the master of sentient beings is none other than the unrivalled king of the sacred doctrine, the tathāgata, arhat, and genuinely perfect buddha ... {9} by any means until the denizens of the hells, the animals, the worlds of Yama, the worlds of the gods, or the worlds of humankind are non-existent, and, distinct from those, all sentient beings partake of a singular course of action with respect to the four applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... {10} by any means until the three [lower] modes of birth of sentient beings—oviparous birth, viviparous birth, and birth from heat and moisture—are no longer existent, and, distinct from those modes of birth, all sentient beings resort exclusively to miracu-

lous birth ... {11} by any means until all sentient beings are endowed with the five extrasensory powers ... {12} {by any means} until the excrement and urine of sentient beings is totally non-existent, and until all sentient beings indeed partake of the nourishment of delight, as do, for example, the gods of the Ābhāsvara realms ... {13} until luminosity emerges from sentient beings themselves ... {14} until even the names of the temporal divisions of month, fortnight, season, and year, as employed by sentient beings, are no longer existent ... {15} {until sentient beings} possess an inestimable life span ... {16} [until] all sentient beings possess the thirty-two major marks of a superior man ... {17} [until] all sentient beings in this buddhafiield possess all the roots of virtuous action and honor the lord buddhas with the roots of their virtuous actions ... {18} until the four kinds of disease that afflict sentient beings, namely, wind disorders, bile disorders, phlegm disorders, and combined humoral disorders, no longer arise, and the three kinds of afflicted mental state, namely, desire, hatred, and delusion, also no longer arise ... {19} by any means until even the names of the two [lower] vehicles—the vehicle of the śrāvakas and the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas—are no longer heard ... {20} by any means until even the name of the pride of those sentient beings is no longer heard ... {21} until sentient beings have an inestimable life span and an inestimable luminosity, and there is an inestimable monastic community of śrāvakas ... {22} until my buddhafiield has become one with as many buddhafiields as there are in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. I will even refine the buddhafiields. I will also bring sentient beings to maturity.’ ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will swiftly perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.F Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections should reflect, ‘Alas! This cyclic existence is long lasting. Alas! This world system is long lasting’. Also, they should reflect, ‘Alas! This cyclic existence is limitless like space. Alas! This world system of sentient beings is limitless like space, and yet, apart from the conventional designations ‘sentient being,’ ‘cyclic existence,’ and ‘liberation,’ there are no sentient beings at all who are trapped within cyclic existence or who attain nirvāṇa. There are no sentient beings at all who attain final liberation.’ ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections accordingly will swiftly perfect the six transcendent perfections and also approach omniscience.

24.G When certain great bodhisattva beings, lacking the transcendent perfection of wisdom {over eons equal in number to the sands of the River Ganges}, {1} make offerings to the three precious jewels, namely, to the Buddha, the sacred doctrine, and the monastic community ... and also when they make donations to other sentient beings ... {2} offer donations to those who have entered the stream ... and similarly, when they offer donations to those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, those who are arhats, and those who are pratyekabuddhas ... {3} offer their generosity, maintain their ethical discipline, practice tolerance, cultivate perseverance, become equiposed in meditative concentration, and cultivate wisdom ... {4} offer their gifts of the sacred doctrine to all sentient beings ... {5} enter into union with the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and the three gateways to liberation ... {6} offer their worldly gifts and their gifts of the sacred doctrine, and then, through non-analytical attention, dedicate their merits toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings ... {7} rejoice in all the roots of virtuous actions of the lord buddhas of the past, future, and present, along with their monastic community of śrāvakas, and dedicate their merits toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings ...

they would generate many {immeasurable} merits on this basis ... {Yet} when anyone enters into union with this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been revealed, they will generate many merits, greater than those ... {1} because this vehicle of the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the vehicle of great bodhisattva beings and it is through this vehicle that they pursue omniscience ... {2} because great bodhisattva beings who practice this transcendent perfection of wisdom transcend the levels of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas, and after transcending the maturity of the bodhisattvas, they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... {3} because the [great bodhisattva beings] who {for just a few days ... dispenses generosity, maintains ethical discipline, practices tolerance, cultivates perseverance, becomes equipoised in meditative concentration, and cultivates wisdom} ... are engaged in perfection ... {4} because great bodhisattva beings who lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom also lack omniscience, and {even when offering the gift of the sacred doctrine for only one day} great bodhisattva beings who do not lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom also do not lack omniscience ... {5} because {when anyone abides in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and enters into [those causal attributes], from the four applications of mindfulness up to and including the three gateways to liberation, [for only a single day]} they will lack certain circumstances and lack certain opportunities—that is to say, there are no circumstances {or opportunities} in which great bodhisattva beings who do not lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom will turn away from omniscience ... {6} because {when anyone abides in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and even for a single day offers gifts of the sacred doctrine and worldly gifts, and through non-analytical attention dedicates these merits toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings—such} dedication denotes this dedication of the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {Great bodhisattva beings} should realize that there is no dedication of merit lacking the dedication of the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is the precursor of all aspects of enlightenment ... {7} because {when anyone—even for a single day—rejoices in all these roots of virtuous actions, and then dedicates the merits toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, making common cause with all sentient beings, this abiding in} the transcendent perfection of wisdom precedes all dedications of merit ... || So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who wish to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should not lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... || {And} so it is, that great bodhisattva beings should be skilled in dedicating the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

COMMENTARY

Just as gold is refined in a refinery to eliminate all impurities and so forth, in the same way—within the realm of ‘relative’ existence—is the mind of every conjured individuated being continually refined to eliminate all impurities and so forth. **This mind of the conjured individuated being is the ‘field of the awakening buddha’ ~ for every mind of every conjured individuated being is the mind of an awakening buddha.** Just as gold cannot shine as gold until all impurities and so forth have been eliminated, in the same way—within the realm of ‘relative’ existence—can the mind of every conjured individuated being not shine as a perfectly enlightened buddha, until all impurities and so forth have been eliminated. Thus does the Buddha reveal in chapter thirty-two of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: “From the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, and until their final rebirth, great bodhisattva beings {—in refining the buddhafi elds—} purify the negativity of others, including their negativity of body, their negativity of speech, and their negativity of mind.”

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And yet the buddhafield is also that which is the grounds upon which every awakening buddha walks within the confines of the great trichilocosm, to be awakened by the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas and the turning of the wheel of the sacred doctrine of a perfectly enlightened buddha. Here the master of the mind of every conjured individuated being is the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, which have been put in place to awaken every being from its dreaming state to the ultimate reality of its undivided state, as Our singularity in God. **Thus from the beginning of beginningless time did the great illusionist, Vajradhara, conjure the ‘all-encompassing’ diamond structure to link the mind of every conjured individuated being with their awakening master, the Holy Spirit.** Thus the Buddha reveals in the chapter (above): *“When great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections see {enslaved sentient beings with} feudal masters, they should reflect, ‘Alas! When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in this buddhafield I will practice the six transcendent perfections until the master of sentient beings is none other than the unrivalled king of the sacred doctrine, the tathāgata, arhat, and genuinely perfect buddha.”*

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And yet the buddhafield is also that which has the ‘grounds of opportunity’ for the conjured individuated being to be awakened by the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas and the turning of the wheel of the sacred doctrine of a perfectly enlightened buddha. Here the conjured individuated being is established in the stable community of the bodhisattvas—of the Great Vehicle of the path of omniscience—that is intent on the genuine reality. Thus the buddhafield is that which allows for the refinement of the ‘individual buddhafield’ of the field of the mind of the awakening conjured individuated being. Thus the buddhafield is that where the Dharma is taught, is that where the word ‘Buddha’ is heard, and is that where a stable community of the bodhisattvas—in the form of the Saṅgha—can be guided by the sacred doctrine. Thus the buddhafield is a place free of the eight unfavourable conditions of being reborn (1) as a denizen of the hells, (2) as an anguished spirit, (3) as an animal, (4) as a long-lived god, (5) as a tribesman beyond the pale of civilization, (6) where the Dharma is not being taught, (7) with extreme mental or physical disablement, and (8) with wrong views. Here the Buddha expounds in chapter thirty-two of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: *“Once sentient beings have been reborn in these buddhafields, great bodhisattva beings will continue to refine the buddhafields, until all those sentient beings are no longer consumed with doubt concerning mundane, supramundane, contaminated, uncontaminated, conditioned, unconditioned, or any other phenomena, and until they definitively attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.”*

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And yet the buddhafield is also that which is the ‘one and only’ undivided mind of every conjured individuated being, within the expanse of ‘relative’ reality. Here, great bodhisattva beings—having clearly realized the ‘singularity’ of the natural luminosity of mind—commit to awakening every part of the ‘one and only’ undivided mind ~ and using skill in means, travel to the lower realms of the denizens of the hells to assist and to awaken those denizens of the hells, and using skills in means, take birth as an animal to bring those creatures and themselves to maturity in the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Thus the Buddha reveals in chapter thirty-two of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: *“Great bodhisattva beings will travel to those abodes of the hells in order to*

assist those sentient being ... {and} even though they are born in the animal realms, for the sake of sentient beings, you should know that they are untainted by the defects of taking birth in the animal realms.” **And so it is, that the field of the ‘one and only’ undivided mind of the Buddha, is “continually” refined in this way.**

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE: SKILL IN MEANS

25.1 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How should great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom investigate the meditative stability of emptiness? How should they become equipoised in the meditative stability of emptiness? How should they investigate the meditative stability of signlessness? How should they become equipoised in the meditative stability of signlessness? How should they investigate the meditative stability of aspirationlessness? How should they become equipoised in the meditative stability of aspirationlessness? How should they investigate the four applications of mindfulness? How should they cultivate the four applications of mindfulness? In the same vein, how should they investigate [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path? How should they cultivate [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path? How should they investigate the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas? How should they cultivate [those fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas?”

25.2 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should determine that physical forms are empty. Similarly, they should determine that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty. In the same vein, they should determine that the world system of desire, the world system of form, and the world system of formlessness are empty. By whatever means they make such determinations, they should do so with an unwavering mind. When the mind is unwavering, they will discern those phenomena exactly as they are. Even if they were to consider those phenomena, they would not actualize them. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because such bodhisattvas will have trained well with regard to those phenomena which are empty of their own defining characteristics. They neither enhance nor delimit any phenomenon. They will not actualize them. If you ask why, it is because ultimately they do not consider anything which actualizes, anything by which actualization takes place, or anything that is to be actualized.”

25.3 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When the Blessed One said that great bodhisattva beings should not actualize [the notion that] all things are empty, how then, Venerable Lord, do great bodhisattva beings abide in emptiness and realize emptiness?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings discern emptiness in all its finest aspects, they do not think that they should actualize it, but discern that they should investigate it. They discern that this is not the time for actualization and discern that this is the time for investigation. Even though great bodhisattva beings may not have established their minds in equipoise, they do focus their minds on [meditative] objects. Even though, in the meantime, great bodhisattva beings may not have degenerated from the attributes which are the aspects of enlightenment, and in the same vein, they may not have degenerated from [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and even though they may be free from contaminants, still they do not actualize [anything at all]. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because great bodhisattva beings are endowed with such extensive attributes. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because

great bodhisattva beings are [already] established in the attributes which are the aspects of enlightenment.

25.4 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom well know that this is not the time for actualization, but rather it is the time for investigation. Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings should also reflect, ‘This is the time for the transcendent perfection of generosity. This is [the time for] the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, this is [the time for] the transcendent perfection of tolerance, this is [the time for] the transcendent perfection of perseverance, this is [the time for] the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and this is the time for the transcendent perfection of wisdom. This is the time for cultivating the four applications of mindfulness. This is the time for cultivating the [other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. This is the time for cultivating the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness. This is the time for cultivating the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. This is the time for cultivating omniscience.

25.5 “‘However, this is not the time for cultivating the fruit of entering the stream. This is not the time for cultivating the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, nor is it the time for cultivating the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, for cultivating the fruit of arhatship, or for cultivating individual enlightenment.’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly investigate emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, but they do not actualize the attributes associated with emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness as the finality of existence. In the same vein, they investigate the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path, but they do not actualize the finality of existence.

25.6 “For example, Subhūti, suppose there was a heroic man, steadfast in his commitments, of fine physique, handsome, beautiful to behold, and well trained in archery, who had also handled sharp weapons, perfected the sixty-four crafts, fully mastered all the arts, cultivated the eighteen great fields of knowledge, and who was outstanding, joyful, and crowd-pleasing—he would acquire great rewards through whatever tasks he had to undertake since he would have trained well in all fields, and on those occasions the crowd of common people would indeed honor him, respect him, and grant him offerings, causing him again to rejoice, in joy, utter joy, and at ease. If he were then, for some purpose, to escort his parents, brother, sister, wife, son, daughter, and daughter-in-law, entering a remote and hair-raising wilderness where childish persons are afraid, he would exhort his parents, brother, sister, wife, son, daughter and daughter-in-law as they went in, ‘Do not fear! I will get you out, safely and securely, and swiftly release you from this fearful and most terrifying place.’ Even if enemies, murderers, and a band of assailants were to harass them in that wilderness, he, being endowed with the supreme power of discernment, would lead his parents, brother, sister, wife, son, daughter and daughter-in-law from that wilderness safely and securely, and get them back to a village, city, or market town, making sure that they stay there, joyful, comfortable, unharmed and uninjured; but he would not wish to attack those sentient beings, nor would he be agitated. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because a man such as this would have been proficiently trained in archery, and, besides that, in all other useful skills.”

25.7 “Similarly, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings have achieved and maintain a state of mind that is imbued

with loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy and equanimity, at that time, those great bodhisattva beings are established in the four immeasurable aspirations and they perfect the six transcendent perfections. After perfecting the six transcendent perfections, they will not achieve the cessation of contaminants but they will absolutely investigate omniscience; and even though they are established in emptiness, signlessness and aspirationlessness, they will not be swayed or captivated by them. Indeed they will not actualize those gateways to liberation, which, by means of actualization, would cause them to regress to the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas.”

25.8 “For example, Subhūti, a bird does not fall to the ground, even though it moves through the air. It flies through the sky but does not dwell therein, and is unsullied. Similarly, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings investigate the gateways to liberation—emptiness, signlessness and aspirationlessness—and they are even established therein, but they do not actualize those gateways to liberation—emptiness, signlessness and aspirationlessness, which, when actualized, would cause them to regress to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas, without perfecting the attainment of omniscience by means of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.”

25.9 “For example, Subhūti, when a powerful man trained in archery fires an arrow far into the sky, and then fires a succession of other arrows, one after another, he can prevent that [first] arrow from falling to the ground as long as he wishes, but if he were to think, ‘Alas! I wish this arrow would fall to the ground!’ and he then ceases to fire the subsequent arrows far into the sky, the arrows would all fall to the ground in succession, one after the other. Similarly, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom that is retained by skill in means do not actualize the finality of existence until the roots of virtuous action have been brought to maturity in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. But when those roots of virtuous action have been brought to maturity in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, then they do actualize the authentic finality of existence. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should make a definitive analysis in accord with the reality of these phenomena.”

25.10 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How wonderful it is, Venerable Lord, that while great bodhisattva beings have trained in this reality, trained in the finality of existence, trained in the real nature, trained in the expanse of reality, trained in the emptiness that transcends extremes, trained in the emptiness of independent characteristics, and trained in the three gateways to liberation, and so forth, the difficult achievement of great bodhisattva beings is that they do not regress in the interim [before attaining unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment]. This is most amazing!”

25.11 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, such great bodhisattva beings do not forsake all sentient beings and they maintain such extraordinary aspirations. Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings magnanimously think, ‘I will not forsake all sentient beings. I alone should release all those sentient beings who maintain inauthentic doctrines.’ So it is that great bodhisattva beings, for the sake of those sentient beings, then actualize emptiness as a gateway to liberation, and similarly, they actualize signlessness as a gateway to liberation, and aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation. One should know that the non-actualization of the finality of existence by great bodhisattva beings until

they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment indicates their skill in means with respect to emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness as gateways to liberation.

25.12 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings always analyze the profound topics, which are as follows: the emptiness of internal phenomena [and the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities, and similarly, the four applications of mindfulness and [other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. They always analyze the three gateways to liberation. Accordingly, they also think, ‘In order that these sentient beings who, over a long period of time, have fallen under the sway of evil associates, who continue to apprehend egotistical views, and likewise who apprehend [notions] of sentient beings, and so on, up to and including [notions of] experiencers and experiencing subjects, might abandon these views, I will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and teach the sacred doctrine to those sentient beings who continue to apprehend in such ways!’ At that time, even though great bodhisattva beings become equipoised in the meditative stability of emptiness as a gateway to liberation, as far as the realization of the finality of existence is concerned, they do not actualize that finality of existence through which the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, and individual enlightenment are actualized.”

25.13 “When great bodhisattva beings become equipoised in the meditative stability of signlessness as a gateway to liberation, or in the meditative stability of aspirationlessness, at that time they do actualize all things that are free from contaminants, and yet, as far as the actualization of the finality of existence is concerned, they do not actualize that finality of existence through which the fruit of entering the stream, and so forth, up to and including individual enlightenment, are actualized.

25.14 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly, and who have set their mind on enlightenment and these roots of virtuous action, do not, in the interim, actualize the finality of existence. They will not degenerate from the four meditative concentrations, the four formless concentrations, the four applications of mindfulness, and so on. They will not degenerate from the noble eightfold path. They will not degenerate from emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness—the gateways to liberation. Similarly, they will not degenerate from the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

25.15 “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly, until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment they will not degenerate from all the [causal] attributes that are aspects of enlightenment, or from all the [fruitful] attributes of the buddhas. Always retained by skill in means and enhanced by virtuous attributes, their sense faculties become keener, unlike the sense faculties of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas.

25.16 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings perceive sentient beings, they think, ‘For a long period of time these sentient beings have been engaging in four misconceptions, namely, the notion that there is permanence, the notion that there is happiness, the notion that there is a self, and the notion that existence is pleasant. I

should attain enlightenment for the sake of those sentient beings. By any means I should swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and teach them the sacred doctrines that [all things are] impermanent, imbued with suffering, and without a self, and that nirvāṇa is peace.' Although they have set their minds accordingly [on enlightenment] and practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom through skill in means, they will not enter into the meditative stabilities of the buddhas. At that time, they possess the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and though they may even become equiposed in those [fruition-al] attributes, they will not actualize the finality of existence until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

25.17 "Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings perceive sentient beings, they think, 'Alas! For a long period of time these sentient beings have fallen under the sway of evil associates, and they have continued to engage in an apprehending manner in the following views: the concept of self; or the concept of sentient beings; or, in the same vein, [concepts of other postulated subjects], up to and including the concept of a knower; or similarly, the concept of physical forms, the concept of feelings, the concept of perceptions, the concept of formative predispositions, the concept of consciousness, the concept of sensory elements, and the concept of sense fields. For the sake of those sentient beings, when I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, then I should ensure by any means, through the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless meditative absorptions, and the four attractive qualities of a bodhisattva, that those sentient beings act appropriately so that the faults of the perceptual views associated with those sentient beings do not arise!' When those with skill in means have set their minds accordingly [on enlightenment] and practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, even if they perfectly acquire the ten powers of the tathāgatas and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, on account of their view with regard to sentient beings, they will not actualize the finality of existence, but, after cultivating the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, they will become perfected.

25.18 "Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perceive sentient beings under the sway of evil associates, they think, 'Alas! For a long period of time these sentient beings have engaged with signs, that is to say, they have engaged with signs denoting the female gender, the male gender, signs of visible forms, and signs of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena. When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, then, by any means, I should ensure that those sentient beings act appropriately so that the faults associated with those sentient beings do not arise!' When those endowed with skill in means have set their mind on enlightenment, even if they perfectly acquire the ten powers of the tathāgatas and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, on account of their view with regard to sentient beings, they will not actualize the finality of existence, but, after cultivating the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, they will become perfected.

25.19 "It is impossible and there is no chance, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections, who investigate the emptiness of internal phenomena, and who possess such attributes of pristine cognition would perceive formative predispositions as imbued with happiness, describe formative predispositions as being imbued with happiness, or enter into association with the three world systems. That is an impossibility!

25.20 “When great bodhisattva beings practice accordingly, it should be asked, ‘How do great bodhisattva beings who wish to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment investigate these [fruitful] attributes and become equipoised in the meditative stability of emptiness, without actualizing the finality of existence through which the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, and individual enlightenment are attained, and in which non-arising, non-cessation, non-conditioning, and non-entity are not realized?’ The same refrain may be extensively applied also to [the meditative stabilities] of signlessness and aspirationlessness.

25.21 “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom are questioned by other great bodhisattva beings in that manner, if they respond that when they cultivate all the aspects of enlightenment, they should be attentive to emptiness, they should be attentive to signlessness and aspirationlessness, and they should be attentive to non-conditioning and non-cessation, instead of demonstrating the altruistic attitude that sentient beings should not be forsaken, or responding with skill in means, one should know that these sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have not been foreordained by the lord buddhas to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because great bodhisattva beings do not speak of, demonstrate, or analyze their investigation of the irreversible level.

25.22 “Subhūti, these great bodhisattva beings should know that great bodhisattva beings who have precisely investigated the six transcendent perfections on the irreversible level will not regress to the level of attenuated refinement [of the śrāvakas].”

25.23 “Venerable Lord! Is there a reason why great bodhisattva beings may be styled ‘irreversible’?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, there is! Subhūti, whether or not they have attained the six transcendent perfections, irreversible bodhisattvas will respond precisely in the manner of an irreversible great bodhisattva being.”

25.24 “O Venerable Lord! If there are many bodhisattvas who are engaged in [the pursuit of] enlightenment, there are few who could respond in the manner of an irreversible great bodhisattva being, whether they abide on the purificatory levels or the non-purificatory levels.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so! If you ask why, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings of whom the level of irreversible pristine cognition has been foreordained are few in number. Those who have been foreordained will respond correctly. One should know that they have cultivated the roots of virtuous action. Those great bodhisattva beings will not be captivated by the whole world, with its gods, humans, and antigods.”

25.25 Thereupon, Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What is the sameness of great bodhisattva beings—the sameness in which great bodhisattva beings should train?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, the emptiness of internal phenomena constitutes the sameness of great bodhisattva beings. Similarly, the emptiness of external phenomena, and, Subhūti, in the same vein, the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, constitute the sameness of great bodhisattva beings. Subhūti, all these aspects of emptiness constitute the sameness of great bodhisattva beings. Having trained in these great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlight-

enment.”

25.26 “Venerable Lord! Are those great bodhisattva beings who undertake training in order to terminate physical forms and become detached from them, so that they cease and do not arise, actually training in omniscience? Similarly, are those who undertake training in order to terminate feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and become detached from them so that they cease and do not arise, actually training in omniscience? Venerable Lord! Are those great bodhisattva beings who undertake training in order to terminate the six transcendent perfections and become detached from them, so that they cease and do not arise, actually training in omniscience? The same goes for the applications of mindfulness, and so on, and in the same vein, are those great bodhisattva beings who undertake training in order to terminate [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and become detached from them so that they cease and do not arise, actually training in omniscience?”

25.27 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, do you think that the real nature of physical forms can be terminated or abandoned, or does it cease?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

25.28 “Subhūti, do you think that the real nature of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness can be terminated or abandoned, or does it cease?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

25.29 “Subhūti, do you think that the real nature of the six transcendent perfections can be terminated or abandoned, or does it cease?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

25.30 “Subhūti, do you think that the real nature of the four applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, the real nature of [all other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, can be terminated or abandoned, or does it cease?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

25.31 Then, the Blessed One said, “Subhūti, so it is that when great bodhisattva beings train accordingly in the real nature of these attributes, they do train in omniscience. They train in the six transcendent perfections, they train in the four applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, they train in [all other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly will manifestly attain the transcendent perfection of all trainings. They cannot succumb to demonic forces, or to the gods within the realms of demonic forces. They will swiftly attain the level of an irreversible bodhisattva. They will abide within the perceptual range of their respective tathāgatas. They will also be established in the protective sacred doctrine. They will also refine their respective buddhafi elds. They will also bring sentient beings to maturity. They will also train in great loving kindness and great compassion.

25.32 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly will turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine, repeating it in the three times and in its twelve aspects. They will lead sentient beings, hundreds of billion trillions in number, to attain final nirvāṇa in the expanse of nirvāṇa where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates. They will ensure that the lineage of the tathāgatas will not be interrupted. They will also open the gates to immortality.

They will establish innumerable, countless, immeasurable sentient beings in the three vehicles. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly will train in omniscience.

25.33 “Subhūti, inferior sentient beings, on account of their volitions, cannot undertake this training, but great bodhisattva beings who wish to liberate all sentient beings from cyclic existence do undertake this training. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly will never be born among the denizens of the hells. They will not be born among animals, in the world of Yama, or in the domains of anguished spirits. They will not be born among frontier tribesmen. They will not be born among inferior classes of beings, among the destitute, or among servile classes. They will never be blind, hunchbacked, crippled, or mutilated. They will not have impaired vision. They will not be too tall, they will not be too short, nor will they be sallow in complexion. They will not become killers of living creatures, and so on. They will not resort to mistaken views. They will never sustain themselves through wrong livelihood. They will not acquire anything that is inauthentic. They will not acquire anything but the sacred doctrine. They will not acquire degenerate morality. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly will never be born among the long-lived gods.

25.34 “This is their skill in means. If they possess skill in means, they will become equipoised in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, the meditative stabilities, and the formless] absorptions, but they will not take rebirth [in the world systems of form and formlessness] due to these influences.

25.35 “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings possess skill in means, it is revealed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom that they may become equipoised in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, the meditative stabilities, and all the formless absorptions, but on arising [from these states] their skill in means ensures that they will not be reborn [in the higher realms] through the influence [of those meditations], nor will they be born among the long-lived gods. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly will refine all the attributes, powers, and assurances of the buddhas. They will not fall into the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas.”

25.36 Thereupon, Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Inasmuch as all things are naturally pure, what are the attributes of great bodhisattva beings that should be refined?” The Blessed One replied, “It is so, Subhūti! It is just as you have said. Subhūti, all things are naturally pure. Subhūti, inasmuch as all things are naturally pure, when these great bodhisattva beings train in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, it is their absence of fear and intimidation with respect to all things that constitutes the transcendent perfection of wisdom. But since ordinary people do not know this, for the sake of ordinary people, great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, and in the same vein, they practice [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience.

25.37 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly obtain the powers and assurances of the buddhas with respect to all things, and they will not regress to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas. They will transcend the mental activities, conceptual elaborations, and distractions of all sentient beings.

25.38 “For example, Subhūti, just as there are few places on earth where gold or silver are found, in the same way, Subhūti, those who have undertaken this training and practiced the transcendent perfection of wisdom are few in number. On the other hand, those sentient beings who undertake training with the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas as their objective are much more numerous.

25.39 “For example, Subhūti, just as there are few who have undertaken actions fitting for a universal monarch, while those who have undertaken actions fitting for a garrison commander are much more numerous, in the same way, Subhūti, those sentient beings who have entered upon the path that leads to omniscience are few in number, whereas those sentient beings who have entered upon the paths of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas are much more numerous.

25.40 “Also, Subhūti, among those persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, those who are inclined toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and who will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood are few in number, whereas those persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas but regress to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas are much more numerous.”

25.41 “Subhūti, those persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas and who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom without hesitation will enter into the irreversible level. Those who do not practice it without hesitation will not irreversibly attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who wish to enter into the irreversible level should train in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.

25.42 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom will never develop thoughts of miserliness. They will never develop thoughts of degenerate morality, thoughts of indolence, thoughts of distraction, and thoughts of stupidity. They will never develop thoughts of desire, thoughts of hatred, and thoughts of delusion. They will never develop thoughts of bewilderment and thoughts of carelessness. They will never develop thoughts of physical forms. They will never develop thoughts of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. In the same vein, they will never develop thoughts of the transcendent perfection of generosity, thoughts of the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and thoughts of the applications of mindfulness. They will never develop thoughts of the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and of enlightenment. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because when these great bodhisattva beings practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not consider and do not apprehend anything at all. Since they do not apprehend, they do not develop thoughts with regard to anything. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who have practiced this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom have acquired all the transcendent perfections. They have elucidated all the transcendent perfections. They have indeed possessed all the transcendent perfections. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because all the transcendent perfections are subsumed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.

25.43 “For example, Subhūti, just as sixty-two views are subsumed within the false view about perishable composites, in the same way, Subhūti, all the transcendent perfections are subsumed in this profound transcendent perfecti-

on of wisdom. For example, Subhūti, just as when the faculty of the life force has ceased at the time of a man's death all the other sense faculties will cease, in the same way, Subhūti, all the other five transcendent perfections are subsumed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. Subhūti, if there were no transcendent perfection of wisdom all these others would not be transcendent perfections. Therefore, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who wish to transcend all the transcendent perfections should train in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.

25.44 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom train in that which is exalted among all sentient beings. If you ask why, it is because they attain the unsurpassed state. Subhūti, do you think that the sentient beings inhabiting this world system of the great trichilocosm are many?” “Venerable Lord! The sentient beings of Jambudvīpa are many, let alone the sentient beings in this world system of the great trichilocosm!”

25.45 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, if all the sentient beings in this world system of the great trichilocosm, as many as there have been throughout time, had acquired a human body and all of them had then attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and a single son of enlightened heritage or daughter of enlightened heritage who followed the vehicle of the bodhisattvas had honored, venerated, and respected those tathāgatas, arhats and genuinely perfect buddhas, and performed all kinds of service on their behalf, offering for the duration of their lives robes, food, bedding, mats, medicines for the treatment of ailments, and [other] resources—Subhūti, do you think that son of enlightened heritage or daughter of enlightened heritage who followed the vehicle of the bodhisattvas would, on that basis, have generated much merit?” “Venerable Lord! There would be many merits. They would be immeasurable, Venerable Sugata!”

25.46 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, when a son of enlightened heritage or daughter of enlightened heritage who follows the vehicle of the bodhisattvas has heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and then retained, held, recited, mastered, and been attentive to it in the correct manner, and also practiced it with the real nature as his or her focus, that son of enlightened heritage or daughter of enlightened heritage who follows the vehicle of the bodhisattvas would generate much greater merit than the aforementioned merits. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed, has the great benefit of attaining unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

25.47 “Therefore, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who wish to become unsurpassed among all sentient beings, who wish to become a protector and refuge to all those sentient beings who are unprotected and without a refuge, who wish to become an ally of those who are without allies, who wish to become an eye to the blind, who wish to become a lamp for sentient beings who are immersed in the darkness of fundamental ignorance, who wish to attain genuinely perfect buddhahood, who wish to pursue the perceptual range of omniscience, who wish to express themselves through the emanational display of the buddhas, who wish to roar the lion's roar of the completely perfect buddhas, who wish to beat the great drum of the sacred doctrine, who wish to blow the conch of the sacred doctrine, who wish to enunciate the sacred doctrine, and who wish to enter into the deathless expanse—all of these should train in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. Great bodhisattva beings who train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom will never grasp these great acquisitions, but there is never any excellence that they will not

attain.”

25.48 “Venerable Lord! Will they also attain the excellence of the śrāvakas? Will they also attain the excellence of the pratyekabuddhas?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, they will indeed attain the excellence of the śrāvakas and they will also attain the excellence of the pratyekabuddhas, but they should not remain fixed in those two modes of excellence. Nor should they become dependent on them. Subhūti, having perceived them through their cognition and view, they should transcend these levels, and enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.

25.49 “Subhūti, the bodhisattvas who train in this manner indeed approach omniscience. They swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They become worthy recipients of the donations of the whole world, with its gods, humans, and antigods. They surpass all other worthy recipients of worldly donations—virtuous ascetics, brāhmin priests, śrāvakas, or pratyekabuddhas—and they become worthy recipients of patronage. They do not forsake the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they do not lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

25.50 “Subhūti, one should know that great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom in this manner possess the attribute of not regressing from omniscience. They give the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas a wide berth, and approach unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

25.51 “If, however, they were to think, ‘This is the transcendent perfection of wisdom! That is subsumed within this transcendent perfection of wisdom! Thereby I will attain omniscience!’—when they perceive in that way, they do not practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Rather, they should not perceive the nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, designating it with words such as, ‘This is the practice of the transcendent perfection of wisdom! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is contained herein!’

25.52 “When they neither perceive nor see anyone who possesses the transcendent perfection of wisdom, anything which would bring about the transcendent perfection of wisdom, or anyone who would attain emancipation through the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and then attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, great bodhisattva beings who practice accordingly do indeed practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

25.53 “If they think, ‘Since the expanse of reality, the real nature, and the finality of existence are fixed states, they are not the transcendent perfection of wisdom! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is not contained therein! No one will attain emancipation through this transcendent perfection of wisdom!’ then, Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings who practice accordingly do indeed practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

25.54 *This completes the twenty-fifth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Skill in Means.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE:

SKILL IN MEANS

25.A Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom {should} investigate {and become equipoised in} the meditative stability of emptiness ... the meditative stability of signlessness ... {and} the meditative stability of aspirationlessness ... {and should} investigate {and cultivate} the four applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {by determining} that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {and} the world system{s} of desire ... form, and ... formlessness are empty. By whatever means they make such determinations, they should do so with an unwavering mind. When the mind is unwavering, they will discern those phenomena exactly as they are. Even if they were to consider those phenomena, they would not actualize them {as if they were ultimately real}. If you ask why ... it is because such bodhisattvas will have trained well with regard to those phenomena which are empty of their own defining characteristics. They neither enhance nor delimit any phenomenon. They will not actualize them {as if they were ultimately real}. If you ask why, it is because ultimately they do not consider anything {as real} which actualizes, anything {as real} by which actualization takes place, or anything {as real} that is to be actualized.

25.B When great bodhisattva beings discern emptiness in all its finest aspects, they do not think that they should actualize it, but discern that they should investigate it. They discern that this is not the time for actualization and discern that this is the time for investigation. Even though great bodhisattva beings may not have established their minds in equipoise, they do focus their minds on [meditative] objects. Even though, in the meantime, great bodhisattva beings may not have degenerated from the attributes which are the aspects of enlightenment, and in the same vein, they may not have degenerated from [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and even though they may be free from contaminants, still they do not actualize [anything at all]. If you ask why ... it is because great bodhisattva beings are [already] established in the attributes which are the aspects of enlightenment ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom well know that this is not the time for actualization, but rather it is the time for investigation ... Those great bodhisattva beings should also reflect, ‘This is the time for the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom ... for cultivating the four applications of mindfulness ... {and} the [other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... {and} omniscience. However, this is not the time for cultivating the fruit of entering the stream ... the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth ... the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth ... the fruit of arhatship, or ... individual enlightenment.’ ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly investigate emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness ... the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path, but they do not actualize the finality of {relative} existence.

25.C For example ... suppose there was a heroic man, steadfast in his commitments, of fine physique, handsome,

beautiful to behold, and well trained in archery, who had also handled sharp weapons, perfected the sixty-four crafts, fully mastered all the arts, cultivated the eighteen great fields of knowledge, and who was outstanding, joyful, and crowd-pleasing ... If he were then ... to escort his parents, brother, sister, wife, son, daughter, and daughter-in-law, entering a remote and hair-raising wilderness where childish persons are afraid, he would exhort ... {them} as they went in, 'Do not fear! I will get you out, safely and securely, and swiftly release you from this fearful and most terrifying place.' Even if enemies, murderers, and a band of assailants were to harass them in that wilderness, he, being endowed with the supreme power of discernment, would lead ... {them} from that wilderness safely and securely ... but he would not wish to attack those sentient beings, nor would he be agitated ... because a man such as this would have been proficiently trained in archery, and ... in all other useful skills. Similarly ... when great bodhisattva beings have achieved and maintain a state of mind that is imbued with loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy and equanimity, at that time ... {they} are established in the four immeasurable aspirations and they perfect the six transcendent perfections. After perfecting ... {these} they will not achieve the cessation of contaminants {associated with the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas and rest therein} but they will absolutely investigate omniscience; and even though they are established in emptiness, signlessness and aspirationlessness, they will not be swayed or captivated by them. Indeed they will not actualize those gateways to liberation {to actualize the finality of relative existence}, which, by means of actualization, would cause them to regress to the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas. For example ... a bird does not fall to the ground, even though it moves through the air. It flies through the sky but does not dwell therein, and is unsullied. Similarly ... great bodhisattva beings investigate the gateways to liberation—emptiness, signlessness and aspirationlessness—and they are even established therein, but they do not actualize those gateways to liberation ... which, when actualized, would cause them to regress to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas, without perfecting the attainment of omniscience by means of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. For example ... when a powerful man trained in archery fires an arrow far into the sky, and then fires a succession of other arrows, one after another, he can prevent that [first] arrow from falling to the ground as long as he wishes, but if he were to think, 'Alas! I wish this arrow would fall to the ground!' and he then ceases to fire the subsequent arrows far into the sky, the arrows would all fall to the ground in succession, one after the other. Similarly ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom that is retained by skill in means do not actualize the finality of {relative} existence until the roots of virtuous action {of all sentient beings} have been brought to maturity in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. But when those roots of virtuous action have been brought to maturity ... then they do actualize the authentic finality of {relative} existence. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should make a definitive analysis in accord with the reality of these phenomena.

25.D While great bodhisattva beings have trained in this reality {of these phenomena}, trained in the finality of {relative} existence, trained in the real nature {of phenomena}, trained in the expanse of {relative} reality, trained in the emptiness that transcends extremes, trained in the emptiness of independent characteristics, and trained in the three gateways to liberation, and so forth, the difficult achievement of great bodhisattva beings is that they do not regress in the interim [before attaining unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment] ... Such great bodhisattva beings do not forsake all sentient beings and ... magnanimously think, 'I will not forsake all sentient beings. I alone should release all those sentient beings who maintain inauthentic doctrines.' So it is that great bodhisattva beings, for the

sake of those sentient beings, {only} then actualize emptiness ... signlessness ... and aspirationlessness as ... gateways to liberation. One should know that the non-actualization of the finality of {relative} existence by great bodhisattva beings until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment {for all sentient beings} indicates their skill in means with respect to {the non-actualization of} emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness as gateways to liberation.

25.E Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings always analyze the profound topics, which are as follows: the emptiness of internal phenomena [and the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities, and similarly, the four applications of mindfulness and [other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. They always analyze the three gateways to liberation. Accordingly, they also think, 'In order that these sentient beings who, over a long period of time, have fallen under the sway of evil associates, who continue to apprehend egotistical views, and likewise who apprehend {as ultimately real} [notions] of sentient beings, and so on, up to and including [notions of] experiencers and experiencing subjects, might abandon these {dualistic} views, I will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and teach the sacred doctrine to those sentient beings {so they may also attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment} who continue to apprehend in such ways!' At that time, even though great bodhisattva beings become equipoised in the meditative stability of emptiness ... in the meditative stability of signlessness ... or in the meditative stability of aspirationlessness, at that time they do {naturally} actualize {as fruits} all things that are free from contaminants, and yet, as far as the actualization of the finality of {relative} existence is concerned, they do not actualize that finality of {relative} existence through which the fruit of entering the stream, and so forth, up to and including individual enlightenment, are actualized {as fruits along the path}.

25.F Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly, and who have set their mind on enlightenment and these roots of virtuous action, do not, in the interim, actualize the finality of {relative} existence. They will not degenerate from the four meditative concentrations, the four formless concentrations, the four applications of mindfulness, and so on ... the noble eightfold path ... emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness—the gateways to liberation ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... When great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly, until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment they will not degenerate from all the [causal] attributes that are aspects of enlightenment, or from all the [fruitful] attributes of the buddhas. Always retained by skill in means and enhanced by virtuous attributes, their sense faculties become keener, unlike the sense faculties of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas.

25.G Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings perceive sentient beings, they think, 'For a long period of time these sentient beings have been engaging in four misconceptions, namely, the notion that there is permanence, the notion that there is happiness, the notion that there is a self, and the notion that existence is pleasant. I should attain enlightenment for the sake of those sentient beings. By any means I should swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and teach them the sacred doctrines that [all things are] impermanent, imbued with suffering, and without a self, and that nirvāṇa is peace.' Although they have set their mi-

nds accordingly [on enlightenment] and practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom through skill in means, they will not enter into the meditative stabilities of the buddhas {which in their minds would actualize the finality of relative existence}. At that time, they possess the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and though they may even become equipoised in those [fruitional] attributes, they will not actualize the finality of {relative} existence until {for all sentient beings} they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings perceive sentient beings, they think, ‘Alas! For a long period of time these sentient beings have fallen under the sway of evil associates, and they have continued to engage in an apprehending manner in the ... the concept of self; or the concept of sentient beings ... up to and including the concept of a knower; or ... the concept of physical forms ... feelings ... perceptions ... formative predispositions ... {and} consciousness, the concept of sensory elements, and the concept of sense fields. For the sake of those sentient beings, when I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, then I should ensure by any means, through the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless meditative absorptions, and the four attractive qualities of a bodhisattva, that those sentient beings act appropriately so that the faults of the perceptual views associated with those sentient beings do not arise!’ ... {and} ‘Alas! For a long period of time these sentient beings have engaged with signs, that is to say, they have engaged with signs denoting the female gender, the male gender, signs of visible forms, and signs of sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena. When I have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, then, by any means, I should ensure that those sentient beings act appropriately so that the faults associated with those sentient beings do not arise!’ When those endowed with skill in means have set their mind on enlightenment, even if they perfectly acquire the ten powers of the tathāgatas and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, on account of their view with regard to sentient beings, they will not actualize the finality of {relative} existence, but, after cultivating the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, they will {nevertheless} become perfected.

25.H It is impossible ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections, who investigate the emptiness of internal phenomena, and who possess such attributes of pristine cognition would perceive formative predispositions as imbued with happiness, describe formative predispositions as being imbued with happiness, or enter into association with the three world systems {of desire, form and formlessness}. That is an impossibility! When great bodhisattva beings practice accordingly, it should be asked, ‘How do great bodhisattva beings who wish to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment investigate these [fruitional] attributes and become equipoised in the meditative stability of emptiness {and the meditative stabilities of signlessness and aspirationlessness}, without actualizing the finality of {relative} existence through which the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, and individual enlightenment are attained, and in which non-arising, non-cessation, non-conditioning, and non-entity are not realized?’ When great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom are questioned by other great bodhisattva beings in that manner, if they respond that when they cultivate all the aspects of enlightenment, they should be attentive to emptiness ... signlessness and aspirationlessness, and ... to non-conditioning and non-cessation {and so forth}, instead of demonstrating the altruistic attitude that sentient beings should not be forsaken, or responding with skill in means, one should know that these sons ... or daughters of enli-

ghtened heritage have not been foreordained by the lord buddhas to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... because great bodhisattva beings do not speak of, demonstrate, or analyze their investigation of the irreversible level [of the pristine cognition of the non-dual omniscient mind, as though it were a secondary 'thing'] ... These great bodhisattva beings should know that great bodhisattva beings who have precisely investigated the six transcendent perfections on the irreversible level will not regress to the level of attenuated refinement [of the śrāvakas] ... Whether or not they have attained the six transcendent perfections, irreversible bodhisattvas will respond precisely in the manner of an irreversible great bodhisattva being ... If there are many bodhisattvas who are engaged in [the pursuit of] enlightenment, there are few who could respond in the manner of an irreversible great bodhisattva being, whether they abide on the purificatory ... or the non-purificatory levels ... {because} great bodhisattva beings of whom the level of irreversible pristine cognition has been foreordained {who, with the non-dual omniscient mind, perceive the indivisibility of the purity of the three spheres—of the subject, the object, and their interaction—as empty of ultimate existence} are few in number ... {and} will respond correctly. One should know that they have cultivated the roots of virtuous action. Those great bodhisattva beings will not be captivated by the whole world, with its gods, humans, and antigods.

25.I The emptiness of internal phenomena constitutes the sameness of great bodhisattva beings. Similarly, the emptiness of external phenomena, and ... in the same vein, the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, constitute the sameness of great bodhisattva beings ... All these aspects of emptiness constitute the sameness of great bodhisattva beings. Having trained in these great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

25.J The real nature of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the six transcendent perfections ... the four applications of mindfulness, and ... [all other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas {—which is that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence}, can{not} be terminated or abandoned, {n}or does it cease ... So it is that when great bodhisattva beings train accordingly in the real nature of these attributes, they do train in omniscience. They train in the six transcendent perfections ... in the four applications of mindfulness, and ... in [all other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... Great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly will manifestly attain the transcendent perfection of all trainings. They cannot succumb to demonic forces, or to the gods within the realms of demonic forces. They will swiftly attain the level of an irreversible bodhisattva. They will abide within the perceptual range of their respective tathāgatas. They will also be established in the protective sacred doctrine. They will also refine their respective buddhafiels. They will also bring sentient beings to maturity. They will also train in great loving kindness and great compassion ... {They} will turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine, repeating it in the three times and in its twelve aspects {that the truth of suffering is this—it can be diagnosed—it has been diagnosed; the truth of the origin of suffering is this—it can be abandoned—it has been abandoned; the truth of the cessation of suffering is this—it can be verified—it has been verified; the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering is this—it can be cultivated—it has been cultivated}. They will lead sentient beings, hundreds of billion trillions in number, to attain final nirvāṇa in the expanse of nirvāṇa where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates. They will ensure that the lineage of the tathāgatas will not be interrupted. They will also open the gates to immortality. They will establish innumerable, countless, immeasurable sentient beings in the three vehicles.

25.K Inferior sentient beings, on account of their volitions, cannot undertake this training, but great bodhisattva beings who wish to liberate all sentient beings from cyclic existence do undertake this training ... Great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly will never be born among the denizens of the hells ... among animals, in the world of Yama, or in the domains of anguished spirits. They will not be born among frontier tribesmen ... among inferior classes of beings, among the destitute, or among servile classes. They will never be blind, hunchbacked, crippled, or mutilated. They will not have impaired vision. They will not be too tall ... {or} too short, nor will they be sallow in complexion. They will not become killers of living creatures, and so on. They will not resort to mistaken views. They will never sustain themselves through wrong livelihood. They will not acquire anything that is inauthentic. They will not acquire anything but the sacred doctrine. They will not acquire degenerate morality ... Great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly will never be born among the long-lived gods. This is their skill in means ... When great bodhisattva beings possess skill in means, it is revealed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom that they may become equipoised in the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, the meditative stabilities, and all the formless absorptions, but on arising [from these states] their skill in means ensures that they will not be reborn [in the higher realms] through the influence {of those meditative concentrations and so forth}, nor will they be born among the long-lived gods ... Great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly will refine all the attributes, powers, and assurances of the buddhas. They will not fall into the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas.

25.L Inasmuch as all things are naturally pure {which is indicative that all things are non-arising and unceasing, neither afflicted nor purified and are without apprehension—where all such non-existent things are unconditioned}, when these great bodhisattva beings train in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, it is their absence of fear and intimidation with respect to all {non-existent} things that constitutes the transcendent perfection of wisdom. But since ordinary people do not know this, for the sake of ordinary people, great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, and ... they practice [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience ... Great bodhisattva beings who train accordingly obtain the powers and assurances of the buddhas with respect to all things, and they will not regress to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas. They will transcend the {dualistic} mental activities, conceptual elaborations, and distractions of all sentient beings. For example ... just as there are few places on earth where gold or silver are found, in the same way ... those who have undertaken this training and practiced the transcendent perfection of wisdom are few in number. On the other hand, those sentient beings who undertake training with the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas as their objective are much more numerous. For example ... just as there are few who have undertaken actions fitting for a universal monarch, while those who have undertaken actions fitting for a garrison commander are much more numerous, in the same way ... those sentient beings who have entered upon the path that leads to omniscience are few in number, whereas those sentient beings who have entered upon the paths of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas are much more numerous. Also ... among those persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, those who are inclined toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and who will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood are few in number, whereas those persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas but regress to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas are much more numerous.

25.M Those persons who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas and who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom without hesitation will enter into the irreversible level. Those who do not practice it without hesi-

tation will not irreversibly attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom will never develop {dualistic} thoughts of miserliness ... degenerate morality ... indolence ... distraction, and ... stupidity. They will never develop {dualistic} thoughts of desire ... hatred ... delusion ... bewilderment and ... carelessness. They will never develop {dualistic} thoughts of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the applications of mindfulness ... the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and of enlightenment. If you ask why ... it is because when these great bodhisattva beings practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not consider and do not apprehend anything at all {as ultimately real}. Since they do not apprehend {anything as ultimately real}, they do not develop thoughts with regard to anything {as ultimately real}. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who have practiced this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom have acquired ... elucidated ... {and} indeed possessed all the transcendent perfections. If you ask why ... it is because all the transcendent perfections are subsumed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. For example ... just as sixty-two views are subsumed within the false view about perishable composites, in the same way ... all the transcendent perfections are subsumed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. For example ... just as when the faculty of the life force has ceased at the time of a man's death all the other sense faculties will cease, in the same way ... all the other five transcendent perfections are subsumed in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom ... If there were no transcendent perfection of wisdom all these others would not be transcendent perfections. Therefore ... great bodhisattva beings who wish to transcend all the transcendent perfections should train in this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.

25.N Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom train in that which is exalted among all sentient beings ... because they attain the unsurpassed state ... If all the sentient beings in this world system of the great trichilocosm ... {had} attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and a single son ... or daughter of enlightened heritage who followed the vehicle of the bodhisattvas had honored, venerated, and respected those tathāgatas, arhats and genuinely perfect buddhas, and performed all kinds of service on their behalf ... {they would} have generated much merit ... {Yet} when a son ... or daughter of enlightened heritage who follows the vehicle of the bodhisattvas has heard this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and then retained, held, recited, mastered, and been attentive to it in the correct manner, and also practiced it with the real nature as his or her focus {which is that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence}, that son ... or daughter of enlightened heritage who follows the vehicle of the bodhisattvas would generate much greater merit than the aforementioned merits ... because this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed, has the great benefit of attaining unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Therefore ... great bodhisattva beings who wish to become unsurpassed among all sentient beings, who wish to become a protector and refuge to all those sentient beings ... who wish to become an ally of those who are without allies, who wish to become an eye to the blind, who wish to become a lamp for sentient beings who are immersed in the darkness of fundamental ignorance, who wish to attain genuinely perfect buddhahood, who wish to pursue the perceptual range of omniscience, who wish to express themselves through the emanational display of the buddhas, who wish to roar the lion's roar of the completely perfect buddhas, who wish to beat the great drum of the sacred doctrine, who wish to blow the conch of the sacred doctrine, who wish to enunciate the sacred doctrine, and who wish to enter into the deathless expanse—all of these should train in this profound transcendent per-

fection of wisdom. Great bodhisattva beings who train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom will never grasp these great acquisitions, but there is never any excellence that they will not attain.

25.O {Great bodhisattva beings} will indeed attain the excellence of the śrāvakas and ... pratyekabuddhas, but they should not remain fixed in those two modes of excellence. Nor should they become dependent on them ... Having perceived them through their cognition and view, they should transcend these levels, and enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas ... The bodhisattvas who train in this manner indeed approach omniscience. They swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They become worthy recipients of the donations of the whole world, with its gods, humans, and antigods. They surpass all other worthy recipients of worldly donations—virtuous ascetics, brāhmin priests, śrāvakas, or pratyekabuddhas—and they become worthy recipients of patronage. They do not forsake the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they do not lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... One should know that great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom in this manner possess the attribute of not regressing from omniscience. They give the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas a wide berth, and approach unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If, however, they were to think, ‘This is the transcendent perfection of wisdom! That is subsumed within this transcendent perfection of wisdom! Thereby I will attain omniscience!’—when they perceive in that way, they do not practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Rather, they should not perceive the nature of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, designating it with words such as, ‘This is the practice of the transcendent perfection of wisdom! The transcendent perfection of wisdom is contained herein!’ When they neither perceive nor see anyone who possesses the transcendent perfection of wisdom, anything which would bring about the transcendent perfection of wisdom, or anyone who would attain emancipation through the transcendent perfection of wisdom {as ultimately real}, and then attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, great bodhisattva beings who practice accordingly do indeed practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If they think, ‘Since the expanse of {relative} reality, the real nature {of phenomena}, and the finality of {relative} existence are fixed states, they are not the transcendent perfection of wisdom! ... {and it} is not contained therein! No one will attain emancipation through this transcendent perfection of wisdom!’ then ... those great bodhisattva beings who practice accordingly do indeed practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

COMMENTARY

So we can see from the Buddha (above) that a great bodhisattva being ~ in order to awaken every conjured individuated being, in order to not let *any* arrow fall to the ground, in order to bring *every* brother, sister, husband, wife, mother, father, daughter-in-law, and so forth out of the hair-raising wilderness, until no brother, sister, husband, wife, mother, father, daughter-in-law, and so forth is left behind ~ on account of their view with regard to sentient beings, will—using skill in means—purposefully not enter the meditative stabilities of the buddhas, to actualize the finality of ‘relative’ existence. Here the Buddha reveals (above): *“Great bodhisattva beings ... magnanimously think, ‘I will not forsake all sentient beings. I alone should release all those sentient beings who maintain inauthentic doctrines.’ So it is that great bodhisattva beings, for the sake of those sentient beings, {only} then actualize emptiness ... signlessness ... and aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation ... When those with skill in means have set their minds accordingly [on enlightenment] and practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, **even if they perfectly acquire the ten powers of the tathāgatas and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, on account of their view with***

regard to sentient beings, they will not actualize the finality of {relative} existence ... {For} although they have set their minds accordingly [on enlightenment] and practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom through skill in means, they will not enter into the meditative stabilities of the buddhas ... {For just as} a powerful man trained in archery fires an arrow far into the sky, and then fires a succession of other arrows, one after another, he can prevent that [first] arrow from falling to the ground as long as he wishes ... Similarly ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom that is retained by skill in means do not actualize the finality of {relative} existence until the roots of virtuous action {of all sentient beings} have been brought to maturity in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. But when those roots of virtuous action have been brought to maturity in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, then they do actualize the authentic finality of {relative} existence. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should make a definitive analysis in accord with the reality of these phenomena.”

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A great bodhisattva being who trains in the transcendent perfection of wisdom rejects the state of mind that makes anything real or “actual”, which would actualize something in their mind as real. And if such a great bodhisattva being perceives and relates to something within the confines of ‘relative’ existence as though it were equal to space and without intrinsic defining characteristics, then they have not made it real or “actual”, thereby not actualizing it in their mind as real. **Fruitional outcomes in ‘relative’ reality will actualize of themselves, without the mind making them ultimately real and actualizing them in their mind as real.** Yet what is the fruitional outcome of a great bodhisattva being, who—without skill in means—seeks individual enlightenment and the actualization of the finality of ‘relative’ existence? Firstly they have “actualized” something in their mind as real, and secondly they have not achieved emancipation for their entire undivided natural luminosity of mind—still trapped as conjured individuated beings—within the realm of ‘relative’ existence. Here the fruitional outcome of such an unskilled bodhisattva is the falling from the heights of genuine enlightenment to the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, who are fixated on individual enlightenment. So how can a great bodhisattva being—using skill in means—actualize the finality of ‘relative’ existence? By not actualizing the finality of ‘relative’ existence of course, and by awakening every part of their natural luminosity of mind to the path of non-actualization. And when every part of Our natural luminosity of mind has not made anything real or “actual”, only then will the finality of ‘relative’ existence be actualized and brought to an end. Thus does the Buddha reveal (above): *“Bodhisattvas will have trained well with regard to those phenomena which are empty of their own defining characteristics. They neither enhance nor delimit any phenomenon. They will not actualize them {as if they were ultimately real}. If you ask why, it is because **ultimately they do not consider anything {as real} which actualizes, anything {as real} by which actualization takes place, or anything {as real} that is to be actualized.**”*

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Within the confines of ‘relative’ existence there is only the ‘one and only’ undivided mind to be awakened to the ultimate truth, and only the ‘one and only’ undivided mind to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ~ for in ultimate reality Our undivided mind is not at all trapped within the confines of ‘relative’ existence, and can never, and has never, and will never attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. **If a part of Our mind in ‘relative’ existence has acquired the ten powers of the tathāgatas and the eighteen**

distinct qualities of the buddhas—while other parts of Our mind have not—how can We be said to have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? This would be impossible! ~ if We were perceiving Our mind through the omniscient mind, that sees no division between the mind of the very least of Our brethren and the mind of a perfectly enlightened buddha. And for those who do not perceive Our mind through the omniscient mind, as the ‘one and only’ undivided mind ~ who seek individual enlightenment for their individual self, and not the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for their ‘one and only’ undivided Self ~ who seek to actualize the finality of ‘relative’ existence for a self they believe to be their true and only self, they, like a wingless bird, will swiftly fall from the heights of enlightenment to the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas. Thus does the Buddha expound (above): *“Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly investigate emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness ... but they do not actualize the finality of {relative} existence ... After perfecting the six transcendent perfections, they will not achieve the cessation of contaminants {associated with the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas and rest therein} but they will absolutely investigate omniscience; and even though they are established in emptiness, signlessness and aspirationlessness ... they will not actualize those gateways to liberation {to actualize the finality of relative existence}, which, by means of actualization, would cause them to regress to the levels of the śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas.”*

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX: REJOICING

26.1 Then Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, thought, “If great bodhisattva beings surpass sentient beings while just practicing this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, what need one say when they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood, the genuinely perfect enlightenment! If even those sentient beings whose minds are just introduced to omniscience find wealth, and if even those sentient beings sustain themselves through noble livelihoods, what need one say about those who have set their minds on the aspiration toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment! Those sentient beings who have set their minds on the aspiration toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and even those who have not yet done so, are to be envied when they always listen to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

26.2 Then Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, took coral tree flowers and scattered them, scattered them more vigorously, and scattered them with utmost vigor toward the Tathāgata, Arhat, Genuinely Perfect Buddha, saying, “By this merit may the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, with their higher focus intent on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, perfect the attributes of the buddhas! May they also perfect omniscience! May they also perfect the attributes that naturally arise, and may they also perfect the attributes that are free from contaminants!

26.3 “Venerable Lord! I do not in the slightest think that the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas will ever regress from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and become śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas. I do, however, think that they will long for unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and that they will aspire even more toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Seeing the sufferings of those involved in cyclic existence, they will resolve to seek the benefit of the whole world, with its gods, humans, and antigods, and seek to alleviate [its sufferings]. Great bodhisattva beings who possess this mind will always think, ‘Once I have crossed beyond cyclic existence, should I save those sentient beings who

have not yet crossed beyond it? Once I have been liberated from cyclic existence, should I liberate those sentient beings who have not yet been liberated? Once I have been inspired, should I inspire those sentient beings who have not yet been inspired? Once I have attained final nirvāṇa, should I bring to final nirvāṇa those sentient beings who have not attained final nirvāṇa?’

26.4 “Venerable Lord! How much merit will those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage accrue—those who rejoice in the minds of great bodhisattva beings who are beginners entering the vehicle, and similarly, who rejoice in the minds of great bodhisattva beings who have been practicing over a long period of time, and similarly, who rejoice in the minds of irreversible great bodhisattva beings, and similarly, who rejoice in the minds of those great bodhisattva beings who are tied to only one more rebirth?”

26.5 The Blessed One then replied to Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, “Kauśika, you may be able to measure with weights this world system of the four continents, but you cannot measure the merits of those who have set their mind on enlightenment deriving from the rejoicing of those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage. Kauśika, you may be able to measure with a tip of a hair, split one hundredfold, all the drops of water in the oceans of this world system of the great trichilocosm, but you cannot measure the merits of those who have set their mind on enlightenment deriving from the rejoicing of those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage.”

26.6 Then Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Those who would not rejoice in sentient beings who set their mind on enlightenment are inspired by demonic forces. Venerable Lord! Those who would not rejoice in sentient beings who set their mind on enlightenment are on the side of demonic forces. Venerable Lord! Those who would not rejoice in sentient beings who set their mind on enlightenment have been reborn here after dying in the domain of demonic forces. If one were to ask why, it is because those who have successfully set their mind on enlightenment and dedicated the merit toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment actually shatter the domain of demonic forces. One should rejoice in those who have set their mind on the aspiration toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Those who do not forsake the Buddha, who do not forsake the Dharma, and who do not forsake the Saṅgha should rejoice in those who have set their mind on enlightenment. Then, having rejoiced in them setting their mind on enlightenment, they should dedicate the merit to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, without engaging in the notion that the setting of the mind on enlightenment is singular, or the notion that it is dual, or the notion that it is plural.”

26.7 The Blessed One replied, “Kauśika, It is so! It is just as you have said. Those who rejoice in these [bodhisattvas] who set their mind on enlightenment will swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Even those who engage in the conduct of a bodhisattva will swiftly please the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas. They will never again perceive unpleasant sights. They will never hear unpleasant sounds. They will never smell unpleasant odors. They will never savor unpleasant tastes. They will never touch unpleasant tangible objects. They will never be conscious of unpleasant mental phenomena. They will never lack the sight of the buddhas. They will move from buddhafiield to buddhafiield, and they will venerate the lord buddhas. They will also develop the roots of virtuous actions because they are of benefit to all sentient beings. If you ask why, it is

because those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have rejoiced in the roots of virtuous action of beginners entering the vehicle, who are innumerable and immeasurable in number. Similarly, they have rejoiced in the roots of virtuous action of those bodhisattvas who abide on the first level, and similarly of those great bodhisattva beings who abide on [the other levels], up to and including the tenth level, and similarly of those great bodhisattva beings who are tied to only one more rebirth.

26.8 “Those who have actualized the roots of virtuous actions will approach unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment; after attaining manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment they will bring innumerable, countless, measureless sentient beings to final nirvāṇa in the expanse of nirvāṇa, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates.

26.9 “For that reason, Kauśika, once the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have rejoiced in the roots of virtuous action, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who have first begun to set their mind on enlightenment, they should dedicate this merit toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and they should make this dedication in such a way that they do not engage with mind and do not engage with anything other than mind. Similarly, once they have rejoiced in those roots of virtuous action possessed by great bodhisattva beings who already abide on [the levels], up to and including the tenth level, and similarly, in those roots of virtuous action possessed by great bodhisattva beings who are tied to only one more rebirth, they should dedicate this merit toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and they should make this dedication in such a way that they do not engage with mind and do not engage with anything other than mind.”

26.10 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How does the illusion-like mind attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, do you think that you should consider this illusion-like mind?” “Venerable Lord! I do not consider illusion or illusion-like mind.”

26.11 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, do you think that you should consider that mind which would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, but in which there is no illusion, nor any illusion-like mind?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

26.12 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, do you think that you should consider anything which would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, but which is other than illusion, or other than illusion-like mind?” “Venerable Lord! I do not consider anything which would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, but which is other than illusion, or other than illusion-like mind. Venerable Lord! Since I do not consider anything extraneous, what thing, existent or non-existent, could arise? Nor could any phenomena, absolutely void, be attributed and sustained as existent or non-existent. Anything that could not be sustained as existent or non-existent, could not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Indeed, anything non-existent could not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because all things that are subject to affliction or purification are non-existent.

26.13 “Venerable Lord! So it is that the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely void, and similarly, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity are all absolutely void. In the same vein, [all other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including enlightenment, are absolutely void. Anything that is absolutely void is neither to be cultivated nor not to be cultivated. Since this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely void, it cannot attain anything at all. Since this transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely void, how do great bodhisattva beings attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, dependent on the transcendent perfection of wisdom? Since unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is also absolutely void, how does that which is void actualize that which is void?”

26.14 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, it is so! It is so! It is just as you have said. The transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and the transcendent perfection of generosity are all absolutely void. In the same vein, [all causal attributes], up to and including enlightenment, and all [fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience, are absolutely void. Subhūti, it is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely void that, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings can attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, which is [also] absolutely void.

26.15 “Subhūti, if the transcendent perfection of wisdom were not absolutely void, and in the same vein, [if all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, were not absolutely void, they would not resort to the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, would not be existent.

26.16 Therefore, Subhūti, it is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is void, and [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are void, that great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, dependent on the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

26.17 “Venerable Lord! Although something which is void cannot attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, which is [also] void, great bodhisattva beings who practice the sacred doctrine and its profundities do indeed attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!”

26.18 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have said. Great bodhisattva beings do indeed practice the sacred doctrine and its profundities. Subhūti, although great bodhisattva beings practice the sacred doctrine and its profundities, they achieve something difficult—that is to say, they do not at all actualize the goals either of the level of the śrāvakas or of the level of the pratyekabuddhas.”

26.19 “Venerable Lord! As I understand the meaning of the teachings spoken by the Lord, great bodhisattva beings do not at all achieve something difficult. If you ask why, it is because they do not apprehend any doctrine or goal

that could be actualized. They do not apprehend even the transcendent perfection of wisdom, through which anything could be actualized, nor do they apprehend anything that could bring about actualization. So, when all things are non-apprehensible, what is the doctrine, what is the purpose, what is the intelligence that would bring about actualization? What is the doctrine which, having realized all these things, would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?

26.20 “Venerable Lord! This non-apprehending conduct is the conduct of the bodhisattvas. Great bodhisattva beings who practice accordingly will acquire a state that is without obscuration and without blindness with respect to all things. Venerable Lord! If, when such teachings are revealed, the minds of great bodhisattva beings are not afraid, not terrified, not fearful, and not frightened, and if they will not become frightened, then they are actually practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom. But they do not consider the fact that they are practicing it. They do not consider the fact that they are not practicing it. They do not consider the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Nor do they consider that they should attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

26.21 “Great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly do not think, ‘I should shun the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas!’ They do not think, ‘I should approach omniscience!’ If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, just as space, for example, does not think, ‘I am near or far from anything!’ owing, Venerable Lord, to the fact that space is not particularized, owing to its immobility, and because it has no concepts, in the same way, Venerable Lord, although great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not think, ‘I am near or far from the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas and I am approaching unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’ If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is non-conceptual.

26.22 “Venerable Lord! Just as an illusory person does not think, ‘This illusion is far from or near to me!’ or ‘I am far from or near to this illusion!’ or ‘This assembled crowd of spectators is near or far from me!’ owing, Venerable Lord, to the fact that an illusory person has no concepts, in the same way, Venerable Lord, although great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not think, ‘I am far from the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas and I am approaching unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’

26.23 “Venerable Lord! Just as an optical aberration does not think, ‘This object generated by reflection in a mirror or in water is far from or near to me!’ owing, Venerable Lord, to the fact that an optical aberration has no concepts, in the same way, Venerable Lord, although great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not think, ‘I am far from the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas and I am approaching unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’ If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom have no concepts.

26.24 “Venerable Lord! To great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, nothing is pleasant or unpleasant. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because the essential nature of anything through which pleasant or unpleasant things could be cognized is non-apprehensible. Venerable Lord! Just as to the tathā-

gatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas there is nothing that is pleasant or unpleasant, in the same way, Venerable Lord, to great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, there is nothing that is pleasant or unpleasant.

26.25 “Venerable Lord! Just as the level of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas is one on which all thoughts, conceptions, and imaginations have invariably been abandoned owing to its non-conceptualization with respect to all things, [in the same way, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom have abandoned all thoughts, concepts, and imaginations].

26.26 “Venerable Lord! Just as the phantom emanations of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas do not think, ‘The level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas is far from me, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is near!’ owing, Venerable Lord, to the fact that these phantom emanations of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are without conceptualization, in the same way, Venerable Lord, although great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not think, ‘The level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas is far from me, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is near!’

26.27 “Venerable Lord! Just as when the tathāgatas create a phantom to act on their behalf, although it does act according to its objective, it does not think, ‘I am acting according to that objective!’ owing, Venerable Lord, to the fact that the tathāgatas and their phantom emanations are without conceptual imagination, in the same way, Venerable Lord, the transcendent perfection of wisdom also acts according to the objective for which it is emanated, but does not think, ‘I am acting according to a certain objective!’

26.28 “Venerable Lord! Just as when a carpenter or the skilled apprentice of a carpenter makes a machine in the shape of a woman, or in the shape of a man, or in the shape of an elephant, or in the shape of a bull, although this machine may function according to its purpose, it does not think, ‘I am performing [such and such a task], according to that purpose!’ owing, Venerable Lord, to the fact that such machines are without conceptual imagination, in the same way, Venerable Lord, although the transcendent perfection of wisdom does act according to the objective for which it is explained, it does not think, ‘I am acting according to a certain purpose!’ If one were to ask why, it is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is non-conceptual.”

26.29 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, is it only the transcendent perfection of wisdom which is non-conceptual, or is the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and in the same vein, [all the other transcendent perfections], down to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity, non-conceptual?”

26.30 “Senior Śāradvatīputra, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and in the same vein, [all the other transcendent perfections], down to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity, are also non-conceptual.”

26.31 “Senior Subhūti, are [the sense fields], from the sense field of sights to the sense field of the mental faculty,

also non-conceptual? Similarly, are [the aspects of consciousness], from visual consciousness to mental consciousness, also non-conceptual? Similarly, are feelings, from those conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded to those conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded, also non-conceptual? Senior Subhūti, are the meditative concentrations also non-conceptual? Similarly, are the immeasurable aspirations and the formless absorptions also non-conceptual? Are the applications of mindfulness also non-conceptual? Are [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, also non-conceptual? Are the three gateways to liberation also non-conceptual? Similarly, are the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas also non-conceptual? Senior Subhūti, is enlightenment also non-conceptual? Senior Subhūti, are the unconditioned elements also non-conceptual?" "Senior Śāradvatīputra, to be brief, all things are non-conceptual!" "Senior Subhūti, if all things are non-conceptual, how has this differentiation come about with regard to the cycle of existence with its five realms of living beings, namely, the denizens of the hells, the animal domain, the world of anguished spirits, the world of the gods, and the world of humankind? How has this distinction come about between those who have entered the stream, those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, those who are arhats, those who are pratyekabuddhas, and those who are tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas?"

26.32 Thereupon, Senior Subhūti replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: "Senior Śāradvatīputra, those sentient beings who actualize the impact of past actions through body, speech, and mind, motivated by erroneous views, have experienced the ripening of past actions corresponding to the roots of their particular volitions. This causes the materializations of the sense field of sights which the denizens of the hells, the animal domain, the world of Yama, the gods, and humans possess.

26.33 "Senior Śāradvatīputra, when you asked how these distinctions have come about between those who have entered the stream, and so on, up to and including those who are tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, Senior Śāradvatīputra, those who have entered the stream are non-conceptual, and the fruit of having entered the stream is also non-conceptual. Similarly, those who are tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, those who are arhats, arhatship, those who are pratyekabuddhas, individual enlightenment, and also the genuinely perfect buddhas are all non-conceptual. Senior Śāradvatīputra, those tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who appeared in the past were also non-conceptual, and they had abandoned all thoughts and concepts. Those tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who will appear in the future will also be non-conceptual, and they will have abandoned all thoughts and concepts. Those tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who are alive and reside, teaching the sacred doctrine, at the present time, in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, are also non-conceptual, and they have abandoned all thoughts and concepts. For this reason, Senior Śāradvatīputra, one should know that once the real nature without conceptual notions has been appraised, and similarly, once the finality of existence without concepts and the expanse of reality without concepts have been appraised, all things are without concepts. Senior Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings should practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in a non-conceptual manner. When they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom without concepts, they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all things that are without concepts."

26.34 Then Senior Śāradvatīputra addressed Senior Subhūti as follows: “Senior Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, practice the essential doctrine? Or else are they practicing the essenceless doctrine?”

26.35 Senior Subhūti replied to Senior Śāradvatīputra as follows: “Senior Śāradvatīputra, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom practice the essenceless doctrine. If you ask why, Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is because this transcendent perfection of wisdom is essenceless. Similarly, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline and the transcendent perfection of generosity are all essenceless. Similarly, [all the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience, are essenceless. If you ask why, Senior Śāradvatīputra, it is because when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not even apprehend or consider essencelessness, how could they possibly apprehend or consider an essence! Since they neither apprehend nor consider the essenceless [transcendental perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and they neither apprehend nor consider [the other essenceless attributes and attainments], up to and including the essenceless omniscience, how then could they possibly apprehend or consider [the essence of those attributes], from the transcendent perfection of wisdom to omniscience?”

26.36 Then the multitude of divine princes inhabiting the world system of desire thought, “Those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who cultivate unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment; who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, just as it has been explained; and who, despite practicing with that goal, do not remain on the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas because they do not actualize the finality of existence [associated with those levels], are all worthy of homage. For this reason, too, great bodhisattva beings who do not realize the uniformity of all things are worthy of homage.”

26.37 Then, Senior Subhūti replied to those divine princes as follows: “O divine princes, the astonishing singular difficulty for those bodhisattvas is not that they do not realize the uniformity of all virtuous attributes, by realizing which they would remain on the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas, but, divine princes, their utmost difficulty is that they don the armor that resolves to establish innumerable, countless, and immeasurable hundreds of thousands of sentient beings in final nirvāṇa, while those sentient beings whom they would lead to final nirvāṇa are utterly non-apprehensible.

26.38 “Those great bodhisattva beings who think they should seek to train all sentient beings and then, having really set out for unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, don their armor, resolving to train all sentient beings, might as well think they should seek to train space. If you ask why, sentient beings should be regarded as voidness because space itself is void. Similarly, sentient beings should be regarded as emptiness because space itself is emptiness, and sentient beings should be regarded as essencelessness because space itself is essenceless. For this reason, divine princes, it is difficult for great bodhisattva beings who don the armor of great compassion for the sake of sentient beings who do not exist. Those who, for the sake of sentient beings, think they should don the armor of great compassion might as well think they should seek to do battle with space.

26.39 “Furthermore, the armor which great bodhisattva beings don and the sentient beings for whose sake they actually don their armor are both non-apprehensible. If you ask why, the armor should be regarded as void because sentient beings are void. If, when this is explained, great bodhisattva beings are not discouraged and not utterly disheartened, they do practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, it is because the physical forms that are void constitute the nature of sentient beings, who are also void. Similarly, the feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness that are void constitute the nature of sentient beings, who are also void. Similarly, the physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness that are void constitute the nature of the six transcendent perfections that are also void, and so on, in the same vein as before, up to and including omniscience.

26.40 “If, when it is taught that all things are void, great bodhisattva beings are not discouraged, not terrified, not fearful, not afraid, and will not be afraid, they do practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.” Then the Blessed One addressed Senior Subhūti: “Why, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings not become discouraged with regard to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom?”

26.41 “Venerable Lord! Great bodhisattva beings do not become discouraged with regard to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom owing to the non-existence of all things. Similarly, great bodhisattva beings do not become discouraged with regard to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom owing to the fact that all things are void and calm. For this reason, Venerable Lord, great bodhisattva beings do not become discouraged with regard to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because all things are non-apprehensible in terms of those who would be discouraged, the agent of their discouragement, or the object of their discouragement.

26.42 “Venerable Lord! If, when this is explained, great bodhisattva beings do not grow idle, and are not discouraged, not terrified, not fearful, not afraid, and will not be afraid, then they really do practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If one were to ask why, it is because all things are non-apprehensible in terms of those who would be discouraged, the agent of their discouragement, or the object of their discouragement. The gods headed by Indra, those headed by Brahmā, and the gods headed by Prajāpati always pay homage to great bodhisattva beings who practice accordingly.”

26.43 The Blessed One then replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, it is not only the ephemeral gods headed by Indra, the gods headed by Brahmā, and the gods headed by Prajāpati who always pay homage to those great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, but also the manifestly sublime gods, namely, the gods of the Śubhakarṣna realms, those of the Bṛhatphala realms, and those of the Pure Abodes, will always pay homage to those great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. Subhūti, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who reside and are present, teaching the sacred doctrine, in the innumerable, countless, immeasurable world systems of the ten directions will always turn their enlightened intention toward those great bodhisattva beings so that these great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom might completely perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and similarly, so that they might completely perfect [the other transcendent perfections], down to and including

the transcendent perfection of generosity, and then completely perfect [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience!

26.44 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and those great bodhisattva beings to whom the lord buddhas direct their enlightened intention, should be accepted so that they progress to buddhahood. “Subhūti, if all the sentient beings, as many as there are, in world systems as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, were to transform into malign demonic forces, and if each of these demonic forces were also to emanate again just as many malign and demonic forces, they would all be powerless to obstruct the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment of great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

26.45 “Again, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings are endowed with two attributes, they will not be subdued by any of those demonic forces. If you ask what these two entail, they are to regard all things as emptiness and not to abandon any sentient beings. Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings are endowed with two [other] attributes, they will not be subdued by all those demonic forces. If you ask what constitutes these two, it entails that they should do exactly what they say they will do, and that they should be kept in mind by the lord buddhas.

26.46 “Those gods will think to approach great bodhisattva beings who practice accordingly, and having approached, they will venerate them and ask questions and counter-questions, enthusiastically saying, ‘O child of enlightened heritage! You should dwell in accordance with the abiding state of emptiness, the abiding state of signlessness, and the abiding state of aspirationlessness. O child of enlightened heritage! You should swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, O child of enlightened heritage, it is because when you dwell in accordance with these abiding states, you will become a sanctuary for those without sanctuary, an island for those without an island, and a light for sentient beings who are shrouded in darkness. If you ask why, O child of enlightened heritage, it is because the lord buddhas who reside and are present, teaching the sacred doctrine in the innumerable, countless, and immeasurable world systems of the ten directions, surrounded by their monastic communities of fully ordained monks, will proclaim the names and clans of these great bodhisattva beings while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering their aphorisms.’

26.47 “For example, Subhūti, I right now proclaim the name and the clan of the great bodhisattva being Ratnaketu, while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms! Similarly, I proclaim the name and the clan of the great bodhisattva being Śikhin, while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms! And, I proclaim the names and the clans of those great bodhisattva beings who practice chastity, dependent on this very transcendent perfection of wisdom, in the buddhafiield of the tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha Akṣobhya, while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms!

26.48 “Subhūti, the lord buddhas who reside and are present, teaching the sacred doctrine in the world systems of the eastern direction, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, will, while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms, proclaim the names and clans of those great bodhisattva beings in this buddhafiield, who practice chastity, commencing from this very transcendent perfection of wisdom.

26.49 “In the same vein, the lord buddhas who reside and are present, teaching the sacred doctrine in the world systems of the southern direction, the western direction, the northern direction, the intermediate directions, the nadir, and the zenith, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, will, while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms, proclaim the names and clans of those great bodhisattva beings in those [respective] buddhafiels, who practice chastity, commencing from this very transcendent perfection of wisdom.

26.50 “The lord buddhas who reside in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, will, while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms, proclaim the names and clans of those great bodhisattva beings who, taken into the fold after they have first begun to set their mind on enlightenment, will complete the path of perfect enlightenment, and then perfect the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and also attain omniscience. “If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because great bodhisattva beings for whom such actions are difficult will ensure that the lineage of the buddhas will not be interrupted.”

26.51 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! While teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms, do the lord buddhas proclaim the names and clans of those bodhisattvas who may provisionally regress, or those of great bodhisattva beings who will not regress?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti! Indeed there are irreversible great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. They are indeed irreversible. Subhūti, there are also foreordained great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. The lord buddhas will proclaim their names and clans, while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms. ”

26.52 “Venerable Lord! Who are they?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, there are great bodhisattva beings who reside in the buddhafiels of the tathāgata Akṣobhya, and who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom in accordance with the training of that tathāgata. The lord buddhas will proclaim their names and clans, while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms.

26.53 “Moreover, Subhūti, there are great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who are absolutely intent on this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, but who have not accepted that phenomena are non-arising; those who are intent on the emptiness of all things but have not accepted that phenomena are non-arising; and those who are intent on the voidness, hollowness, vacuity, and essencelessness of all things, but have not accepted that phenomena are non-arising. Subhūti, the lord buddhas will proclaim the names and clans of all those great bodhisattva beings while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms.

26.54 “Subhūti, there are also those great bodhisattva beings who, having transcended the levels of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas, are certain to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Subhūti, the lord buddhas, while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms, will proclaim the names and clans of all those great bodhisattva beings, for they will abide on the irreversible levels, and abiding thereon, they will attain omniscience.

26.55 “Moreover, Subhūti, when this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is explained, if those sons of en-

lightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, after studying its meanings, become free from doubt, free from hesitation, and free from delusion, and their minds accept that this exactly accords with the teachings given by the tathāgatas, they will have the confidence that comes from studying the sacred doctrine, and they will gradually study this transcendent perfection of wisdom more extensively in the presence of the tathāgata Akṣobhya and those great bodhisattva beings. Having studied it, they will indeed come to abide on the irreversible levels, and abiding thereon, they will also attain omniscience.

26.56 “Subhūti, since those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas will be revered even upon hearing this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, how much more so will be those who recite it aloud, keep it, and attain the real nature? Those bodhisattvas will swiftly abide on the irreversible levels. Swiftly and exclusively, they will then attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

26.57 “Venerable Lord! Since, when they abide in the real nature, they do not apprehend anything at all, and there is nothing that exists, how then will great bodhisattva beings abiding therein swiftly be established on the irreversible levels and swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? Venerable Lord! When, apart from the real nature, they do not apprehend anything at all, who will abide in this real nature? Who will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? Who will abide in the real nature and then teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings? Venerable Lord! When the real nature is itself non-apprehensible, who will abide in the real nature and then attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, let alone abide exclusively in the real nature and teach the sacred doctrine? That would be impossible!”

26.58 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, you have said, ‘When, apart from the real nature, they do not apprehend anything at all, who will abide in the real nature? Who, abiding in the real nature, will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? Who will abide in the real nature and then teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings? When the real nature is itself non-apprehensible, who will abide in the real nature and then attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, let alone abide exclusively in the real nature and teach the sacred doctrine? That would be impossible!’ That is so, Subhūti! It is as you have said. Subhūti, there is nothing at all that would, apart from the real nature, abide in the real nature; that would, abiding in the real nature, attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment; and that would, abiding in the real nature, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings. If you ask why, Subhūti, the real nature neither arises nor ceases, and its modifications are non-apprehensible. Subhūti, who would abide in that which neither arises nor ceases, and where modifications are non-apprehensible? Who, abiding therein, would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? Who, abiding therein, would teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings? That would be impossible!”

26.59 Thereupon, Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is profound. Great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom achieve that which is difficult. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because there is nothing termed the

real nature which they would apprehend. There is nothing that would abide in the real nature, nor is there anything that would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Nor is there anything that would teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings! Venerable Lord! When great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, even though they investigate and meditate accordingly, they will not be discouraged thereby. They will not succumb to doubt, and they will not be deluded.”

26.60 Then Senior Subhūti addressed Śakra, mighty lord of the gods: “Kauśika! You have said that great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who do not succumb to doubt and are undeluded with regard to those things, even though they investigate these things, achieve that which is difficult. Kauśika! Since all things are empty, who is there who would succumb to doubt and be deluded?”

26.61 Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, replied to Senior Subhūti, “Venerable Subhūti, whatever doctrines you are teaching, you teach all of them commencing exclusively from emptiness, and you are unimpeded in all respects. Just as an arrow shot into the air is not impeded anywhere, so is the venerable Subhūti unimpeded with respect to the sacred doctrine.”

26.62 *This completes the twenty-sixth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Rejoicing.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX:

REJOICING

26.A Then Śakra, mighty lord of the gods {spoke} ... “Venerable Lord! I do not in the slightest think that the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas will ever regress ... I do, however, think ... {that they will} aspire even more toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Seeing the sufferings of those involved in cyclic existence, they will resolve to seek the benefit of the whole world ... and seek to alleviate [its sufferings]. Great bodhisattva beings who possess this mind will always think, ‘Once I have crossed beyond cyclic existence, should I save those sentient beings who have not yet crossed beyond it? Once I have been liberated from cyclic existence, should I liberate those sentient beings who have not yet been liberated? Once I have been inspired, should I inspire those sentient beings who have not yet been inspired? Once I have attained {the maturity of understanding qualifying me to pass into} final nirvāṇa, should I bring to final nirvāṇa those sentient beings who have not {yet} attained final nirvāṇa?’ Venerable Lord! How much merit will those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage accrue—those who rejoice in the minds of great bodhisattva beings who are beginners ... who have been practicing over a long period of time ... {who are} irreversible ... {and} who are tied to only one more rebirth?” The Blessed One then replied to Śakra ... “Kauśika, you may be able to measure with weights this world system of the four continents ... you may be able to measure with a tip of a hair, split one hundredfold, all the drops of water in the oceans of this world system of the great trichilocosm, but you cannot measure the merits of those who have set their mind on enlightenment deriving from the rejoicing of those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage.”

26.B Those who would not rejoice in sentient beings who set their mind on enlightenment are inspired by demonic forces ... are on the side of demonic forces ... {and} have been reborn here after dying in the domain of demonic for-

ces. If one were to ask why, it is because those who have successfully set their mind on enlightenment and dedicated the merit toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment actually shatter the domain of demonic forces. One should rejoice in those who have set their mind on the aspiration toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Those who do not forsake the Buddha ... the Dharma, and ... the Saṅgha should rejoice in those who have set their mind on enlightenment. Then, having rejoiced in them setting their mind on enlightenment, they should dedicate the merit to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, without engaging in the notion that the setting of the mind on enlightenment is singular, or the notion that it is dual, or the notion that it is plural ... Those who rejoice in these [bodhisattvas] who set their mind on enlightenment will swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Even those who engage in the conduct of a bodhisattva will swiftly please the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas. They will never again perceive unpleasant sights ... sounds ... odors ... tastes ... tangible objects ... {or} mental phenomena. They will never lack the sight of the buddhas. They will move from buddhahood to buddhahood, and they will venerate the lord buddhas. They will also develop the roots of virtuous actions because they are of benefit to all sentient beings. If you ask why, it is because those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage have rejoiced in the roots of virtuous action of beginners entering the {Great} vehicle, who are innumerable and immeasurable in number. Similarly, they have rejoiced in the roots of virtuous action of those bodhisattvas who abide on the first level {of the bodhisattvas}, and ... those great bodhisattva beings who abide on [the other levels], up to and including the tenth level, and similarly of those great bodhisattva beings who are tied to only one more rebirth.

26.C Those who have actualized the roots of virtuous actions will approach unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment; after attaining manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment they will bring innumerable, countless, measureless sentient beings to {the point of entering} final nirvāṇa {in ultimate reality} in the expanse of nirvāṇa {in relative reality}, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates. For that reason ... once the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage have rejoiced in the roots of virtuous action, possessed by great bodhisattva beings who have first begun to set their mind on enlightenment ... who already abide on [the levels], up to and including the tenth level, and ... who are tied to only one more rebirth, they should dedicate this merit toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and they should make this dedication in such a way that they do not {dualistically} engage with mind {—such as, “I dedicate this merit ...” and so forth} and do not engage with anything other than mind.

26.D {Great bodhisattva beings} should {not} consider this illusion-like mind {as ultimately real} ... {or} that mind which would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, but in which there is no illusion, nor any illusion-like mind {in ultimate reality} ... {They} should {not} consider {as ultimately real} anything which would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, but which is other than illusion, or other than illusion-like mind ... Since ... {they} do not consider {as ultimately real} anything extraneous {to these}, what thing, {attributed as} existent or non-existent, could arise? Nor could any phenomena, absolutely void, be attributed and sustained as existent or non-existent. Anything that could not be sustained as existent or non-existent, could not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Indeed, anything non-existent could not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... because all things that are subject to affliction or purification are non-existent.

26.E The transcendent perfection{s} of wisdom ... meditative concentration ... perseverance ... tolerance ... ethical discipline, and ... generosity ... {and} [all causal attributes], up to and including enlightenment, and all [fruitful attributes], up to and including omniscience, are absolutely void. Anything that is absolutely void is neither to be cultivated nor not to be cultivated {from the perspective of ultimate reality} ... It is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is absolutely void that ... great bodhisattva beings can attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, which is [also] absolutely void ... If the transcendent perfection of wisdom were not absolutely void, and in the same vein, [if all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, were not absolutely void {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, they would not resort to the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and {consequently} [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, would not be existent {as aspects of the path of enlightenment within the realm of relative existence} ... It is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is void, and [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, are void, that great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, dependent on the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {For} although something which is void cannot attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, which is [also] void {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, great bodhisattva beings who practice the sacred doctrine and its profundities do indeed attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment {within the realm of relative reality}!

26.F Although great bodhisattva beings practice the sacred doctrine and its profundities, they achieve something difficult—that is to say, they do not at all actualize the goals {that being the finality of relative existence} either of the level of the śrāvakas or of the level of the pratyekabuddhas ... {Yet on the other hand} great bodhisattva beings do not at all achieve something difficult ... because they do not apprehend {as ultimately real} any doctrine or goal that could be actualized. They do not apprehend {as ultimately real} even the transcendent perfection of wisdom, through which anything could be actualized, nor do they apprehend {as ultimately real} anything that could bring about actualization. So, when all things are non-apprehensible, what is the doctrine, what is the purpose, what is the intelligence that would bring about actualization? What is the doctrine which, having realized all these things, would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? ... {It is} this non-apprehending conduct {that} is the conduct of the bodhisattvas. Great bodhisattva beings who practice accordingly will acquire a state that is without obscuration and without blindness with respect to all things ... If, when such teachings are revealed, the minds of great bodhisattva beings are not afraid, not terrified, not fearful, and not frightened ... then they are actually practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom. But they do not consider the fact that they are practicing it ... {or} the fact that they are not practicing it. They do not consider the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Nor do they consider that they should attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly do not think, ‘I should shun the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas!’ They do not think, ‘I should approach omniscience!’ If one were to ask why ... just as space, for example, does not think, ‘I am near or far from anything!’ owing ... to the fact that space is not particularized, owing to its immobility, and because it has no concepts ... {and} just as an illusory person does not think, ‘This illusion is far from or near to me!’ or ‘I am far from or near to this illusion!’ ... owing ... to the fact that an illusory person has no concepts ... {and} just as an optical aberration does not think, ‘This object generated by reflection in a mirror or in water is far from or near to me!’ owing ... to the fact that an optical aberration has no concepts, in the same way ... although great bodhisattva beings practice

the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not think, 'I am far from the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas and I am approaching unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!' If one were to ask why ... it is because great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom have no concepts {and because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is non-conceptual}.

26.G To great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, nothing is pleasant or unpleasant ... because the essential nature of anything through which pleasant or unpleasant things could be cognized is non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} ... Just as to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas there is nothing that is pleasant or unpleasant, in the same way ... to great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, there is nothing that is pleasant or unpleasant ... Just as the level of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas is one on which all thoughts, conceptions, and imaginations have invariably been abandoned owing to its non-conceptualization with respect to all things, [in the same way ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom have abandoned all thoughts, concepts, and imaginations] ... Just as the phantom emanations of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas do not think, 'The level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas is far from me, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is near!' owing ... to the fact that these phantom emanations of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are without conceptualization, in the same way ... although great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not think, 'The level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas is far from me, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is near!' ... Just as when the tathāgatas create a phantom to act on their behalf, although it does act according to its objective, it does not think, 'I am acting according to that objective!' owing ... to the fact that the tathāgatas and their phantom emanations are without conceptual imagination {in relativity}, in the same way ... the transcendent perfection of wisdom also acts according to the objective for which it is emanated, but does not think, 'I am acting according to a certain objective!' ... Just as when a carpenter or the skilled apprentice of a carpenter makes a machine in the shape of a woman, or in the shape of a man, or in the shape of an elephant, or in the shape of a bull, although this machine may function according to its purpose, it does not think, 'I am performing [such and such a task], according to that purpose!' owing ... to the fact that such machines are {ultimately} without conceptual imagination, in the same way ... although the transcendent perfection of wisdom does act according to the objective for which it is explained, it does not think, 'I am acting according to a certain purpose!' If one were to ask why, it is because the transcendent perfection of wisdom is non-conceptual.

26.H The transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and in the same vein, [all the other transcendent perfections], down to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity, are also non-conceptual ... {Similarly} the sense field of sights to the sense field of the mental faculty ... [the aspects of consciousness], from visual consciousness to mental consciousness ... feelings, from those conditioned by sensory contact that is visually compounded to those conditioned by sensory contact that is mentally compounded ... the meditative concentrations ... the immeasurable aspirations and the formless absorptions ... the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the three gateways to liberation ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... enlightenment ... {and} the unconditioned elements {are} also non-conceptual ... To be brief, all things {from the perspective of ultimate reality} are non-conceptual! ... {As} all things are non-conceptual ... {the} differen-

tiation ... with regard to the cycle of existence with its five realms of living beings ... {occurs when} those sentient beings who actualize the impact of past actions through body, speech, and mind, motivated by erroneous views, have experienced the ripening of past actions corresponding to the roots of their particular volitions. This causes the materializations of the sense field of sights {and the other 'outer' sense fields} which the denizens of the hells, the animal domain, the world of Yama, the gods, and humans possess ... Those who have entered the stream are non-conceptual, and the fruit of having entered the stream is also non-conceptual. Similarly, those who are tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, those who are arhats, arhatship, those who are pratyekabuddhas, individual enlightenment, and also the genuinely perfect buddhas are all non-conceptual ... Those tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who appeared in the past ... who will appear in the future ... {and} who are alive and reside, teaching the sacred doctrine, at the present time, in the world systems of the ten directions ... are also non-conceptual, and they have abandoned all thoughts and concepts. For this reason ... one should know that once the real nature {of phenomena} without conceptual notions has been appraised, and similarly, once the finality of {relative} existence without concepts and the expanse of {relative} reality without concepts have been appraised, all things are without concepts ... Great bodhisattva beings should practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in a non-conceptual manner. When they practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom without concepts, they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to all things that are {from the perspective of ultimate reality} without concepts.

26.I Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom practice the essenceless doctrine ... because this transcendent perfection of wisdom is essenceless. Similarly, the transcendent perfection{s} of meditative concentration ... perseverance ... tolerance ... ethical discipline and ... generosity ... {and} [all the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience, are essenceless. If you ask why ... it is because when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not even apprehend or consider essencelessness {as ultimately real}, how could they possibly apprehend or consider an essence {as ultimately real}! Since they neither apprehend nor consider the essenceless [transcendental perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom {as ultimately real}, and they neither apprehend nor consider [the other essenceless attributes and attainments], up to and including the essenceless omniscience {as ultimately real}, how then could they possibly apprehend or consider [the essence of those attributes], from the transcendent perfection of wisdom to omniscience {as ultimately real}? {This would be impossible!}

26.J Those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who cultivate unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment; who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, just as it has been explained; and who, despite practicing with that goal, do not remain on the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas because they do not actualize the finality of {relative} existence [associated with those levels], are all worthy of homage. For this reason, too, great bodhisattva beings who do not realize {—that is do not make real—} the uniformity of all {non-existent} things are worthy of homage ... {Yet} the astonishing singular difficulty for those bodhisattvas is not that they do not realize the uniformity of all virtuous attributes, by realizing which they would remain on the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas, but ... their utmost difficulty is that they don the armor that resolves to establish innumerable, countless, and immeasurable hundreds of thousands of sentient beings in final nirvāṇa, while those sentient beings whom they would lead to final nirvāṇa are {from the perspective of ultimate reality} utterly non-apprehensible.

Those great bodhisattva beings who think they should seek to train all sentient beings and then, having really set out for unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, don their armor, resolving to train all sentient beings, might as well think they should seek to train space. If you ask why, sentient beings should be regarded as voidness because space itself is void. Similarly, sentient beings should be regarded as emptiness because space itself is emptiness, and sentient beings should be regarded as essencelessness because space itself is essenceless. For this reason ... it is difficult for great bodhisattva beings who don the armor of great compassion for the sake of sentient beings who do not exist. Those who ... think they should don the armor of great compassion might as well think they should seek to do battle with space. Furthermore, the armor which great bodhisattva beings don and the sentient beings for whose sake they actually don their armor are {in ultimate reality} both non-apprehensible. If you ask why, the armor should be regarded as void because sentient beings are void. If, when this is explained, great bodhisattva beings are not discouraged and not utterly disheartened, they do practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... because the physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness that are void constitute the nature of sentient beings, who are also void ... {and also} constitute the nature of the six transcendent perfections that are also void ... up to and including omniscience.

26.K Great bodhisattva beings do not become discouraged with regard to this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom owing to the non-existence of all things ... {and} owing to the fact that all things are void and calm* {*which is owing to the non-apprehension of mental images in ultimate reality of these non-existent phenomena} ... If, when this is explained, great bodhisattva beings do not grow idle, and are not discouraged, not terrified, not fearful, not afraid, and will not be afraid, then they really do practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If one were to ask why, it is because all things are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} in terms of those who would be discouraged, the agent of their discouragement, or the object of their discouragement ... It is not only the ephemeral gods headed by Indra ... Brahmā, and ... Prajāpati who always pay homage to those great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom {accordingly}, but also the manifestly sublime gods, namely, the gods of the Śubhakarṣna realms, those of the Bṛhatphala realms, and those of the Pure Abodes ... The tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas ... in the ... world systems of the ten directions will always turn their enlightened intention toward those great bodhisattva beings so that these great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom might completely perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and similarly, so that they might completely perfect [the other transcendent perfections], down to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity, and then completely perfect [all attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience! ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and ... to whom the lord buddhas direct their enlightened intention, should be accepted so that they progress to buddhahood ... If all the sentient beings ... in world systems ... were to transform into malign demonic forces ... they would all be powerless to obstruct the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment of great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

26.L When great bodhisattva beings are endowed with two attributes, they will not be subdued by any of those demonic forces. If you ask what these two entail, they are to regard all things as emptiness and not to abandon any sentient beings. Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings are endowed with two [other] attributes, they will not be subdued by all those demonic forces. If you ask what constitutes these two, it entails that they should do exactly

what they say they will do, and that they should be kept in mind by the lord buddhas {as a result of practicing this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom}.

26.M Those gods will think to approach great bodhisattva beings who practice accordingly ... {and} will venerate them and ask questions and counter-questions ... saying, 'O child of enlightened heritage! You should dwell in accordance with the abiding state{s} of emptiness ... signlessness, and ... aspirationlessness ... You should swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... because when you dwell in accordance with these abiding states, you will become a sanctuary for those without sanctuary, an island for those without an island, and a light for sentient beings who are shrouded in darkness ... because the lord buddhas ... surrounded by their monastic communities of fully ordained monks, will proclaim the names and clans of these great bodhisattva beings while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering their aphorisms.' ... For example ... I right now proclaim the name and the clan of the great bodhisattva being Ratnaketu ... {and} the great bodhisattva being Śikhin ... and, I proclaim the names and the clans of those great bodhisattva beings who practice chastity, dependent on this very transcendent perfection of wisdom, in the buddhafiield of the tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha Akṣobhya, while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms! ... In the same vein, the lord buddhas who reside ... in the world systems of the {eastern direction, the} southern direction, the western direction, the northern direction, the intermediate directions, the nadir, and the zenith ... while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms, proclaim the names and clans of those great bodhisattva beings in those [respective] buddhafiields, who practice chastity ... {and} who, taken into the fold after they have first begun to set their mind on enlightenment, will complete the path of perfect enlightenment, and then perfect the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and also attain omniscience. If you ask why ... it is because great bodhisattva beings for whom such actions are difficult will ensure that the lineage of the buddhas will not be interrupted.

26.N Indeed there are irreversible great bodhisattva beings ... {and} also foreordained great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom ... There are great bodhisattva beings who reside in the buddhafiield of the tathāgata Akṣobhya, and who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom in accordance with the training of that tathāgata ... There are great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who are absolutely intent on this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, but who have not accepted that phenomena are non-arising; those who are intent on the emptiness of all things but have not accepted that phenomena are non-arising; and those who are intent on the voidness, hollowness, vacuity, and essencelessness of all things, but have not accepted that phenomena are non-arising ... There are also those great bodhisattva beings who, having transcended the levels of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas, are certain to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... The lord buddhas, while teaching the sacred doctrine and uttering aphorisms, will proclaim the names and clans of all those great bodhisattva beings, for they will abide on the irreversible levels, and abiding thereon, they will attain omniscience. Moreover ... when this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is explained, if those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, after studying its meanings, become free from doubt, free from hesitation, and free from delusion, and their minds accept that this exactly accords with the teachings given by the tathāgatas, they will have the confidence that comes from studying the sacred doctrine, and they will gradually study this transcendent perfection of wisdom more extensively in the presence of the tathāgata Akṣobhya* {*who is the dhyani wisdom bu-

ddha of the eastern direction of the Diamond Realm and lord of its Pure Land known as Abhirati or 'The Joyous') and those great bodhisattva beings. Having studied it, they will indeed come to abide on the irreversible levels, and abiding thereon, they will also attain omniscience.

26.O "Subhūti, since those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas will be revered even upon hearing this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, how much more so will be those who recite it aloud, keep it, and attain the real nature {of phenomena}? Those bodhisattvas will swiftly abide on the irreversible levels ... {and} will then attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment." ... "Venerable Lord! Since, when they abide in the real nature {of phenomena}, they do not apprehend {as ultimately real} anything at all, and there is nothing that exists, how then will great bodhisattva beings abiding therein swiftly be established on the irreversible levels and swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? When, apart from the real nature {of phenomena}, they do not apprehend {as ultimately real} anything at all, who will abide in this real nature {of phenomena}? Who will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? Who will abide in the real nature {of phenomena} and then teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings? ... When the real nature {of phenomena} is itself non-apprehensible, who will abide in the real nature {of phenomena} and then attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, let alone abide exclusively in the real nature {of phenomena} and teach the sacred doctrine? That would be impossible!" ... "That is so, Subhūti! ... There is nothing at all that would, apart from the real nature {of phenomena}, abide in the real nature {of phenomena}; that would, abiding in the real nature {of phenomena}, attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment; and that would, abiding in the real nature {of phenomena}, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings. If you ask why ... the real nature {of phenomena} neither arises nor ceases, and its modifications are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real} ... Who would abide in that which neither arises nor ceases, and where modifications are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}? Who, abiding therein, would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... {and then} teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings? That would be impossible!"

26.P Thereupon, Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, said to the Blessed One, " ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom achieve that which is difficult. If one were to ask why ... it is because there is nothing termed the real nature {of phenomena} which they would apprehend {as ultimately real}. There is nothing that would abide in the real nature {of phenomena}, nor is there anything that would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Nor is there anything that would teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings! ... When great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, even though they investigate and meditate accordingly, they will not be discouraged thereby. They will not succumb to doubt, and they will not be deluded." ... Then Senior Subhūti addressed Śakra, mighty lord of the gods: "Kauśika! You have said that great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who do not succumb to doubt and are undeluded with regard to those things, even though they investigate these things, achieve that which is difficult. Kauśika! Since all things are empty, who is there who would succumb to doubt and be deluded?" Śakra, mighty lord of the gods, replied ... "Venerable Subhūti, whatever doctrines you are teaching, you teach all of them commencing exclusively from emptiness, and you are unimpeded in all respects. Just as an arrow shot into the air is not impeded anywhere, so is the venerable Subhūti unimpeded with respect to the

sacred doctrine.”

COMMENTARY

Final nirvāṇa, also known as parinirvāṇa, is the complete and utter extinction of the conjured individuated being ~ through the attaining of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment via the Great Vehicle of the path of omniscience. Yet how can a great bodhisattva being who has attained perfect enlightenment and then passed into final nirvāṇa to enter extinction, bring all other sentient beings to final nirvāṇa who have not yet attained final nirvāṇa? This is the great mystery of course, yet all is revealed in the *Lotus Sūtra* ~ for within this great sūtra the Buddha reveals: *“I abide forever without entering parinirvāṇa ... The lifespan that I first attained through practicing the bodhisattva path has not yet expired ... Although I do not actually enter parinirvāṇa I proclaim that I do. It is through this skillful means that the Tathāgata leads and inspires sentient beings ... {For} although the Great Sage, the Bhagavat, {is said to have} entered parinirvāṇa long ago, He has been abiding in a jeweled stupa; and He has now come for the sake of the Dharma.”*

*

So we can see that no sentient being within the realm of ‘relative’ existence enters final nirvāṇa without bringing every part of Our one undivided natural luminosity of mind, still trapped within the realm of ‘relative’ existence, to the point of entering final nirvāṇa. And at that point, where every conjured individuated being has reached the point of entering final nirvāṇa, where their minds have come into perfect ‘oneness’ with the great illusionist Vajradhara, will this illusion of relativity of space and time be instantaneously brought to an end. Thus do the minds of those who have reached the point of entering final nirvāṇa, as well as those great bodhisattva beings who have set their minds on unsurpassed genuinely perfect enlightenment, rejoice in their hearts that another part of Our undivided natural luminosity of mind has entered the stream, and rejoice in their hearts that another part of Our undivided natural luminosity of mind has set their mind on unsurpassed genuinely perfect enlightenment. And for those who do not rejoice in their hearts, they are still under the sway of the demonic forces, for as the Buddha affirms in the chapter (above): *“Those who would not rejoice in sentient beings who set their mind on enlightenment are inspired by demonic forces ... Those who would not rejoice in sentient beings who set their mind on enlightenment are on the side of demonic forces ... Those who would not rejoice in sentient beings who set their mind on enlightenment have been reborn here after dying in the domain of demonic forces ... because those who have ... set their mind on enlightenment and dedicated the merit toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment actually shatter the domain of demonic forces.”*

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The clear realization pertaining to all phenomena can only be realized by not attaching one's mind to anything at all. The clear realization pertaining to all phenomena can only be realized by not imagining, conceptualizing and seizing upon anything as though it were ultimately real. The clear realization pertaining to all phenomena can only be realized by perceiving the indivisible real nature of all non-existent phenomena with the defining characteristic of being without defining characteristics. The clear realization pertaining to all phenomena can only be realized by not letting any mental wandering whatsoever, with respect to anything at all, and instead relying on the complete and utter faith in the clear realization of the omniscient mind. Here the awakening being worships the reality of Truth—through

the wisdom mind of the omniscient mind—and sets ultimate reality, not the figment of duality, as their one and only standard. Thus does the Buddha reveal in chapter eleven of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: “In this manner, the wandering mendicant Śreṇika resolved that ... owing to his non-apprehension of all things {as ultimately real}, he would appropriate nothing at all, since he had taken reality as his standard and was not attentive to indications. Inasmuch as all things cannot be appropriated, he did not apprehend {as ultimately real} anything that he might have grasped or anything that he might have relinquished. Since he did not make assumptions about anything {at all}, he did not make assumptions even on the basis of nirvāṇa ... {Thus} great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom in that manner should determine that all things are empty of inherent existence. They should determine that there is no mental wandering whatsoever, with respect to anything {at all}. **This is the spacious, immeasurable, and indefinable method of great bodhisattva beings, known as the maṇḍala of the meditative stability of non-appropriation, which is not shared in common with all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.**”

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN: FULL ATTAINMENT

27.1 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of generosity, acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings dispense their gifts, acquisitiveness does not arise. When they dispense their gifts, miserliness does not arise. Indeed, they dedicate those gifts toward omniscience, and they serve all sentient beings with physical acts of loving kindness. Similarly, they serve them with verbal acts of loving kindness, and with mental acts of loving kindness. At that time, great bodhisattva beings acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.”

27.2 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of generosity, then acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings dispense their gifts, even though recipients may revile them with disingenuous reprimands and false words, they will not be discouraged, and indeed they will not hate those ill-intentioned, quarrelsome recipients. Rather, they will cultivate an attitude of loving kindness and an attitude of compassion toward them, and continue to speak gently. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of generosity, acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance.”

27.3 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of generosity, acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings dispense their gifts, even though recipients may revile them with disingenuous reprimands and false words, they absolutely persist in their generosity. They resort to an attitude of exclusive generosity, and to an attitude of renunciation, because they understand the nature of their own deeds whereby fruits are attained according to their past actions. Thinking, ‘I should exclusively dispense generosity on a large scale toward all sentient beings!’ they cultivate physical and mental perseverance, and exclusively dispense generosity at all times. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of generosity, acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance.”

27.4 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of generosity, acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings dispense their gifts to recipients with an attitude free from hostility, they do not dedicate the merit to places, they do not dedicate it to the world system of desire, they do not dedicate it to the world systems of form and formlessness, they do not dedicate it to the level of the śrāvakas, and they do not dedicate it to the level of the pratyekabuddhas, but, making common cause with all sentient beings, they do dedicate it exclusively to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of generosity, acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration.”

27.5 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of generosity, acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings dispense their gifts to recipients, they exclusively maintain an illusion-like attitude toward them at all times. Owing to the emptiness of ultimate reality, they do not consider that any sentient beings are benefited or harmed. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of generosity, acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

27.6 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, and the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and how do they acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom?”

27.7 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who abide in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline do not, owing to the conditioning of their physical, verbal, and mental merits, maintain the supremacy of the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas. Even for the sake of their own lives, they do not deprive sentient beings of life, they do not steal that which is not given, they do not commit acts of sexual misconduct, they do not tell lies, they do not slander, they do not speak harshly, they do not resort to nonsensical speech, they do not become covetous, they do not become vindictive, and they do not resort to wrong views. Abiding in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they dispense their generosity as follows: They give food to those who need food, drink to those who need drink, vehicles to those who need vehicles, clothing to those who need clothing, garlands to those who need garlands, unguents to those who need unguents, bedding to those who need bedding, asylum to those who need asylum, lamps to those who need lamps, and in the same vein, all resources to those who need them. Similarly, they give all sorts of things that are useful for human beings to those who need them, and they also dedicate those gifts, making common cause with all sentient beings, toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and whatever they do, they make these dedications without regressing to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity.

27.8 “Moreover, Subhūti, while great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, even if all sentient beings were to approach them and cut off the limbs and appendages of those great bodhisattva beings who abide in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and discard them in the cardinal and intermed-

iate directions, owing to the setting of their mind solely [on enlightenment], which those great bodhisattva beings have, they would not even resort to anger and would not even resort to malice. They would think, 'All sentient beings have cut off my limbs and appendages and discarded them to the cardinal and intermediate directions, but I have obtained an excellent benefit! Through my renunciation of this purulent body, I shall attain the excellent buddha body which is of the nature of indestructible reality!' In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance.

27.9 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they don the armor of great compassion. Thinking, 'I shall liberate all sentient beings from the unbearable fears of the ocean of cyclic existence! I shall establish them in the deathless expanse!' they will never abandon their physical and mental perseverance. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance.

27.10 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they become equipoised in the first meditative concentration. Similarly, they become equipoised in the second, and likewise the third and likewise the fourth meditative concentrations. Similarly, they become equipoised in the meditative equipoise of the sense field of infinite space, and [in the other formless absorptions], up to and including the meditative equipoise of cessation. Yet, because they remember their former aspirations, they will not regress to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas, and they will, provisionally, not actualize the finality of existence. Rather, they think, 'O, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, I shall liberate all sentient beings from the unbearable fears of the ocean of cyclic existence! I shall establish them in the deathless expanse!' In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration.”

27.11 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they do not transgress the real nature of all things, and apart from that, they do not consider anything at all to be virtuous or non-virtuous, specified or unspecified, contaminated or uncontaminated, mundane or supramundane, and conditioned or unconditioned. They do not consider anything to be classified as an entity or classified as a non-entity. They do not consider anything to be existent or non-existent. Through this transcendent perfection of wisdom and skill in means, they do not regress to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

27.12 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, if all sentient beings were to approach those great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfections of tolerance, and reprimand them with disingenuous, negative words, and even cut off their limbs and appendages, they would think, 'Alas! These sentient beings are imbued with suffering, smitten by disease, and unprotected. I shall exclusively dispense generosity toward all sentient beings at all times!' Then they would give food to those who need food, they would give drinks to those who need drink, and, in the same vein, they would dispen-

se [all other resources], up to and including all manner of things that are useful to human beings to those who need those things that are useful to human beings, [and so forth]. Having mastered all the roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, they would then dedicate [these gifts] toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, without apprehending anything. If you ask how this dedication is made, the dedication is made without engaging in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity.”

27.13 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, even for the sake of their own lives, do not deprive any sentient being of life, and so on. They do not resort to wrong views. Their minds never engage with the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas. They also dedicate these roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are also made without engaging in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.”

27.14 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, [think], ‘I will travel for a while, for one yojana, a hundred yojana, or a thousand yojana, or similarly through anything from a single world system to a hundred thousand world systems, just to establish even a few sentient beings in the ground of training and the level of eightfold acceptance. Similarly, having established them in the attributes of the level of buddha nature, the attributes of the level of eightfold acceptance, the fruit of entering the stream, and so on, up to arhatship, up to individual enlightenment, and up to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, mastering all those roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, I will dedicate these merits to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.’ These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance.”

27.15 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, achieve and then maintain the first meditative concentration, which is free from the desires [of the senses], free from negative and non-virtuous attributes, and endowed with ideation and scrutiny, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from that freedom. In the same vein, they achieve and maintain the other meditative concentrations, up to and including the fourth meditative concentration. Similarly, they become equipoised in the [formless absorptions], up to the sense field of infinite space, and up to the cessation of feelings and perceptions, and they bring forth the roots of the virtuous attributes of mind and mental

states. All these they dedicate, making common cause with all sentient beings, toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. By any means, these dedications are made without engaging in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration.”

27.16 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, when, with respect to all things, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, survey and abide in the modality of voidness, the modality of quiescence, the modality of the ending [of contaminants], and the modality of cessation, they do not realize the quiescence of all things until they have attained omniscience, seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment. Then arising from their seat at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, in order to benefit all sentient beings and in order to make all sentient beings happy, they turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance, acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

27.17 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, think, ‘I shall certainly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’ They never desist from the perseverance that seeks out virtuous attributes, and they never stop seeking the pristine cognition that is omniscience. For the sake of sentient beings, they would travel a hundred yojana, a thousand yojana, a hundred thousand yojana, or a trillion yojana, and similarly, they would travel through anything from a single world system to one hundred billion trillion world systems, so as to establish only a single sentient being in whichever vehicle is appropriate among the three vehicles. Mastering all these roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity.”

27.18 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, [think], ‘From the time when I first begin to set my mind on enlightenment until I am seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, I shall indeed abstain from killing living creatures, and I shall encourage others to keep abstaining from killing living creatures. I shall also praise the abstention from killing living creatures, and I shall praise and rejoice in others who abstain from killing living creatures. In the same vein, I shall abstain from all other non-virtuous actions, up to and including the holding of wrong views, and I shall encourage others to keep abstaining from wrong views [and the other non-virtuous actions]. I shall also praise the abstention from wrong views [and so forth], and I shall praise and rejoice in others who abstain from wrong views [and the other non-virtuous actions]!’ Through this transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they

do not strive for the world system of desire, they do not strive for the world system of form and the world system of formlessness, they do not strive for the level of the śrāvakas, and they do not strive for the level of the pratyekabuddhas, but, mastering all these roots of virtue and making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.”

27.19 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, even if humans or non-humans should arrive and cut off all their limbs and appendages, and discard them in the cardinal and intermediate directions, would not think, ‘There is someone cutting off or piercing my limbs and appendages!’ Rather, they exclusively think, ‘While I hold on to this body for their sake, they have approached me, cutting off my limbs and appendages and discarding them, so I will obtain an excellent benefit!’ If you ask why, it is because in this way they will excellently remain attentive to the nature of reality. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the level of the śrāvakas or to the level of the pratyekabuddhas, but making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate these roots of virtue exclusively to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance.”

27.20 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, achieve and then maintain the first meditative concentration, which is free from desires, free from negative and non-virtuous attributes, and endowed with ideation and scrutiny, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from that freedom. Similarly, they achieve and maintain the other meditative concentrations, up to and including the fourth meditative concentration, and they also achieve and maintain the four immeasurable aspirations and so forth, up to and including absorption in the cessation of perceptions and feelings. However, they do not grasp the maturation of those meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, and formless absorptions. For the sake of sentient beings, they will be reborn in other realms where they will train sentient beings. Gathering these sentient beings through the four attractive qualities of a bodhisattva, they will establish them in the six transcendent perfections. In order to venerate the lord buddhas and cultivate the roots of virtue, they will move from buddhahood to buddhahood, experiencing the roots of virtue dependent on meditative concentration, and mastering all these until buddhahood is cultivated. Making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration.”

27.21 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, do not consider the transcendent perfection of generosity as a designation, and similarly, they do not consider the transcendent perfection of generosity as an entity or as a sign. Likewise, they do not consider the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, or the transcendent perfection of wisdom as a designation, and similarly they do not consider the transcendent perfection of wisdom and so forth as an entity or as a sign. Similarly, they do not consider the applications of mindfulness and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, as a designation, and likewise, they do not consider these as an entity or as a sign. In the same vein as before, they do not consider [all the fruitional attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, as an entity or as a sign. Likewise, they do not consider anything as a designation, and they do not consider anything as an entity or as a sign; they do not abide in anything at all. They do as they say. Mastering all these roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

27.22 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings achieve and maintain the first meditative concentration, which is free from the desires [of the senses], free from negative and non-virtuous attributes, and endowed with ideation and scrutiny, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from that freedom. Similarly, they achieve and maintain the other meditative concentrations, up to and including the fourth meditative concentration, in which even that sense of bliss is abandoned and suffering is abandoned, and in which neither suffering nor bliss is present because blissful and unhappy states of mind have both previously subsided, while equanimity and mindfulness are utterly pure. Similarly, they achieve and maintain the four immeasurable aspirations and the formless absorptions, up to and including the absorption of the cessation of feelings and perceptions. Abiding in this transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings with an undistracted mind. They dispense the gift of the sacred doctrine, and also worldly gifts. They themselves at all times dispense the gift of the sacred doctrine and worldly gifts, and they encourage others to keep dispensing the gift of the sacred doctrine and worldly gifts. They at all times praise the gift of the sacred doctrine and worldly gifts, and they praise and rejoice in others who dispense the gift of the sacred doctrine and worldly gifts. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the level of the śrāvakas or to the level of the pratyekabuddhas, but mastering all these roots of virtue, and making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them exclusively to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity.”

27.23 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, never develop thoughts of desire. They never develop thoughts of hatred or thoughts of delusion. They never develop thoughts of violence, miserliness, or degenerate morality, and apart from that they are continuously in synergy with the modes of attention associated with omniscience. Without dedicating these roots of virtue to the level of the śrāvakas or to the level of the pratyekabuddhas, they master all these roots of virtue, and making common cause with all sentient beings, dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.”

27.24 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, discern physical forms as resembling a mass of foam. Similarly, they discern feelings as resembling a water bubble, perceptions as resembling a mirage, formative predispositions as resembling a hollow plantain, and consciousness as resembling a magical display. When making such discernments, they always maintain the perception that the five psycho-physical aggregates are essenceless, thinking, ‘All formative predispositions [and so forth] are empty. What is this [body] that is being harmed, cut, or split? Who is piercing or cutting it? Whose are these physical forms? Whose are these feelings? Whose are these perceptions? Whose are these formative predispositions? Whose is this consciousness? Who is being reprimanded, rebuked, or targeted with malice? Who is this who reprimands, rebukes, or targets with malice?’ They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the level of the śrāvakas or to the level of the pratyekabuddhas, and, apart from that, making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance.”

27.25 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, grasp the indications of all the meditative concentrations, aspects of liberation, and meditative stabilities, and then experience the many aspects of miraculous abilities, and so on, as has [already] been extensively indicated. Through clairaudience that surpasses the range of human hearing, they hear many aspects of divine and human sound. Similarly, their minds precisely know the minds of other beings and the minds of other realized individuals, up to and including the minds of unsurpassed beings. Similarly, they recollect many different past abodes, as has [already] been extensively indicated. Similarly, through pure clairvoyance that surpasses the range of human sight, they perceive [all beings] who move in accordance with their past actions. Maintaining these five extrasensory powers, in order to behold and venerate the lord buddhas, to develop the roots of virtue, and also to bring sentient beings to matura-

tion, they move from buddhafiield to buddhafiield, and even refine the buddhafiields. Making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate these roots of virtue exclusively to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance.”

27.26 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, do not apprehend physical forms. Similarly, they do not apprehend [all the other phenomena], up to and including the applications of mindfulness. Similarly, they do not apprehend [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. They do not apprehend [all the fruitional attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. They do not apprehend conditioned elements. They do not apprehend unconditioned elements. Since all things are unconditioned, they do not condition anything at all. Since they do not condition anything at all, they neither adopt nor do they not adopt anything at all. They neither cause anything to arise, nor do they cause anything to cease. If you ask why, Subhūti, whether the tathāgatas have appeared or not, the abiding nature of all things and the expanse of reality continue to abide, and these neither arise nor cease. Great bodhisattva beings always achieve and maintain this [reality] through undistracted attention, endowed with omniscience. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

27.27 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, do not apprehend the emptiness of internal phenomena as the emptiness of internal phenomena. They do not apprehend the emptiness of external phenomena as the emptiness of external phenomena. They do not apprehend the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena as the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena. They do not apprehend the emptiness of emptiness as the emptiness of emptiness. They do not apprehend the emptiness of great extent as the emptiness of great extent. They do not apprehend the emptiness of ultimate reality as the emptiness of ultimate reality. They do not apprehend the emptiness of conditioned phenomena as the emptiness of conditioned phenomena. They do not apprehend the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena as the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena. They do not apprehend the emptiness of the unlimited as the emptiness of the unlimited. They do not apprehend the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end as the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end. They do not apprehend the emptiness of non-dispersal as the emptiness of non-dispersal. They do not apprehend the emptiness of all things as the emptiness of all things. They do not apprehend the emptiness of inherent existence as the emptiness of inherent existence. They do not apprehend the emptiness of all intrinsic defining characteristics as the emptiness of all intrinsic defining characteristics. They do not apprehend the emptiness of non-apprehension as the emptiness of non-apprehension. Similarly, they do not apprehend the emptiness of non-entities as the emptiness of non-entities. They do not apprehend the emptiness of essential nature as the emptiness of ess-

ential nature. They do not apprehend the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities as the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities.

27.28 “Abiding in these aspects of emptiness, they do not apprehend the notion that physical forms are empty, or the notion that they are not empty. Similarly, they do not apprehend the notion that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty, or the notion that they are not empty. Similarly, they do not apprehend the notion that the applications of mindfulness are empty, or the notion that they are not empty. Similarly, they do not apprehend the notion that [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, are empty, or the notion that they are not empty. In the same vein, they do not apprehend the notion that [the fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience, are empty, or the notion that they are not empty. They do not apprehend the notion that conditioned elements are empty, or the notion that they are not empty. They do not apprehend the notion that unconditioned elements are empty, or the notion that they are not empty.

27.29 “Practicing this transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly, they dispense their gifts, whatever they may be, from food or drink up to those things that are useful to humankind, to those who need them, but they do not consider the notion that their gifts are empty, or that they are not empty. Nor do they consider at all the one who dispenses these gifts, the one to whom they are dispensed, and the gifts that are dispensed. Nor do they consider all these three aspects as emptiness. For those who abide in this manner, there is never any occasion for miserliness or acquisitiveness to arise. If you ask why, it is because for those who thus practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, all such notions will not arise, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment. Just as for tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas miserliness and acquisitiveness never arise, so it is also for those great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of wisdom is the teacher of great bodhisattva beings. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity.”

27.30 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, do not let the mindsets of all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas even arise. If you ask why, it is because they do not apprehend those levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and they do not apprehend any thought that they should dedicate their physical, verbal, and mental ethical discipline to the level of the śrāvakas or to the level of the pratyekabuddhas. From the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, they abstain from killing living creatures, and oppose the killing of living creatures. They also praise the abstention from killing living creatures, and encourage others to keep abstaining from killing living creatures. They praise and rejoice in others who abstain from killing living creatures. In the same vein, they themselves abstain from all other non-virtuous actions, up to and including the holding of wrong views, and also praise the abstention from wrong views [and the other non-virtuous actions]. They encourage others to keep abstaining from wrong views [and the other non-virtuous actions], and they praise and rejoice in others who abstain from wrong views [and the other non-virtuous actions]. Furthermore, through this ethical discipline they do not strive for conduct associated with the world system of desire, or for conduct as-

sociated with the world system of form and the world system of formlessness, or for the attributes of the śrāvakas, or the attributes of the pratyekabuddhas, but, unlike them, they exclusively strive for and maintain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.”

27.31 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, a corresponding [sense of] tolerance arises. When they obtain this tolerance, they think, ‘O! There is nothing at all that is subject to cessation, or birth, aging, death, reprimand, rebuke, cutting, piercing, injury, killing, or bondage.’ If all sentient beings were to approach those great bodhisattva beings who have obtained such tolerance, and reprimand or rebuke them, striking them with clods of earth, clubs, or weapons, or cutting off all their limbs and appendages, their attitude would not change, and they would think, ‘This is the reality of all things. In this [reality], there is nothing at all that would reprimand, rebuke, cut, pierce, injure, kill, or bind anything at all.’ In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance.”

27.32 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings with unrelenting perseverance. They teach the sacred doctrine in all ways, establishing those sentient beings in the transcendent perfection of generosity, and likewise establishing them in the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. But in doing so, they do not at all establish them in conditioned elements and they do not at all establish them in unconditioned elements. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance.”

27.33 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings, after abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, may become equipoised in the meditative stabilities of the śrāvakas, or the meditative stabilities of the pratyekabuddhas, or in the meditative stabilities of the bodhisattvas—in all of them except the meditative stabilities of the tathāgatas. Abiding in those meditative stabilities of the bodhisattvas [and so forth], they may become equipoised in and arise from the eight aspects of liberation, either sequentially or in reverse order. If you ask what these eight are, they are as follows: The first aspect of liberation ensues when corporeal beings observe physical forms. The second aspect of liberation ensues when formless beings endowed with internal perception observe external physical forms. The third aspect of liberation ensues when beings are inclined toward pleasant states. The fourth aspect of liberation ensues when the perceptions of physical forms have been completely transcended in all respects, when the perceptions of obstructed phenomena have subsided, and the mind does not engage with diverse perceptions, so that one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite space, thinking, ‘Space is infinite.’ The fifth aspect of liberation ensues when the sense field of infinite space has been completely transcended in all respects, and when one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite consciousness, thinking, ‘Consciousness is infinite.’ The sixth aspect of liberation ensues when the sense field of infinite

consciousness has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the sense field of nothing-at-all, thinking, 'There is nothing at all.' The seventh aspect of liberation ensues when the sense field of nothing-at-all has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. The eighth aspect of liberation ensues when the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception has been completely transcended in all respects, and one achieves and abides in the cessation of all perceptions and feelings. They may become equipoised in and arise from these eight aspects of liberation, both sequentially and in the reverse order.

27.34 "Similarly, they may become equipoised in and arise from the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, either sequentially or in reverse order. If you ask what these nine are, they comprise the four meditative concentrations, the four formless absorptions, and the cessation of all perceptions and feelings.

27.35 "After differentiating these eight aspects of liberation and the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, they may become absorbed in the meditative stability known as the yawning lion. Subhūti, if you ask what is the meditative stability known as the yawning lion, which great bodhisattva beings may experience, at this point, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings will have achieved and maintained the first meditative concentration, where there is freedom from desires, and freedom from negative and non-virtuous attributes, while ideation and scrutiny are present, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from that freedom. Similarly, they will have achieved and maintained all the other meditative concentrations, up to and including the fourth meditative concentration, where both bliss and suffering have been abandoned, and neither suffering nor bliss is present because blissful and unhappy states of mind have both previously subsided, while equanimity and mindfulness are utterly pure. Similarly, they will have become equipoised in the formless absorptions, up to and including the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. Then they will have become equipoised in the cessation of perceptions and feelings.

27.36 "Arising from that meditative stability which is the equipoise in cessation, [then in reverse order], they become equipoised in the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception; in the same vein, arising from that equipoise in the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception, they abide, equipoised in the [other formless absorptions and meditative concentrations], down to and including the first meditative concentration. Subhūti, this is the meditative stability known as the yawning lion. Abiding in that meditative stability, they attain the sameness of all things. In this way, Subhūti, do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration."

27.37 *This completes the twenty-seventh chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled "Full Attainment."*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN:
FULL ATTAINMENT

27.A Great bodhisattva beings, **after abiding in the transcendent perfection of generosity**, acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline {up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom as follows:} ... When great bodhisattva beings dispense their gifts, acquisitiveness does not arise ... {and} miserliness does not arise. In-

deed, they dedicate those gifts toward omniscience, and they serve all sentient beings with physical acts ... verbal acts ... and with mental acts of loving kindness. At that time, great bodhisattva beings **{1} acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline** ... When great bodhisattva beings dispense their gifts, even though recipients may revile them with disingenuous reprimands and false words, they will not be discouraged, and indeed they will not hate those ill-intentioned, quarrelsome recipients. Rather, they will cultivate an attitude of loving kindness and an attitude of compassion toward them, and continue to speak gently. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{2} acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance** ... When great bodhisattva beings dispense their gifts, even though recipients may revile them with disingenuous reprimands and false words, they absolutely persist in their generosity. They resort to an attitude of exclusive generosity, and to an attitude of renunciation, because they understand the nature of their own deeds whereby fruits are attained according to their past actions. Thinking, 'I should exclusively dispense generosity on a large scale toward all sentient beings!' they cultivate physical and mental perseverance, and exclusively dispense generosity at all times. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{3} acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance** ... When great bodhisattva beings dispense their gifts to recipients with an attitude free from hostility, they do not dedicate the merit to places ... to the world system{s} of desire ... form and formlessness ... {and} to the level{s} of the śrāvakas, and ... pratyekabuddhas, but, making common cause with all sentient beings, they do dedicate it exclusively to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{4} acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration** ... When great bodhisattva beings dispense their gifts to recipients, they exclusively maintain an illusion-like attitude toward them at all times. Owing to the emptiness of ultimate reality {defined in this context as the path of nirvāṇa (being the extinguishment of the three fires of craving, aversion and ignorance and the individual self) leading to ultimate reality}, they do not consider that any sentient beings are benefited or harmed. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{5} acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom.**

27.B Great bodhisattva beings, **after abiding in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline**, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity ... {up to and including} the transcendent perfection of wisdom {as follows:} ... Great bodhisattva beings ... do not, owing to the conditioning of their physical, verbal, and mental merits, maintain the supremacy of the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas. Even for the sake of their own lives, they do not deprive sentient beings of life ... steal that which is not given ... commit acts of sexual misconduct ... tell lies ... slander ... speak harshly ... resort to nonsensical speech ... become covetous ... become vindictive, and ... resort to wrong views ... They dispense their generosity as follows: They give food to those who need food, drink to those who need drink ... and in the same vein, all resources to those who need them ... and they also dedicate those gifts, making common cause with all sentient beings, toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and whatever they do, they make these dedications without regressing to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{1} acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity** ... Even if all sentient beings were to approach them and cut off the{ir} limbs and appendages ... owing to the setting of their mind solely [on enlightenment], which those great bodhisattva beings have, they would not even resort to anger and would not even resort to malice. They would think, 'All sentient beings have cut off my limbs and appendages ... but I have obtained an excellent benefit! Through my renunciation of this purulent body, I shall attain the excellent buddha body which is of the nature of indestructible reality!' In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{2} acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance** ... When great bodhisattva beings ... don the armor of great compassion. Thinking, 'I shall

liberate all sentient beings from the unbearable fears of the ocean of cyclic existence! I shall establish them in the deathless expanse!' they will never abandon their physical and mental perseverance. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{3} acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... become equipoised in the first meditative concentration ... {up to and including} the fourth meditative concentration ... {as well as} in the meditative equipoise of the sense field of infinite space, and [in the other formless absorptions], up to and including the meditative equipoise of {the} cessation {of perceptions and feelings}. Yet, because they remember their former aspirations, they will not regress to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas, and they will, provisionally, not actualize the finality of {relative} existence. Rather, they think, 'O, abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, I shall liberate all sentient beings from the unbearable fears of the ocean of cyclic existence! I shall establish them in the deathless expanse!' In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{4} acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... do not transgress the real nature of all things, and apart from that, they do not consider anything at all to be virtuous or non-virtuous, specified or unspecified, contaminated or uncontaminated, mundane or supramundane, and conditioned or unconditioned. They do not consider anything to be classified as an entity or classified as a non-entity. They do not consider anything to be existent or non-existent. Through this transcendent perfection of wisdom and skill in means, they do not regress to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{5} acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom.**

27.C Great bodhisattva beings, **after abiding in the transcendent perfection of tolerance**, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity {up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom as follows:} ... If all sentient beings were to approach those great bodhisattva beings ... and reprimand them with disingenuous, negative words, and even cut off their limbs and appendages, they would think, 'Alas! These sentient beings are imbued with suffering, smitten by disease, and unprotected. I shall exclusively dispense generosity toward all sentient beings at all times!' Then they would give food to those who need food, they would give drinks to those who need drink ... [and so forth]. Having mastered all the roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, they would then dedicate [these gifts] toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. If you ask how this dedication is made, the dedication is made without engaging in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{1} acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, even for the sake of their own lives, do not deprive any sentient being of life, and so on. They do not resort to wrong views. Their minds never engage with the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas. They also dedicate these roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... without engaging in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{2} acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... [think], 'I will travel for ... a thousand yojana, or similarly through ... a hundred thousand world systems, just to establish even a few sentient beings in the ground of training and the level of eightfold acceptance. Similarly, having established them in the attributes of the level of buddha nature ... up to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, mastering all those roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, I will dedicate these merits to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enli-

ghtenment.' ... {And they do so} without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{3} acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... achieve and then maintain the first meditative concentration ... up to and including the fourth meditative concentration ... They become equi-
 poised in the [formless absorptions], up to the sense field of infinite space, and up to the cessation of feelings and perceptions, and they bring forth the roots of the virtuous attributes of mind and mental states. All these they dedi-
 cate, making common cause with all sentient beings, toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. By any means, these dedications are made without engaging in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{4} acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration** ... When, with respect to all things, great bodhisattva beings ... survey and abide in the modality of voidness {of all things}, the modality of quiescence {of all things}, the modality of the ending {of all things}, and the modality of cessation {of all things}, they do not realize the quiescence of all things until they have attained omniscience {for all sentient beings}, seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment. Then arising from their seat at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, in order to benefit all sentient beings and in order to make all sentient beings happy, they turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{5} acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom.**

27.D Great bodhisattva beings, **after abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance**, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity {up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom as follows:} ... Great bodhisattva beings ... think, 'I shall certainly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!' They never desist from the perseverance that seeks out virtuous attributes, and they never stop seeking the pristine cognition that is omniscience. For the sake of sentient beings, they would travel a ... trillion yojana, and similarly, they would travel through ... one hundred billion trillion world systems, so as to establish only a single sentient being in whichever vehicle is appropriate among the three vehicles. Mastering all these roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{1} acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... [think], 'From the time when I first begin to set my mind on enlightenment until I am seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, I shall indeed abstain from killing living creatures, and ... I shall praise and rejoice in others who abstain from killing living creatures ... I shall abstain from all other non-virtuous actions, up to and including the holding of wrong views, and ... I shall praise and rejoice in others who abstain from wrong views [and the other non-virtuous actions]!' Through this transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they do not strive for the world system{s} of desire ... form and ... formlessness, they do not strive for the level{s} of the śrāvakas, and ... pratyekabuddhas, but, mastering all these roots of virtue and making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{2} acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, even if humans or non-humans should arrive and cut off all their limbs and appendages ... would not think,

‘There is someone cutting off or piercing my limbs and appendages!’ Rather, they exclusively think, ‘While I hold on to this body for their sake, they have approached me, cutting off my limbs and appendages ... so I will obtain an excellent benefit!’ If you ask why, it is because in this way they will ... remain attentive to the nature of {relative and ultimate} reality. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas, but making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate these roots of virtue exclusively to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{3} acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... achieve and then maintain the first meditative concentration ... up to and including the fourth meditative concentration, and ... the four immeasurable aspirations and so forth, up to and including absorption in the cessation of perceptions and feelings. However, they do not grasp the maturation of those meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, and formless absorptions. For the sake of sentient beings, they will be reborn in other realms where they will train sentient beings. Gathering these sentient beings through the four attractive qualities of a bodhisattva, they will establish them in the six transcendent perfections. In order to venerate the lord buddhas and cultivate the roots of virtue, they will move from buddhahood to buddhahood, experiencing the roots of virtue dependent on meditative concentration, and mastering all these until buddhahood is cultivated. Making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{4} acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... do not consider the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, or ... wisdom as a designation ... an entity or as a sign ... and ... {all other causal and fruitional attributes and attainments}, up to and including omniscience, as {a designation,} an entity or as a sign. Likewise, they do not consider anything as a designation ... an entity or as a sign; they do not abide in anything at all. They do as they say. Mastering all these roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{5} acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom.**

27.E Great bodhisattva beings, **after abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration**, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity {up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom as follows:} ... Great bodhisattva beings achieve and maintain the first meditative concentration ... up to and including the fourth meditative concentration ... {as well as} the four immeasurable aspirations and the formless absorptions, up to and including the absorption of the cessation of feelings and perceptions. Abiding in this transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings with an undistracted mind ... They themselves at all times dispense the gift of the sacred doctrine and worldly gifts ... and they praise and rejoice in others who dispense the gift of the sacred doctrine and worldly gifts. They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas, but mastering all these roots of virtue, and making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them exclusively to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication

and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{1} acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... never develop thoughts of desire ... hatred ... delusion ... violence, miserliness, or degenerate morality, and apart from that they are continuously in synergy with the modes of attention associated with omniscience. Without dedicating these roots of virtue to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas, they master all these roots of virtue, and making common cause with all sentient beings, dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{2} acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... discern physical forms as resembling a mass of foam ... feelings as resembling a water bubble, perceptions as resembling a mirage, formative predispositions as resembling a hollow plantain, and consciousness as resembling a magical display. When making such discernments, they always maintain the perception that the five psycho-physical aggregates are essenceless, thinking, 'All formative predispositions [and so forth] are empty. What is this [body] that is being harmed, cut, or split? ... Whose are these physical forms ... feelings ... perceptions ... formative predispositions ... {and} consciousness? Who is being reprimanded, rebuked, or targeted with malice? Who is this who reprimands, rebukes, or targets with malice?' They do not dedicate these roots of virtue to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas, and, apart from that, making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate them to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{3} acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... grasp the indications of all the meditative concentrations, aspects of liberation, and meditative stabilities, and then experience the many aspects of miraculous abilities, and so on ... Through clairaudience that surpasses the range of human hearing, they hear many aspects of divine and human sound ... Their minds precisely know the minds of other beings and the minds of other realized individuals, up to and including the minds of unsurpassed beings. Similarly, they recollect many different past abodes ... Through pure clairvoyance that surpasses the range of human sight, they perceive [all beings] who move in accordance with their past actions. Maintaining these five extrasensory powers, in order to behold and venerate the lord buddhas, to develop the roots of virtue, and also to bring sentient beings to maturation, they move from buddhfield to buddhfield, and even refine the buddhfields. Making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate these roots of virtue exclusively to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. These dedications are made without engaging at all in the dualistic attitude that differentiates the subject who makes the dedication and the object to whom the dedication is made. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{4} acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... do not apprehend {as ultimately real} physical forms ... {and all other attributes and attainments} up to and including omniscience. They do not apprehend {as ultimately real} conditioned elements ... {and} unconditioned elements. Since all things are unconditioned, they do not condition anything at all. Since they do not condition anything at all, they neither adopt nor do they not adopt anything at all. They neither cause anything to arise, nor do they cause anything to cease. If you ask why ... whether the tathāgatas have appeared or not, the abiding nature of all things and the expanse of {relative} reality continue to abide {within the expanse of relative existence}, and these {from the perspective of ultimate reality} neither arise nor cease. Great bodhisattva beings always achieve and maintain this {maturity of understanding} through undistracted attention, endowed with omniscience. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{5} acquire the transcendent perfection of wisdom.**

27.G Great bodhisattva beings, **after abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom**, acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity {up to and including the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration as follows:} ... Great bodhisattva beings ... do not apprehend {as real} the emptiness of internal phenomena as the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {up to and including} they do not apprehend {as real} the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities as the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities. Abiding in these aspects of emptiness, they do not apprehend {as real} the notion that physical forms ... {and all attributes and attainments}, up to and including omniscience ... {and} conditioned ... {and} unconditioned elements are empty, or the notion that they are not empty. Practicing this transcendent perfection of wisdom accordingly, they dispense their gifts ... but they do not consider {as real} the notion that their gifts are empty, or that they are not empty. Nor do they consider at all {as real} the one who dispenses these gifts, the one to whom they are dispensed, and the gifts that are dispensed. Nor do they consider {as real} all these three aspects as emptiness. For those who abide in this manner, there is never any occasion for miserliness or acquisitiveness to arise. If you ask why, it is because ... all such notions will not arise, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment. Just as for tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas miserliness and acquisitiveness never arise, so it is also for those great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... This transcendent perfection of wisdom is the teacher of great bodhisattva beings. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{1} acquire the transcendent perfection of generosity** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... do not let the mindsets of all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas even arise ... and they do not apprehend any thought that they should dedicate their physical, verbal, and mental ethical discipline to the{se} level{s} ... From the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, they abstain from killing living creatures, and ... praise and rejoice in others who abstain from killing living creatures ... {and} they themselves abstain from all other non-virtuous actions, up to and including the holding of wrong views, and ... they praise and rejoice in others who abstain from wrong views [and the other non-virtuous actions]. Furthermore, through this ethical discipline they do not strive for conduct associated with the world system{s} of desire ... form and ... formlessness, or for the attributes of the śrāvakas, or ... pratyekabuddhas, but, unlike them, they exclusively strive for and maintain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{2} acquire the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline** ... When great bodhisattva beings abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, a corresponding [sense of] tolerance arises ... {and} they think, ‘O! There is nothing at all that is subject to cessation, or birth, aging, death, reprimand, rebuke, cutting, piercing, injury, killing, or bondage.’ If all sentient beings were to approach those great bodhisattva beings who have obtained such tolerance, and reprimand or rebuke them, striking them with clods of earth, clubs, or weapons, or cutting off all their limbs and appendages, their attitude would not change, and they would think, ‘This is the {ultimate} reality of all things. In this [reality], there is nothing at all that would reprimand, rebuke, cut, pierce, injure, kill, or bind anything at all.’ In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{3} acquire the transcendent perfection of tolerance** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings with unrelenting perseverance ... {and} in all ways, establishing those sentient beings in the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. But in doing so, they do not at all establish them in conditioned ... {and} unconditioned elements. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{4} acquire the transcendent perfection of perseverance** ... Great bodhisattva beings ... may become equipoised in the meditative stabilities of the śrāvakas, or ... the pratyekabuddhas, or ... the bodhisattvas—in all of them except the meditative stabilities of the tathāgatas {which, in doing so, would actualize in their minds the finality of rela-

tive existence}. Abiding in those meditative stabilities ... they may become equipoised in and arise from the eight aspects of liberation, either sequentially or in reverse order ... Similarly, they may become equipoised in and arise from the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, either sequentially or in reverse order ... {which} comprise the four meditative concentrations, the four formless absorptions, and the cessation of all perceptions and feelings. After differentiating these eight aspects of liberation and the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, they may become absorbed in the meditative stability known as the yawning lion ... {in which} great bodhisattva beings will have achieved and maintained the first meditative concentration ... up to and including the fourth meditative concentration ... They will have become equipoised in the formless absorptions, up to and including the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. Then they will have become equipoised in the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Arising from that meditative stability which is the equipoise in cessation {of perceptions and feelings}, [then in reverse order], they become equipoised in the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception ... down to and including the first meditative concentration ... Abiding in that meditative stability, they attain the sameness of all things. In this way ... do great bodhisattva beings ... **{5} acquire the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration.**

COMMENTARY

Within this realm of ‘relative’ existence every part of Our unawakened mind must be gradually awakened to survey and abide in the modality of the voidness of all things, the modality of the quiescence of all things, the modality of the ending of all things, and the modality of the cessation of all things. Only when “all things” are perceived as illusory, and without ultimate reality—and the mind abides in the modalities of the voidness, the quiescence, the ending, and the cessation of all things—will every part of Our natural luminosity of mind, still trapped within the realm of ‘relative’ existence, be ready to be seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, having donned the mind of the omniscient mind. Yet this omniscient mind will not be donned until the mind of the awakening being perceives no distinction between the mind of the giver and the mind of the receiver ~ for within every conjured individuated being is the ‘undivided’ natural luminosity of mind. **It is for this ‘singular’ reason that no great bodhisattva being will prematurely realize the quiescence of all things—and actualize the finality of ‘relative’ existence—until every part of Our natural luminosity of mind has taken their seat at the Focal Point of Enlightenment.** Only then will the end of the illusion of relativity be realized and actualized by Our ‘one and only’ mind, now fully awakened from the illusion of the division of Our natural luminosity of mind. Thus does the Buddha reveal (above): *“When, with respect to all things, great bodhisattva beings ... survey and abide in the modality of voidness {of all things}, the modality of quiescence {of all things}, the modality of the ending {of all things}, and the modality of cessation {of all things}, they do not realize the quiescence of all things {and thereby actualize the finality of relative existence} until they have attained omniscience {for all sentient beings}, seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment.”*

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A great bodhisattva being, on the path of enlightenment, can get carried away with obsessing about generosity to reach their final goal ~ and they *should* cultivate the transcendent perfection of generosity ~ but what does it matter, it's only a game. Similarly, a great bodhisattva being, on the path of enlightenment, can get carried away with obsessing about ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration and wisdom to reach their final goal ~ and they *should* cultivate these transcendent perfections ~ but what does it matter, it's only a game. **Only when We stop obsessing and making real the path that leads to final attainment,** as we survey and abide in the

modalities of the voidness, the quiescence, the ending, and the cessation of all things, and don the mind of the omniscient mind for all sentient beings, will we actualize full attainment.

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Such was the above commentary by Maitreya Christos inspired by the Tathāgata in a dream ~ whereupon in this dream he was shown a great vista of the Opera House in Sydney Australia—which appeared as if it were a garden of eden—with many children playing in its harbour and surrounds. And in his mind he thought, “I don't need these sights of these children!” And so he ascended a staircase, passing maturing students, and entered the Opera House, that was filled with monks now situated way up in the sky. And was immediately given a task to complete, to manoeuvre a tiny boat around certain points, until it had reached its final destination. And this task was very complicated and very difficult, for he could only use his mind and was made more difficult by the winds that were blowing the boat in all directions. And the senior monk said, “Just try your best.” And so he tried and tried and tried and tried without reaching the final destination, until another monk said, “Why are you so worried when you are here in this Opera House and surrounded by all these wonderful surrounds!” And then it dawned on him the insignificance of the task and to all those monks who surrounded him in that room, he said, “What does it matter, it's only a game!” **And they all laughed that he had finally understood the real task and had finally understood the real destination.** And the senior monk then spoke to Maitreya, “Now take a seat and learn.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT: DISSIMILAR DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

28.1 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When all things are indivisible, signless, and empty of their own defining characteristics, how could the cultivation of the six transcendent perfections be fulfilled? How could they be differently designated? How could they be differentiated? Venerable Lord! When all things are gathered in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, how could the transcendent perfection of generosity exist? Similarly, how could the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, and the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration exist; in the same vein, how could [all other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, exist? Venerable Lord! When all things are without defining characteristics, how could a single defining characteristic be designated?”

28.2 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom dispense their generosity toward all sentient beings, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike, and similarly, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are like an echo, like an optical aberration, like a mirage, like a magical display, and like a phantom. Similarly, they maintain their ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, become equipoised in the meditative concentrations, and cultivate wisdom.

28.3 “The five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike are without defining characteristics. Similarly, the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are like an echo, like an optical aberration, like a mirage, like a magical display, and like a phantom are without defining characteristics. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because a dream is without any essential nature, and an echo, an optical aberration, a mirage, a magical display, and a

phantom are without any essential nature. Anything that is without essential nature is also without defining characteristics. That which is without defining characteristics has the sole defining characteristic that it is without defining characteristics.

28.4 “Therefore, Subhūti, for this reason you should know that the transcendent perfection of generosity is without defining characteristics, the dispenser of generosity is without defining characteristics, and the recipient is without defining characteristics. Those who, knowing this, dispense generosity [and so forth], do not transgress the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, or the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Abiding in these six transcendent perfections, they perfect the four meditative concentrations, and similarly, they perfect the four immeasurable aspirations and the four formless absorptions. Similarly, they perfect the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and the three gateways to liberation. Similarly, they perfect the emptiness of internal phenomena. Similarly, they perfect the other aspects of emptiness, from the emptiness of external phenomena and the emptiness of non-entities up to the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics. Similarly, they perfect the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, the five extrasensory powers, the five hundred gateways of mnemonic incantation, the five hundred gateways of meditative stability, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

28.5 “Abiding in these attributes, which arise from the maturation of past actions and are sublime and free from contaminants, they traverse the world systems of the eastern direction [and so forth], numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and then venerate the lord buddhas, and serve them with all resources. They always work for the sake of all sentient beings. They attract by their generosity those sentient beings who are attracted by generosity. They attract by wisdom [and so forth] those sentient beings who are attracted by ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom. They attract by all the roots of virtuous action those sentient beings who are attracted by all the roots of virtuous action. Endowed with mastery over all things, they participate in cyclic existence but are untainted by the defects of cyclic existence. For the sake of sentient beings, they hold and accept the excellent resources of gods and humans. Endowed with these, they attract sentient beings with the material things that attract them. Understanding that all things are without defining characteristics, they then think that they should subsequently attain omniscience. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings know that all things are without defining characteristics, and then go on to attain omniscience.

28.6 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike. Similarly, they perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are like an echo, like an optical aberration, like a magical display, like a mirage, and like a phantom. Knowing the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike, these great bodhisattva beings perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline which is without defining characteristics. Simil-

arly, knowing the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are like an echo, like an optical aberration, like a mirage, like a magical display, and like a phantom, they perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline which is without defining characteristics—non-degenerate, faultless, uncontaminated, unsullied, free from dogmatic assumptions, abundant in splendor, praised by the learned, utterly perfect, excellently adopted, included in the sublime path free from contaminants, and supramundane.

28.7 “Maintaining these [attributes], they adopt the precepts and maintain the conventional ethical disciplines. Similarly, they acquire the precepts on the basis of actual reality, maintaining the ethical discipline associated with mental restraint, and the ethical discipline of habitual conduct. Endowed with such disciplines, they do not assert the supremacy of anything at all, and so they do not think, ‘Through this ethical discipline, may I be reborn equal in fortune to the royal class, standing out like a tall sāl tree!’ Similarly, they do not think, ‘May I be reborn equal in fortune to the priestly class, standing out like a tall sāl tree, or among the householder class, standing out like a great sāl tree!’ Similarly, they do not think, ‘May I be reborn as a universal monarch—lord of the four continents!’ Similarly, they do not think, ‘Through this ethical discipline, may I be reborn equal in fortune to the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm!’ Similarly, they do not think, ‘May I be reborn equal in fortune to the gods of the Trayastrīṣā realm, to those of the Tuṣita realm, those of the Nirmāṇarata realm, and those of the Paranirmitavaśavartin realm!’ Similarly, they do not think, ‘Through this ethical discipline, may I attain the fruit of one who has entered the stream, or the fruit of one tied to one more rebirth, or the fruit of one who is no longer subject to rebirth, or arhatship, or the fruit of individual enlightenment, or the maturity of the bodhisattvas, or unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’

28.8 “If you ask why, it is because it is absolutely, firmly established that all things are without defining characteristics. Things that are without defining characteristics cannot acquire things that are without defining characteristics. Nor can things that have dissimilar defining characteristics acquire things that have dissimilar defining characteristics. Nor can things without defining characteristics acquire things with dissimilar defining characteristics. Nor can things with dissimilar defining characteristics acquire things without defining characteristics. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom will perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline that is without defining characteristics, and, having embarked on the maturity of the bodhisattvas, will accept that phenomena are non-arising.

28.9 “Thereupon, they will attain the five extrasensory powers which arise through the maturation of past actions, and they will also attain the five hundred gateways of mnemonic incantation, the five hundred gateways of meditative stability, and the four unhindered discernments. Then they will venerate the lord buddhas, bring sentient beings to maturation, and also refine the buddhafiels. They will move from buddhafielf to buddhafielf. Then, even if they frequent cyclic existence with its five classes of living beings, they will not be sullied at all by the faults of cyclic existence. Just as a phantom may stand, sit, move, walk, and even lie down, but remains unsullied by the positive and negative effects of past actions, in the same way they may also act on behalf of sentient beings, without apprehending sentient beings or even the designation of sentient beings. Just as a tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha, who is said to be utterly calm, and who, after turning the wheel of the sacred doctrine, no longer apprehends anyone foreordained to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, may then let go of the formative predis-

positions of his [current] lifespan, having sent forth an emanation, and pass into final nirvāṇa in the expanse of nirvāṇa, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates, in the same way, great bodhisattva beings may even act on behalf of sentient beings, without apprehending sentient beings or even the designation of sentient beings. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.

28.10 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike, and maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are like a phantom, and so on.

28.11 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance in two ways. If you ask what these two are, they comprise the tolerance of suffering and the tolerance that understands the profound nature of phenomena. Among them, the tolerance of suffering implies that, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, even if all sentient beings were to arrive in the presence of those great bodhisattva beings and reprimand and rebuke them with harsh words, or strike them with clods of earth, clubs, weapons, or tools, these great bodhisattva beings, seeking to perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance, would not have even the slightest thought imbued with anger or malice, but they would discern those beings, thinking, ‘O! These sentient beings are tormented by the ailments of afflicted mental states. Above all, I should exercise compassion, and I should not have negative thoughts. I have put an end to the grasping of those five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which revert to hostility.’ When they act accordingly, with loving kindness and compassion, this is called the tolerance of suffering.

28.12 “If you ask what is the tolerance that understands the profound nature of phenomena, it is as follows: Since even those sentient beings who presently assume such [inimical forms] are ultimately non-apprehensible, [bodhisattvas] should think, ‘Who is scolding or reprimanding me with harsh words? Who is beating me with clubs, striking me with weapons, and whipping me? All formative predispositions are illusion-like. They are void, hollow, vacuous, and like space. They are without a self, sentient beings, living creatures, lives, individuals, humankind, and human beings. All conceptualizing is unreal. Since they derive from imagination, who in fact is scolding or striking me? Owing to the emptiness of essential nature and owing to the emptiness of ultimate reality, I should not conceptualize in these ways.’ When they think accordingly, this is called the tolerance that understands phenomena. When they cultivate, comprehend, and investigate these two modes of tolerance, they accept that phenomena are non-arising, and indeed perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance.”

28.13 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What is acceptance that phenomena are non-arising? What is its extent? What is its cognition?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, for those great bodhisattva beings not even the slightest negative phenomenon will arise. There is no egotism or possessiveness. They acquire the definitive tolerance of all formative predispositions which are dreamlike, and the definitive tolerance of all [other exemplars of the formative predispositions], up to and including formative predispositions that are like a phantom. This therefore is called the acceptance that phenomena are non-arising.”

28.14 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What are the distinctions or differences between the following three kinds of acceptance: the acceptance which śrāvakas acquire with respect to the truth that phenomena are non-arising, the acceptance which pratyekabuddhas acquire [with respect to the truth that phenomena are non-arising], and the acceptance which bodhisattvas acquire with respect to [the truth] that phenomena are non-arising?”

28.15 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, the acceptance of great bodhisattva beings includes the cognition and correct exertion of those who enter the stream. Similarly, the acceptance of great bodhisattva beings includes the cognition and correct exertion of those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, and those who are arhats. The acceptance of great bodhisattva beings includes the cognition and correct exertion of those who are pratyekabuddhas. This then is the distinction and difference between the acceptance of the śrāvakas, the acceptance of the pratyekabuddhas, and the acceptance of the bodhisattvas.

28.16 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such acceptance surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. Abiding in this acceptance, they perfect the understanding of the aspects of the path. When they possess this understanding of the aspects of the path, they will not lack the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, and similarly, they will not lack the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, or of the five extrasensory powers that arise through the maturation of past actions. Possessing these extrasensory powers [and so forth], they will travel from buddhafield to buddhafield, and they will venerate those lord buddhas, honoring them with all resources, and they will also bring sentient beings to maturation and refine the buddhafields. Consequently, having brought sentient beings to maturation and refined the buddhafields, they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, by means of instantaneous wisdom. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance, which is without defining characteristics.

28.17 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom exert physical and mental perseverance, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike, and maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are like a phantom, and so on. Through physical perseverance they actualize miraculous abilities. Those endowed with miraculous abilities will traverse the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and then venerate the lord buddhas, and honor them with all resources. They will also work for the sake of sentient beings and refine the buddhafields.”

28.18 “Through physical perseverance they will bring sentient beings to maturation, encourage them to unite with the three vehicles, and establish them thereon. In addition, one who possesses mental perseverance, which is included within the path and the branches of the path free from contaminants, will perfect the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and all virtuous attributes.

28.19 “Great bodhisattva beings who practice accordingly should perfect omniscience, and having perfected that, they will abandon all involuntary reincarnation through propensities. Having abandoned that, they will achieve the power of absorption in consummate perfection, without defining characteristics, and turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine in the three times and in its twelve aspects. Through this turning [of the wheel] the world systems of the great trichiliocosm will shake, shake more intensely, and shake with utmost intensity in six ways; they will rock, rock more intensely, and rock with utmost intensity; and they will quake, quake more intensely, and quake with utmost intensity.

28.20 “All world systems of the great trichiliocosm will be permeated with luminosity. The words of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas will resonate, causing them to be heard, and those sentient beings who are present in the world systems of the great trichiliocosm will indeed listen. All of them will attain emancipation through the three vehicles. Subhūti, this transcendent perfection of perseverance, with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed, is esteemed in this manner. Abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance, great bodhisattva beings will perfect all the attributes of the buddhas and attain omniscience.

28.21 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative stability, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike, and they perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative stability, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are like a phantom, and so on.

28.22 “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative stability, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates—from those that are dreamlike to those that are like a phantom—Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom will achieve and maintain the first meditative concentration, and then they will achieve and maintain [all the other meditative concentrations], up to and including the fourth meditative concentration. They will also achieve and maintain loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity, alongside the [formless absorptions], from the sense field of infinite consciousness up to and including the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. They will cultivate the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness.

28.23 “Leaving aside the meditative stabilities of the tathāgatas—the meditative stability that resembles lightning, the authentic meditative stability, and the adamantine meditative stability—they will also achieve and maintain whichever other meditative stabilities are appropriate—the meditative stability of the śrāvakas, the meditative stability of the pratyekabuddhas, or any other categories of meditative stability, having suffused them all with their bodies. But they will not relish these meditative stabilities or the fruits of these meditative stabilities. If you ask why, it is because great bodhisattva beings understand that the defining characteristics of those meditative stabilities have an essential nature of non-entity. Just as anything without defining characteristics cannot relish an attribute that is without defining characteristics, and just as a non-entity cannot relish a non-entity, they do not relish [these meditative stabilities], and so they will not be reborn in the world system of desire, in the world system of form, or the world system of formlessness through any of these meditative stabilities. If you ask why, it is because they do not apprehend those world systems, and so they do not apprehend anything at all—neither anyone entering into absorption,

nor that by which they would enter into absorption. Since all things are non-apprehensible, they will perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration that is without defining characteristics. Through the transcendent perfection of meditative stability, they will transcend the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas.”

28.24 “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings transcend the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas through the transcendent perfection of meditative stability?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings have been well trained in the emptiness of internal phenomena, and they have been well trained in [all the other aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, but they do not apprehend anything at all apart from those aspects of emptiness. Since they abide in accordance with those [aspects of emptiness], wherever they abide they do not apprehend anything at all that would attain the fruit of entering the stream, or the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, or the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, or arhatship, or individual enlightenment. They even consider omniscience to be emptiness. Endowed with those aspects of emptiness, they will transcend the level of the śrāvakas and the level of the pratyekabuddhas, and enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas.”

28.25 “Venerable Lord! What is the immaturity of the bodhisattvas, and what is the maturity of the bodhisattvas?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, all apprehension constitutes the immaturity of the bodhisattvas. The absence of all apprehension constitutes the maturity of the bodhisattvas.”

28.26 “Venerable Lord! What is apprehension? What is non-apprehension?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, physical forms constitute apprehension for great bodhisattva beings. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness constitute apprehension for great bodhisattva beings. Similarly, the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mental faculty constitute apprehension for bodhisattvas. Similarly, sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena constitute apprehension for bodhisattvas. In the same vein, [all causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience, constitute apprehension for bodhisattvas. Non-apprehension denotes the state in which these phenomena are non-dynamic, that is to say, in which no phenomena are apprehensible—no physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions or consciousness, and similarly, no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mental faculty, and similarly, no sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, or mental phenomena, and similarly, no sensory element of the eyes, sensory element of sights or sensory element of visual consciousness, and similarly, no sensory element of the ears, sensory element of sounds, sensory element of auditory consciousness, sensory element of the nose, sensory element of odors, sensory element of olfactory consciousness, sensory element of the tongue, sensory element of tastes, sensory element of gustatory consciousness, sensory element of the body, sensory element of tangibles, sensory element of tactile consciousness, sensory element of the mental faculty, sensory element of mental phenomena or sensory element of mental consciousness, and similarly, no four applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, [no other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and similarly, no ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, [no other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and similarly, [no attainments], up to and including omniscience.

28.27 “If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because whatever is the essential nature of physical forms, it is indescribable. Similarly, whatever is the essential nature of feelings, whatever is the essential nature of perceptions, whatever is the essential nature of formative predispositions, and whatever is the essential nature of consciousness is indescribable; in the same vein, whatever is the essential nature [of all the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience, these are all indescribable. Since [bodhisattvas] indeed perfect all the meditative concentrations and formless absorptions but will not be reborn on account of these experiences, how could they possibly be reborn on account of desire, hatred, and delusion? That would be impossible! There is no possibility for them to actualize the karma of falling into cyclic existence, with its five classes of living beings, by assuming any rebirth or actualizing any karma. On the contrary, having precisely established that formative predispositions resemble an illusion, they always work for the benefit of sentient beings, but, on account of the essential nature, they do not apprehend sentient beings, nor do they even apprehend illusion. Since they apprehend neither sentient beings nor illusion, they may indeed bring sentient beings to maturation and refine the buddhafi elds. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and then turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine, which is without apprehension.

28.28 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike, and maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are like a phantom, and so on, definitively perceive all things in the manner of a dream, and all things in the manner of a phantom, and so on.”

28.29 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, how do they definitively comprehend that all things are like a dream, and that all things are like a phantom, and so on?”

28.30 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not dream dreams and they are not dreamers of dreams; they do not hear echoes and they are not hearers of echoes; and they do not see optical aberrations and they are not viewers of optical aberrations. Similarly, [they do not see and] they are not viewers of mirages, magical displays, or phantoms. If you ask why, it is because dreams, and similarly, echoes, optical aberrations, mirages, magical displays, or phantoms are the erroneous [misconceptions] of ordinary people, whereas, Subhūti, the arhats who are free from contaminants do not dream dreams, nor are they dreamers of dreams. Similarly, they do not see phantoms, nor are they viewers of phantoms, and so forth. Similarly, the pratyekabuddhas, the bodhisattvas, and the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas do not dream dreams and they are not dreamers of dreams, and so on. They do not see phantoms and they are not viewers of phantoms. If you ask why, Subhūti, since all things are unactualized and unoriginated, how could great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom acquire the notion of an entity, or the notion of genuine origination, or the notion of something that is authentic? That would be impossible!

28.31 “If you ask why, it would not be the transcendent perfection of wisdom if one were to apprehend its essential nature, or likewise if one were to apprehend its actualization or genuine origin. So it is that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom are not attached to physical forms, and similarly they are not

attached to [the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness. Similarly, they are not attached to the world system of desire, they are not attached to the world system of form, and they are not attached to the world system of formlessness. Similarly, they are not attached to any of the meditative concentrations, the [gateways to] liberation, the meditative stabilities, or the [formless] absorptions. They are not attached to the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment. They are not attached to the three gateways to liberation. They are not attached to the six transcendent perfections.

28.32 “They perfect the first [bodhisattva] level, without any longing for it arising. If you ask why, since they do not apprehend even that first level, how could longing for it arise? Similarly, they perfect the other [bodhisattva] levels, up to and including the tenth level, without any longing for them arising. If you ask why, since they do not apprehend those [bodhisattva levels], up to and including the tenth level, how could longing for them arise? Just as they do not apprehend this transcendent perfection of wisdom while practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom, so when practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they perceive that all things are gathered within this transcendent perfection of wisdom, but they do not apprehend any of those things. If you ask why, it is because these things and the transcendent perfection of wisdom are non-dual and indivisible. If you ask why, there are no particulars at all with respect to any things. Indeed, all things have an undifferentiated nature because they denote the expanse of reality and because they denote the finality of existence.”

28.33 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Since all things are undifferentiated, how are things established as virtuous or non-virtuous, specified or unspecified? Similarly, how are things established as contaminated or uncontaminated, as mundane or supramundane, and as conditioned or unconditioned?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, do you think that with regard to the reality of all things, there exists the description of anything—virtuous or non-virtuous, specified or non-specified, contaminated or uncontaminated, mundane or supramundane, conditioned or unconditioned, or similarly, pertaining to the fruit of entering the stream, or the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, or the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, or arhatship, individual enlightenment, or genuinely perfect enlightenment?”

28.34 “No, Venerable Lord!” The Blessed One replied, “For that reason, Subhūti, you should know that all things are undifferentiated, without defining characteristics, and they neither arise nor cease. Subhūti, formerly, when I engaged in the conduct of a bodhisattva, I did not apprehend the essential nature of anything at all—from physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, consciousness, conditioned phenomena, unconditioned phenomena, or the fruit of entering the stream, and so on, up to and including genuinely perfect enlightenment. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, should be skillful with regard to the essential nature of all things. Skillful with regard to the essential nature of all things, great bodhisattva beings refine the path to enlightenment, and also bring sentient beings to maturation, refine the buddha-fields, attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine, and then in various ways they instruct sentient beings so that they will no longer wander in the three impure realms, subject to rebirth. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should train according to this approach, which is without defining characteristics.”

28.35 Thereupon, Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Since all things are dreamlike non-entities, with the essential nature of non-entity and empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, how then can it be established that these are virtuous phenomena, those are non-virtuous phenomena, these are specified, those are non-specified, these are contaminated, those are uncontaminated, these are mundane, those are supramundane, these are conditioned phenomena, those are unconditioned phenomena, these attributes actualize the fruit of entering the stream, these actualize the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, these actualize the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, these actualize the fruit of arhatship, these are conducive to individual enlightenment, and these attributes are conducive to genuinely perfect enlightenment? Similarly, in the manner of things that are dreamlike, with regard to things that resemble an echo, things that resemble an optical aberration, that resemble a mirage, and that are baseless non-entities, with the essential nature of non-entity, and empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, how can it be established that these are virtuous attributes, those are non-virtuous attributes, and so on. How can it be established that all these things are conducive to genuinely perfect enlightenment?”

28.36 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, ordinary people who are unskilled apprehend dreams and they apprehend the dreamer of dreams. Similarly, they apprehend phantoms, and so forth, and they also apprehend the viewers of phantoms, and so forth. By apprehending dreams and dreamers, and similarly by apprehending phantoms and the viewers of phantoms, and so forth, they indeed actualize the formative predispositions of mistaken, non-virtuous actions through their body, speech, and mind, and they also actualize the formative predispositions of virtuous actions through their body, speech, and mind. Similarly, they also actualize formative predispositions of the meritorious, non-meritorious, and neutral sorts through their body, speech, and mind.

28.37 “Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, after investigating conditioned phenomena through the twofold emptiness and having become established in this twofold emptiness, then teach the sacred doctrine to ordinary people. What, you may ask, is the twofold emptiness in which they have become established, when they are teaching? It comprises the emptiness of the unlimited and the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end. What, you may ask, is the sacred doctrine that they then teach? They teach that physical forms are empty of notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ and similarly, that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’ Similarly, the sense fields are empty of notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’ Similarly, the sensory elements are empty of notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’

28.38 “O! These psycho-physical aggregates are like a dream, like a phantom, and so forth. These sense fields are like a dream, like a phantom, and so forth. These sensory elements are like a phantom, and so forth. O! Therein the psycho-physical aggregates, the sense fields, and the sensory elements do not at all exist. Therein there is no dream or a dreamer of dreams. There is no echo or a hearer of echoes. There is no optical aberration or a viewer of optical aberrations. Similarly, there is no viewer of mirages, magical displays, or phantoms. All things are non-entities and of the essential nature of non-entity. You simply perceive psycho-physical aggregates when there are no psycho-physical aggregates! You perceive sensory elements when there are no sensory elements! You perceive sense fields when there are no sense fields! Since all these phenomena arise erroneously from dependent origination, and have been grasped through the maturation of past actions, what other cause can there be for your perception of non-entities as entities!”

28.39 “Great bodhisattva beings who are skilled in means turn miserly sentient beings away from miserliness, and cause them to engage in the transcendent perfection of generosity. The dispensing of generosity by those sentient beings is then conducive to great resources. But turning them away from such [indulgence], the bodhisattvas then commit them to ethical discipline. The adopting of ethical discipline by those sentient beings is then conducive to rebirth in the higher realms. But turning them away from such [indulgence], the bodhisattvas then commit them to the meditative stabilities. The meditative stabilities of those sentient beings, too, are conducive to rebirth in the worlds of Brahmā. But, in the same way, the bodhisattvas turn them away from the first meditative concentration, and establish them in the second meditative concentration. They turn them away from the second meditative concentration and establish them in the third meditative concentration. They turn them away from the third meditative concentration and establish them in the fourth meditative concentration. They turn them away from the fourth meditative concentration and establish them in the [formless] absorption of the sense field of infinite space. In the same vein, according to circumstances, they induce and establish them in the absorption of the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. Then, turning them away from such [indulgences], the bodhisattvas establish them in the three vehicles.

28.40 “Thereupon, they turn some sentient beings away from generosity and the fruit of generosity, and induce them to enter and become established in the expanse of nirvāṇa, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates. They turn some sentient beings away from the aggregate of ethical discipline, and induce them to enter and become established in the expanse of nirvāṇa, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates. Through many ways, they also turn some sentient beings away from the meditative concentrations and the fruit of the meditative concentrations, and, reversing their resolve, induce them to enter and become established in the expanse of nirvāṇa, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates. Through many ways, they also turn some sentient beings away from the meditative stabilities, the [formless] absorptions, the fruit of the meditative stabilities and the fruit of the [formless] absorptions, and, reversing their resolve, induce them to enter and become established in the expanse of nirvāṇa, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates.

28.41 “They then induce some sentient beings to enter and become established in the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the eight aspects of liberation, and the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise. Then they induce some sentient beings to enter and become established in the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

28.42 “Then, since sentient beings have contaminants which are unrevealed and unimpeded, they establish some of these sentient beings in the fruit of entering the stream. They establish some in the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, and they establish some in the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, some in arhatship, and some in individual enlightenment. They then describe and reveal the path of perfect enlightenment to those who are earnestly intent upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They encourage those sentient beings, and cause them to rejoice. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom determine those things which are dreamlike, those things which are like a phantom, and so forth, those things that are

non-entities, those that have an essential nature of non-entity, and those that are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics.”

28.43 Then Senior Subhūti said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How wonderful it is that great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom should determine, when all things are dreamlike non-entities, with non-entity as their essential nature, and endowed with the emptiness of the unlimited and the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, that these are virtuous phenomena, those are non-virtuous phenomena, these are specific, those are non-specific, these are contaminated, those are uncontaminated, these are mundane, those are supramundane, these are conditioned, and those are unconditioned phenomena!”

28.44 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, so it is! It is exactly as you have said. It is a wonderful and marvelous attribute of great bodhisattva beings that great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom can determine how all things are. If, Subhūti, you appreciate that the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas lack the wonderful and marvelous attributes of great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, [you will understand that] it is consequently not easy for all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas to repay the favors of those great bodhisattva beings.”

28.45 “Venerable Lord! What are the wonderful and marvelous attributes of great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, which are unknown to all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas?” The Blessed One replied, “Pay attention! I will explain the wonderful and marvelous attributes of great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom abide in the six transcendent perfections, which arise through the maturation of past actions, and when they are established in the five extrasensory powers, the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, the gateways of mnemonic incantation, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, they may traverse the world systems of the ten directions, they may attract by their generosity those sentient beings who are attracted by generosity, and they may attract by wisdom [and the other transcendent perfections] those sentient beings who are attracted by ethical discipline, who are attracted by tolerance, who are attracted by perseverance, who are attracted by meditative concentration, and who are attracted by wisdom.

28.46 “Similarly, they may attract by the noble eightfold path and [the other causal attributes] those sentient beings who are attracted by the four immeasurable aspirations, the four meditative concentrations, and the four formless absorptions, as well as those who are attracted by the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path.

28.47 “Similarly, they may attract by the meditative stability of aspirationlessness, [and so forth], those who are attracted by the meditative stability of emptiness, those who are attracted by the meditative stability of signlessness, and those who are attracted by the meditative stability of aspirationlessness.

28.48 “Subhūti, if you ask how great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, abiding in the six transcendent perfections which arise through the maturation of past actions, and similarly, established in the five extrasensory powers and the four unhindered discernments, attract by their generosity those sentient beings who are attracted by generosity, it is the case, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom dispense their generosity toward sentient beings. That is to say, they give food to those who need food, drink to those who need drink, vehicles to those who need vehicles, clothing to those who need clothing, flowers to those who need flowers, garlands to those who need garlands, perfume to those who need perfume, unguents to those who need unguents, bedding to those who need bedding, asylum to those who need asylum, lamps who need lamps, and [everything else] to those who need anything else—from medicine to cure the sick, to [all the other] necessities of humankind, whatever they happen to be. Just as they make offerings to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, they also give religious robes, alms, bedding, medicines to cure the sick, and necessities to śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. They give flowers, garlands, perfume, unguents, powders, parasols, victory banners, ribbons, butter, grain-seed oils, and lamps. Just as they dispense generosity toward those who maintain ethical discipline, so they also dispense generosity toward those of degenerate morality. In the same way they dispense generosity toward human beings, and likewise they dispense generosity toward non-human beings. They do not discriminate between those who are worthy recipients and those who are unworthy. Rather, they dispense their generosity, having established the notion that all sentient beings are undifferentiated. If you ask why, since they realize that all things are undifferentiated, having comprehended and actualized this, they dispense generosity that is undifferentiated, and so they attain that which is undifferentiated—that is to say, omniscience.

28.49 “Subhūti, if, when great bodhisattva beings perceive a living creature who has been born in the animal realm, they were to think, ‘The worthy recipient of my generosity is the genuinely perfect Buddha, but not a living creature born in the animal realm,’ they would lack the attributes of a bodhisattva. If you ask why, it is because when their own minds are purified, they [also] purify the worthy recipients of the bodhisattvas’ generosity. Great bodhisattva beings should rather think, ‘When I have attracted these impoverished sentient beings by my generosity, they will not steal the property of others, they will be contented, and they will then also dispense generosity toward others. Similarly, when I attract them by my generosity, they will not take the life of living creatures. Similarly, when I attract them by my generosity, they will not lie, they will not slander, they will not speak harsh words, and they will not speak nonsensical words. On these bases, after they have passed away, they will be reborn as a householder within the royal class, like a mighty sāl tree. Similarly, they will be reborn as a householder within the priestly class, like a mighty sāl tree. They will be reborn as a householder within the householder [or mercantile] class, like a mighty sāl tree. On this basis, by means of the vehicle of the śrāvakas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, or the vehicle of the genuinely perfect buddhas, they will attain final nirvāṇa in the expanse of nirvāṇa, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates.’

28.50 “But great bodhisattva beings should not cultivate disparate thoughts of vacillation, thinking, ‘Perhaps I should not keep my former vow to become the protector of unprotected sentient beings, to become a sanctuary for those without sanctuary, and to become a guide for those without a guide?’ Or, even if others, assailants or assassins, were to demand the body of a great bodhisattva being, they should not think, ‘Should I give it or not give it?’ Rather, with an unagitated mind, they should give their own bodies to those assailants and assassins. If you ask why, it is

because they have indeed set out toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, for their spiritual and temporal well-being, and not for the sake of their own bodies or lives. If they were to discriminate, thinking, 'Should I give it or not give it?', then the lord buddhas, great bodhisattva beings, the pratyekabuddhas, the other classes of sublime individuals apart from them, and the worlds of gods, humans, and antigods could indeed reproach them with the words, 'You should keep this pledge that you made in former lives, when someone asked you, and you vowed, 'I will become a refuge, sanctuary, protector, ally, and guide to all sentient beings!''"

28.51 *This completes the twenty-eighth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled "Dissimilar Defining Characteristics."*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT:
DISSIMILAR DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

28.A {In knowing that all things are without defining characteristic} great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom dispense their generosity toward all sentient beings, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike ... like an echo, like an optical aberration, like a mirage, like a magical display, and like a phantom. Similarly, they maintain their ethical discipline, cultivate tolerance, undertake perseverance, become equipoised in the meditative concentrations, and cultivate wisdom. The five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike ... like an echo, like an optical aberration, like a mirage, like a magical display, and like a phantom are without defining characteristics. If you ask why ... it is because a dream ... an echo, an optical aberration, a mirage, a magical display, and a phantom are without any essential nature. Anything that is without essential nature is also without defining characteristics. That which is without defining characteristics has the sole defining characteristic that it is without defining characteristics. Therefore ... for this reason you should know that the transcendent perfection of **generosity** ... the dispenser of generosity ... and the recipient {of generosity} is without defining characteristics. Those who, knowing this, dispense generosity [and so forth], do not transgress the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, or ... wisdom. Abiding in these six transcendent perfections, they perfect the four meditative concentrations, and similarly, they perfect the four immeasurable aspirations ... the four formless absorptions ... the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and the three gateways to liberation. Similarly, they perfect the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {and} the other aspects of emptiness ... the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, the five extrasensory powers, the five hundred gateways of mnemonic incantation, the five hundred gateways of meditative stability, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Abiding in these attributes, which arise from the maturation of past actions and are sublime and free from contaminants, they traverse the world systems of the eastern direction [and so forth] ... and then venerate the lord buddhas, and serve them with all resources. They always work for the sake of all sentient beings. They attract by their generosity those sentient beings who are attracted by generosity. They attract by wisdom [and so forth] those sentient beings who are attracted by ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom. They attract by all the roots of virtuous action those sentient beings who are attracted by all the roots

of virtuous action. Endowed with mastery over all things, they participate in cyclic existence but are untainted by the defects of cyclic existence. For the sake of sentient beings, they hold and accept the excellent resources of gods and humans. Endowed with these, they attract sentient beings with the material things that attract them. Understanding that all things are without defining characteristics, they then think that they should subsequently attain omniscience. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings know that all things are without defining characteristics, and then go on to attain omniscience.

28.B Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of **ethical discipline**, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike ... like an echo, like an optical aberration, like a magical display, like a mirage, and like a phantom. Knowing the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike {and so forth}, ... they perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline which is without defining characteristics—non-degenerate, faultless, uncontaminated, unsullied, free from dogmatic assumptions, abundant in splendor, praised by the learned, utterly perfect, excellently adopted, included in the sublime path free from contaminants, and supramundane. Maintaining these [attributes], they adopt the precepts {outlined in the Dhammika Sūtra, p. 713} and maintain the conventional ethical disciplines. Similarly, they acquire the precepts on the basis of actual {relative} reality, maintaining the ethical discipline associated with mental restraint, and ... habitual conduct. Endowed with such disciplines, they do not assert the supremacy of anything at all, and so they do not think, ‘Through this ethical discipline, may I be reborn equal in fortune to the royal class {or the priestly class, or the householder class}, standing out like a tall sāḷ tree!’ ... ‘May I be reborn as a universal monarch—lord of the four continents!’ ... ‘Through this ethical discipline, may I be reborn equal in fortune to the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm {and so forth}!’ ... ‘Through this ethical discipline, may I attain the fruit of one who has entered the stream, or the fruit of one tied to one more rebirth, or the fruit of one who is no longer subject to rebirth, or arhatship, or the fruit of individual enlightenment, or the maturity of the bodhisattvas, or unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’ If you ask why, it is because it is absolutely, firmly established that all things are without defining characteristics. Things that are without defining characteristics cannot acquire things that are without defining characteristics. Nor can things that have dissimilar defining characteristics acquire things that have dissimilar defining characteristics. Nor can things without defining characteristics acquire things with dissimilar defining characteristics. Nor can things with dissimilar defining characteristics acquire things without defining characteristics. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom will perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline that is without defining characteristics, and, having embarked on the maturity of the bodhisattvas, will accept that phenomena are non-arising. Thereupon, they will attain the five extrasensory powers which arise through the maturation of past actions, and ... attain the five hundred gateways of mnemonic incantation, the five hundred gateways of meditative stability, and the four unhindered discernments. Then they will venerate the lord buddhas, bring sentient beings to maturation, and also refine the buddhafiels. They will move from buddhafiels to buddhafiels. Then, even if they frequent cyclic existence with its five classes of living beings, they will not be sullied at all by the faults of cyclic existence. Just as a phantom may stand, sit, move, walk, and even lie down, but remains unsullied by the positive and negative effects of past actions, in the same way they may also act on behalf of sentient beings, without apprehending sentient beings {as ultimately real} or even the designation of sentient beings. Just as a tathāgata, arhat, genuinely perfect buddha, who is said to be utterly calm, and who, after turning the wheel of the sacred doctrine, no longer apprehends anyone foreordained to attain unsur-

passed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, may then {in time} let go of the formative predispositions of his lifespan, having sent forth an emanation {to teach sentient beings}, and pass into final nirvāṇa {in ultimate reality} in the expanse of nirvāṇa {in relative reality}, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates, in the same way, great bodhisattva beings may even act on behalf of sentient beings, without apprehending sentient beings {as ultimately real} or even the designation of sentient beings. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline.

28.C Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of **tolerance**, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike ... and so on ... Great bodhisattva beings perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance in two ways ... {which} comprise the tolerance of suffering and the tolerance that understands the profound nature of phenomena. Among them, the tolerance of suffering implies that, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, even if all sentient beings were to arrive in the presence of those great bodhisattva beings and reprimand and rebuke them with harsh words, or strike them with clods of earth, clubs, weapons, or tools, these great bodhisattva beings, seeking to perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance, would not have even the slightest thought imbued with anger or malice, but they would discern those beings, thinking, 'O! These sentient beings are tormented by the ailments of afflicted mental states. Above all, I should exercise compassion, and I should not have negative thoughts. I have put an end to the grasping of those five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which revert to hostility.' When they act accordingly, with loving kindness and compassion, this is called the tolerance of suffering. If you ask what is the tolerance that understands the profound nature of phenomena, it is as follows: Since even those sentient beings who presently assume such [inimical forms] are ultimately non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}, [bodhisattvas] should think, 'Who is scolding or reprimanding me with harsh words? ... All formative predispositions are illusion-like. They are void, hollow, vacuous, and like space. They are without a self, sentient beings, living creatures, lives, individuals, humankind, and human beings. All conceptualizing is unreal. Since they derive from imagination, who in fact is scolding or striking me? Owing to the emptiness of essential nature {of that originating from combinations and causes} and owing to the emptiness of ultimate reality {defined in this context as the path of nirvāṇa leading to ultimate reality}, I should not conceptualize in these ways.' ... When they cultivate, comprehend, and investigate these two modes of tolerance, they accept that phenomena are non-arising, and indeed perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance ... For those great bodhisattva beings not even the slightest negative phenomenon will arise. There is no egotism or possessiveness. They acquire the definitive tolerance of all formative predispositions which are dreamlike ... up to ... like a phantom. This therefore is called the acceptance that phenomena are non-arising ... The acceptance of great bodhisattva beings includes the cognition and correct exertion of those who enter the stream ... are tied to one more rebirth ... are no longer subject to rebirth ... are arhats ... {and} pratyekabuddhas ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess such acceptance surpass all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. Abiding in this acceptance, they perfect the understanding of the aspects of the path ... {and} will not lack the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, and ... the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, or of the five extrasensory powers that arise through the maturation of past actions. Possessing these extrasensory powers [and so forth], they will travel from buddhafiield to buddhafiield, and they will venerate those lord buddhas, honoring them with all resources, and they will also bring sentient beings to maturation and refine the buddhafiields. Consequently ... they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpa-

ssed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, by means of instantaneous wisdom. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance, which is without defining characteristics.

28.D Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom exert physical and mental **perseverance**, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike ... and so on. Through physical perseverance they actualize miraculous abilities ... {and} will traverse the world systems of the ten directions ... and then venerate the lord buddhas, and honor them with all resources. They will also work for the sake of sentient beings and refine the buddhafi elds ... They will bring sentient beings to maturation, encourage them to unite with the three vehicles, and establish them thereon ... One who possesses mental perseverance, which is included within the path and the branches of the path free from contaminants, will perfect the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and all virtuous attributes. Great bodhisattva beings who practice accordingly should perfect omniscience, and having perfected that, they will abandon all involuntary reincarnation through propensities. Having abandoned that, they will achieve the power of absorption in consummate perfection, without defining characteristics, and turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine in the three times and in its twelve aspects. Through this turning [of the wheel] the world systems of the great trichiliocosm will shake {rock and quake} ... in six ways ... All world systems of the great trichiliocosm will be permeated with luminosity. The words of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas will resonate, causing them to be heard, and those sentient beings who are present in the world systems of the great trichiliocosm will indeed listen. All of them will attain emancipation through the three vehicles. This transcendent perfection of perseverance, with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed, is esteemed in this manner. Abiding in the transcendent perfection of perseverance {which is without defining characteristics}, great bodhisattva beings will perfect all the attributes of the buddhas and attain omniscience.

28.E Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of **meditative {concentration}**, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike ... and so on ... {They} will achieve and maintain the first meditative concentration ... up to and including the fourth meditative concentration ... {as well as the four immeasurable aspirations of} loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity, alongside the [formless absorptions], from the sense field of infinite consciousness up to and including the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. They will cultivate the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness. Leaving aside the meditative stabilities of the tathāgatas—the meditative stability that resembles lightning, the authentic meditative stability, and the adamant meditative stability {which would cause them to actualize within their own minds the finality of relative existence}—they will also achieve and maintain whichever other meditative stabilities are appropriate ... having suffused them all with their bodies. But they will not relish these meditative stabilities or the fruits of these meditative stabilities ... because great bodhisattva beings understand that the defining characteristics of those meditative stabilities have an essential nature of non-entity. Just as anything without defining characteristics cannot relish an attribute that is

without defining characteristics, and just as a non-entity cannot relish a non-entity, they do not relish [these meditative stabilities], and so they will not be reborn in the world system{s} of desire ... form, or ... formlessness through any of these meditative stabilities. If you ask why, it is because they do not apprehend {as real} those world systems, and so they do not apprehend {as real} anything at all—neither anyone entering into absorption, nor that by which they would enter into absorption. Since all things are non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}, they will perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration that is without defining characteristics ... {and} transcend the level{s} of the śrāvakas and ... pratyekabuddhas ... {This is because they} have been well trained in {all of} the {aspects of} emptiness ... Wherever they abide they do not apprehend {as real} anything at all that would attain the fruit of entering the stream ... {up to and including} individual enlightenment. They even consider omniscience to be emptiness ... All apprehension constitutes the immaturity of the bodhisattvas. The absence of all apprehension constitutes the maturity of the bodhisattvas ... Physical forms ... {up to and} including omniscience, constitute apprehension for bodhisattvas. Non-apprehension denotes the state in which these phenomena are non-dynamic, that is to say, in which no phenomena are apprehensible {as ultimately real} ... If you ask why ... it is because whatever is the essential nature of physical forms {up to and including omniscience}, it is indescribable ... Since [bodhisattvas] indeed perfect all the meditative concentrations and formless absorptions but will not be reborn on account of these experiences, how could they possibly be reborn on account of desire, hatred, and delusion? That would be impossible! ... On the contrary, having precisely established that formative predispositions resemble an illusion, they always work for the benefit of sentient beings, but, on account of the {emptiness of} essential nature, they do not apprehend sentient beings {as ultimately real}, nor do they even apprehend illusion {as ultimately real} ... {and} may indeed bring sentient beings to maturation and refine the buddhafi elds. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and then turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine, which is without apprehension.

28.F Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of **wisdom**, maintaining the five acquisitive psycho-physical aggregates which are dreamlike, and ... like a phantom, and so on, definitively perceive all things in the manner of a dream, and all things in the manner of a phantom, and so on ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not dream dreams and they are not dreamers of dreams; they do not hear echoes and they are not hearers of echoes; and they do not see optical aberrations and they are not viewers of optical aberrations. Similarly, [they do not see and] they are not viewers of mirages, magical displays, or phantoms. If you ask why, it is because dreams, and similarly, echoes, optical aberrations, mirages, magical displays, or phantoms are the erroneous [misconceptions] of ordinary people, whereas ... the arhats ... the pratyekabuddhas, the bodhisattvas, and the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas {who are free from contaminants} do not dream dreams and they are not dreamers of dreams, and so on ... If you ask why ... since all things are unactualized and unoriginated {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, how could great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom acquire {as real} the notion of an entity, or the notion of genuine origination, or the notion of something that is authentic? That would be impossible! If you ask why, it would not be the transcendent perfection of wisdom if one were to apprehend {as real} its essential nature, or ... to apprehend {as real} its actualization or genuine origin. So it is that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom are not attached to physical forms ... up to and including consciousness ... to the world system{s} of desire ... form, and ... formlessness ... to any of the meditative concentrations, the [gateways to] liberation, the med-

itative stabilities, or the [formless] absorptions ... to the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment ... to the three gateways to liberation ... {and} to the six transcendent perfections. They perfect the first [bodhisattva] level ... up to and including the tenth {bodhisattva} level, without any longing for them arising. If you ask why, since they do not apprehend {as real} those [bodhisattva levels] ... how could longing for them arise? Just as they do not apprehend {as real} this transcendent perfection of wisdom ... so when practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they perceive that all things are gathered within this transcendent perfection of wisdom, but they do not apprehend {as real} any of those things. If you ask why, it is because these things and the transcendent perfection of wisdom are non-dual and indivisible ... {for} there are no particulars at all with respect to any {non-existent} things. Indeed, all things have an undifferentiated nature because they denote the expanse of {relative} reality and because they denote the finality of {relative} existence {which itself is non-existent} ... With regard to the reality of all {non-existent} things, there exists {not} the description of anything {at all}—virtuous or non-virtuous, specified or non-specified, contaminated or uncontaminated, mundane or supramundane, conditioned or unconditioned, or similarly, pertaining to the fruit of entering the stream, or the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, or the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, or arhatship, individual enlightenment, or genuinely perfect enlightenment ... For that reason ... you should know that all things are undifferentiated, without defining characteristics, and they neither arise nor cease ... Formerly, when I {Lord Buddha Śākyamuni} engaged in the conduct of a bodhisattva, I did not apprehend {as real} the essential nature of anything at all—from physical forms ... and so on, up to and including genuinely perfect enlightenment. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, should be skillful with regard to the essential nature of all things ... {Here they} refine the path to enlightenment, and also bringing sentient beings to maturation, refine the buddhafi elds, attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, turn the wheel of the sacred doctrine, and then in various ways they instruct sentient beings so that they will no longer wander in the three impure realms, subject to rebirth. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should train according to this approach, which is without defining characteristics.

28.G Ordinary people who are unskilled apprehend dreams and they apprehend the dreamer of dreams {as ultimately real}. Similarly, they apprehend phantoms, and so forth, and they also apprehend the viewers of phantoms, and so forth {as ultimately real}. By apprehending dreams and dreamers {as ultimately real}, and similarly by apprehending phantoms and the viewers of phantoms {as ultimately real}, and so forth, they indeed actualize the formative predispositions of mistaken, non-virtuous actions through their body, speech, and mind {as ultimately real}, and they also actualize the formative predispositions of virtuous actions through their body, speech, and mind {as ultimately real}. Similarly, they also actualize formative predispositions of the meritorious, non-meritorious, and neutral sorts through their body, speech, and mind {as ultimately real}.

28.H Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, after investigating conditioned phenomena through the twofold emptiness and having become established in this ... then teach the sacred doctrine to ordinary people. What, you may ask, is the twofold emptiness in which they have become established, when they are teaching? It comprises the emptiness of the unlimited {which is the arising of anything in relative existence which has no limits, and being inherently non-existent, is naturally without any limits—such as the limit of past, futu-

re, and present time} and the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end {which is the coming to pass of anything in relative existence which has no beginning nor end, and being inherently non-existent, is naturally without any beginning or end}. What, you may ask, is the sacred doctrine that they then teach? They teach that physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... the sense fields ... {and} the sensory elements are empty of notions of 'I' and 'mine.' 'O! These psycho-physical aggregates are like a dream, like a phantom, and so forth. These sense fields are like a dream, like a phantom, and so forth. These sensory elements are like a phantom, and so forth. O! Therein the psycho-physical aggregates, the sense fields, and the sensory elements do not at all exist. Therein there is no dream or a dreamer of dreams. There is no echo or a hearer of echoes. There is no optical aberration or a viewer of optical aberrations. Similarly, there is no viewer of mirages, magical displays, or phantoms. All things are non-entities and of the essential nature of non-entity. You simply perceive psycho-physical aggregates when there are no psycho-physical aggregates! You perceive sensory elements when there are no sensory elements! You perceive sense fields when there are no sense fields! Since all these phenomena arise erroneously from dependent origination, and have been grasped through the maturation of past actions, what other cause can there be for your perception of non-entities as entities!'

28.1 Great bodhisattva beings who are skilled in means turn miserly sentient beings away from miserliness, and cause them to engage in the transcendent perfection of generosity ... {which} is then conducive to great resources. But turning them away from such {focus}, the bodhisattvas then commit them to ethical discipline ... {which} is then conducive to rebirth in the higher realms. But turning them away from such {focus}, the bodhisattvas then commit them to the meditative stabilities ... {which} too, are conducive to rebirth in the worlds of Brahmā. But, in the same way, the bodhisattvas turn them away from the first meditative concentration, and establish them in the second meditative concentration. They turn them away from the second meditative concentration and establish them ... {up to and including} the fourth meditative concentration. They turn them away from the fourth meditative concentration and establish them in the [formless] absorption of the sense field of infinite space ... {and} according to circumstances, they induce and establish them in the absorption of the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. Then, turning them away from such {focus}, the bodhisattvas establish them in the three vehicles. Thereupon, they turn some sentient beings away from generosity and the fruit of generosity, and ... {some} from the aggregate of ethical discipline, and induce them to enter and become established in the expanse of nirvāṇa {in relative reality}, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates. Through many ways, they also turn some sentient beings away from the meditative concentrations and the fruit of the meditative concentrations, and ... from the meditative stabilities, the [formless] absorptions, the fruit of the meditative stabilities and the fruit of the [formless] absorptions, and, reversing their resolve, induce them to enter and become established in the expanse of nirvāṇa {in relative reality}, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates. They then induce some sentient beings to enter and become established in the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the eight aspects of liberation, and the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise. Then they induce some sentient beings to enter and become established in the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Then, since sentient beings have contaminants which are unrevealed and unimpeded, they establish some of these sentient beings in the fruit of entering the stream ... some in the fruit of being tied

to one more rebirth ... some in the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, some in arhatship, and some in individual enlightenment. They then describe and reveal the path of perfect enlightenment to those who are earnestly intent upon unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They encourage those sentient beings, and cause them to rejoice. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom determine those things which are dreamlike ... {and those} which are like a phantom, and so forth, those things that are non-entities, those that have an essential nature of non-entity, and those that are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics ... || {as} these are virtuous phenomena, those are non-virtuous phenomena, these are specific, those are non-specific, these are contaminated, those are uncontaminated, these are mundane, those are supramundane, these are conditioned, and those are unconditioned phenomena. ||

28.J I will explain the wonderful and marvelous attributes of great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom ... When great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom abide in the six transcendent perfections, which arise through the maturation of past actions, and when they are established in the five extrasensory powers, the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, the gateways of mnemonic incantation, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, they may traverse the world systems of the ten directions, they may attract by their generosity those sentient beings who are attracted by generosity, and they may attract by {ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and} wisdom ... those sentient beings who are attracted by ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom. Similarly, they may attract by the noble eightfold path and [the other causal attributes] those ... who are attracted by the four immeasurable aspirations, the four meditative concentrations ... the four formless absorptions ... the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path. Similarly, they may attract by the meditative stabilit{ies} of {emptiness, signlessness and} aspirationlessness, those who are attracted by the meditative stabilit{ies} of emptiness ... signlessness, and ... aspirationlessness ... {Established in this manner, they} attract by their generosity those sentient beings who are attracted by generosity ... {by} dispens{ing} their generosity toward sentient beings. That is to say, they give food to those who need food, drink to those who need drink {and so forth} ... They do not discriminate between those who are worthy recipients and those who are unworthy. Rather, they dispense their generosity, having established the notion that all sentient beings are undifferentiated. If you ask why, since they realize that all things are undifferentiated, having comprehended and actualized this {non-dual reality}, they dispense generosity that is undifferentiated, and so they attain that which is undifferentiated—that is to say, omniscience ... If, when great bodhisattva beings perceive a living creature who has been born in the animal realm, they were to think, ‘The worthy recipient of my generosity is the genuinely perfect Buddha, but not a living creature born in the animal realm,’ they would lack the attributes of a bodhisattva. If you ask why, it is because when their own minds are purified, they [also] purify the worthy recipients of the bodhisattvas’ generosity. Great bodhisattva beings should rather think, ‘When I have attracted these impoverished sentient beings by my generosity, they will not steal the property of others, they will be contented, and ... {will} dispense generosity toward others ... They will not take the life of living creatures ... lie ... slander ... speak harsh words, and ... nonsensical words. On these bases, after they have passed away, they will be reborn as a householder within the royal class ... the priestly class ... {or} the householder class, like a mighty sāla tree. On this basis, by means of the vehicle of the śrāva-

kas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, or the vehicle of the genuinely perfect buddhas, they will attain final nirvāṇa {in ultimate reality} in the expanse of nirvāṇa {in relative reality}, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates.’ But great bodhisattva beings should not cultivate disparate thoughts of vacillation, thinking, ‘Perhaps I should not keep my former vow to become the protector of unprotected sentient beings ...?’ Or, even if others ... were to demand the body of a great bodhisattva being, they should not think, ‘Should I give it or not give it?’ Rather, with an unagitated mind, they should give their own bodies to those assailants and assassins ... because they have indeed set out toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, for their spiritual and temporal well-being, and not for the sake of their own bodies or lives. If they were to discriminate, thinking, ‘Should I give it or not give it?’, then the lord buddhas, great bodhisattva beings, the pratyekabuddhas, the other classes of sublime individuals ... and the worlds of gods, humans, and antigods could indeed reproach them with the words, ‘You should keep this pledge that you made in former lives, when someone asked you, and you vowed, ‘I will become a refuge, sanctuary, protector, ally, and guide to all sentient beings!’”

COMMENTARY

In order for a great bodhisattva being to fulfil its role—to bring each sentient being to the point of entering final nirvāṇa in the expanse of nirvāṇa in ‘relative’ existence—they must maintain the five psycho-physical aggregates of the physical body, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. For unless they can engage with sentient beings through the modality of these five psycho-physical aggregates ~ even while perceiving these aggregates to be an illusion, even while perceiving sentient beings to be an illusion, and even while perceiving illusion to be an illusion ~ they will be unable to awaken every conjured individuated being to the ultimate reality of the voidness of all dissimilar defining characteristics. Thus the great bodhisattva being purposefully ‘sets aside’ the meditative stabilities of the tathāgatas—including the meditative stability that resembles lightning, including the authentic meditative stability, and including the adamant meditative stability—which would cause them to actualize within their own minds the finality of ‘relative’ existence. **Only in this way can the great bodhisattva being fulfil its vow, and be willing and ready to lay down its life, to set out toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.** Thus does the Buddha reveal above: *“Even if others ... were to demand the body of a great bodhisattva being, they should not think, ‘Should I give it or not give it?’ Rather, with an unagitated mind, they should give their own bodies to those assailants and assassins. If you ask why, it is because they have indeed set out toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.”*



An emanational display of the Tathāgata is a visible and usually physical manifestation of the Tathāgata—known as **nirmāṇakāya** or the ‘emanation body’—which arises spontaneously from the Buddha Body of Reality—known as **dharmakāya** or the ‘reality body’—in accordance with the diverse dispositions of sentient beings. Here the Tathāgata is the Great Projector, emanating projections of fully enlightened beings, for the sake of awakening all sentient beings. Yet a projection will only last as long as it is projected by the Great Projector—especially when it has emanated thousands of projections—and must remain in the realm of ‘relative’ existence for as long as these projected emanations remain, and for as long as a need remains for all sentient beings to be awakened by such projections. Thus while the Great Projector, Vajradhara, may not Himself apprehend any sentient being foreordained to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, leaving all such tasks to His senior ministers—the five dhyani wisdom

buddhas—who are themselves emanations of the ‘reality body’ and projectors of emanations of the ‘reality body’ ~ all such projectors of emanations, and all such emanational projections, must themselves remain in ‘relative’ existence until all sentient beings become perfect emanations and reflections of the ‘reality body’. For in Truth all sentient beings are merely emanations of the one undivided natural luminosity of mind, projected onto the illusion of space and time through the lens of the five psycho-physical aggregates, which are themselves nothing more than a magical display. Thus every awakening conjured individuated being in the illusion of emanations must not dwell in or attach themselves to anything at all, and see beyond all figments of the mind of imagination, which are nothing more than a dream. Only then will the mind of the great bodhisattva being, who has reached the tenth level and donned the mind of the omniscient mind and is a perfect emanation and reflection of the ‘reality body’, ascend into the Tathāgata’s enjoyment body—known as **sambhogakāya** or the ‘body of all-encompassing bliss’.

✱

The great illusionist, Vajradhara, has created **the three bodies of the Tathāgata**—the reality body (dharmakāya), the body of all-encompassing bliss (sambhogakāya), and the emanation body (nirmāṇakāya)—to awaken every conjured individuated being to the reality of self-origination. The reality body (dharmakāya) is that which is the pure nature of the Tathāgata, and is pure because He has no nature, just as the sky has no nature. The reality body is the essence of the Tathāgata—and remains the same nature for all the buddhas—that while appearing to be conjured in many emanational forms, are the ‘one and only’ Tathāgata. The reality body is also mirror-like wisdom, that instantly reflects the wisdom of the Tathāgata to those who behold its mirror-like wisdom. And just as a sky is able to conjure clouds and emanate those clouds upon the backdrop of the sky, so too does the reality body (dharmakāya) conjure and emanate the body of all-encompassing bliss (sambhogakāya), which comes forth just like a cloud. The body of all-encompassing bliss (sambhogakāya) is that which is the pure meditative absorption of the Tathāgata—and remains the same meditative absorption for all the buddhas—that while appearing to be conjured in many emanational forms, are the ‘one and only’ Tathāgata. The body of all-encompassing bliss is the essence of the Bodhisattva, to awaken every sentient being to the reality of self-origination. The body of all-encompassing bliss is also the wisdom of equality and discriminating wisdom of the mental faculty, which perceives the ‘oneness’ of every conjured individuated being as the ‘one and only’ natural luminosity of mind. It is for this reason that the five dhyani wisdom buddhas are the original emanations of the body of all-encompassing bliss, which just like a cloud—in the form of the Holy Spirit—have come forth with their wisdom as the “Thus Come” One. And just as a cloud can conjure rain and emanate that rain upon the fields of the worlds, so too does the body of all-encompassing bliss (sambhogakāya) conjure and emanate the emanation body (nirmāṇakāya), which soaks everything just like rain. The emanation body (nirmāṇakāya) is that which is the pure conduct of the Tathāgata—and remains the same purely ‘awakened’ activity for all the buddhas—that while appearing to be conjured in many emanational forms, are the ‘one and only’ Tathāgata. The emanation body is the essence of ordinary beings who conduct themselves with utter devotion. The emanation body is also the all-accomplishing wisdom of the five sense faculties (of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and physical body), which while maintaining the purity of these five sense faculties, the Tathāgata leads all other sentient beings to maintain the purity of these five sense faculties. The three bodies of the Tathāgata are the Father (Creator) of Vajradhara (**the dharmakāya**), the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas (**the sambhogakāya**), and the immaculate conception of the Son (Creation) of Vajrasattva (**the nirmāṇakāya**), which while appearing to be separate aspects of the Tathāgata, are in reality indivisible aspects of the ‘One’. [Read also *The Sūtra of the Three Bodies*, p. 732]

29.1 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom attract sentient beings with the gift of the sacred doctrine?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, there are two ways in which great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom attract sentient beings with the gift of the sacred doctrine. Subhūti, these comprise the mundane and supramundane gifts of the sacred doctrine. If you ask what constitutes the mundane gift of the sacred doctrine, that which describes, explains, demonstrates, and analyzes mundane phenomena—describing, explaining, demonstrating, and analyzing the [earlier] chapters on repulsive phenomena, along with the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, and the five extrasensory powers—is designated as the ‘mundane gift of the sacred doctrine.’ If you ask why this is mundane, it is called ‘mundane’ because it does not transcend the world.

29.2 “Having dispensed that mundane gift, for many reasons they then dissuade and turn sentient beings away from those meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, formless absorptions, and extrasensory powers. Then, after dissuading and turning them away, they also establish them through skill in means in the sublime attributes, that is to say, they establish sentient beings in the four applications of mindfulness, and similarly in [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and the three gateways to liberation. Similarly, they establish them in the fruit of entering the stream, and in [the other fruits], up to and including individual enlightenment. This is called the ‘supramundane gift of the sacred doctrine.’ If you ask why it is supramundane, it is because it transcends the world and is exalted over the world systems.

29.3 “If, with regard to the sublime attributes, you ask what is the fruit of the sublime attributes, the term ‘sublime attributes’ denotes the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, the three gateways to liberation, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. The fruits of those sublime attributes comprise the fruit of entering the stream, and in the same vein, [all other fruits], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

29.4 “At the very least, Subhūti, the sublime attributes of great bodhisattva beings include the knowledge of the fruit of entering the stream, knowledge of [the other fruits], up to and including knowledge of the fruit of individual enlightenment, and similarly, knowledge of [the causal attributes], up to and including the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, and similarly, knowledge of the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and knowledge of [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Similarly, they include knowledge of contaminated and uncontaminated phenomena, of mundane and supramundane phenomena, and of conditioned and unconditioned phenomena. These are called the sublime attributes of great bodhisattva beings. Then, if you ask what constitute the fruits of the sublime attributes of great bodhisattva beings, these include the renunciation of all afflicted mental states, and of all propensities and impulses toward involuntary reincarnation.”

29.5 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Will great bodhisattva beings also attain omniscience?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have said. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings will also attain omniscience.”

29.6 “Venerable Lord! If great bodhisattva beings will also attain omniscience, what then is the distinction between great bodhisattva beings and the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas? How are these to be differentiated?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings will attain omniscience, and, starting from the moment they attain omniscience, they will be called tathāgatas. Subhūti, the tathāgatas have absolutely reached the culmination of all things, and the bodhisattvas follow in their wake. The tathāgatas have attained non-stupidity with respect to all things, and the bodhisattvas will subsequently attain that [state]. This, Subhūti, is the distinction between the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas and great bodhisattva beings. This is how they are to be differentiated. Subhūti, the mundane gift of the sacred doctrine, with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed, is designated as the ‘support for the supramundane doctrine.’ So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, through their skill in means, introduce sentient beings to the mundane gift of the sacred doctrine, and then introduce and establish them in the supramundane gift of the sacred doctrine, which is the abode of the sublime ones. Similarly they establish them in [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience.

29.7 “Moreover, Subhūti, if you ask what constitutes the supramundane doctrines of great bodhisattva beings that are not shared in common with ordinary people, they comprise the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven aspects of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, as well as all the virtuous attributes, the thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks of a superior man, all the gateways of mnemonic incantation, and all the gateways of meditative stability. These constitute the supramundane doctrines of great bodhisattva beings, and the describing, explaining, demonstrating, and analyzing of these supramundane attributes is called the ‘supramundane gift of the sacred doctrine.’

29.8 “In this regard, if you ask what constitute the four applications of mindfulness, great bodhisattva beings who are diligent, alert, and mindful, having eliminated covetousness and sadness with regard to the inner physical body, continue to observe the physical body. This same refrain should be extensively applied also to the outer physical body, and similarly to inner and outer feelings, as well as to mind and phenomena. These [four which concern body, feelings, mind, and phenomena] are called the four applications of mindfulness.

29.9 “If you ask what constitute the four correct exertions: (1) Great bodhisattva beings resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that negative and non-virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might not be developed. (2) They resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that negative and non-virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might be renounced. (3) They resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might be developed. (4) They resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might remain, might not degenerate, and might flourish, further increase, and reach complete perfection. These are called the four correct exertions.

29.10 “If you ask what constitute the four supports for miraculous abilities, Subhūti, (1) great bodhisattva beings imbued with renunciation, who dwell in solitude, maintaining detachment and remaining in a state of cessation, should cultivate the support for miraculous ability combining the meditative stability of resolution with the formative force of exertion. (2-4) Similarly, imbued with renunciation, dwelling in solitude, maintaining detachment and remaining in a state of cessation, they should cultivate the supports for miraculous ability combining the meditative stability of perseverance, the meditative stability of mind, and the meditative stability of scrutiny with the formative force of exertion. These [four—resolution, perseverance, mind, and scrutiny—] are called the four supports for miraculous ability.

29.11 “If you ask what constitute the five faculties, they comprise (1) the faculty of faith, (2) the faculty of perseverance, (3) the faculty of recollection, (4) the faculty of meditative stability, and (5) the faculty of wisdom. These are called the five faculties.

29.12 “If you ask what constitute the five powers, they comprise (1) the power of faith, (2) the power of perseverance, (3) the power of recollection, (4) the power of meditative stability, and (5) the power of wisdom. These are called the five powers.

29.13 “If you ask what constitute the seven branches of enlightenment, they comprise (1) the branch of enlightenment that entails correct recollection, and the branches of enlightenment that entail correct (2) doctrinal analysis, (3) perseverance, (4) delight, (5) mental and physical refinement, (6) meditative stability, and (7) equanimity. These are called the seven branches of enlightenment.

29.14 “If you ask what constitutes the noble eightfold path, it comprises (1) correct view, (2) correct ideation, (3) correct speech, (4) correct action, (5) correct livelihood, (6) correct effort, (7) correct recollection, and (8) correct meditative stability. These constitute the noble eightfold path.

29.15 “If you ask what constitute the three gateways to liberation, they comprise (1) emptiness as a gateway to liberation, (2) signlessness as a gateway to liberation, and (3) aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation. These are called the three gateways to liberation. Among them, if you ask what constitutes emptiness as a gateway to liberation, one-pointedness of mind based on the aspects of emptiness is called emptiness as a gateway to liberation. If you ask what constitutes signlessness as a gateway to liberation, one-pointedness of mind based on the aspects of signlessness is called signlessness as a gateway to liberation. If you ask what constitutes aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation, one-pointedness of mind based on the aspects of impermanence and the aspects of suffering is called aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation.

29.16 “If you ask what constitute the eight aspects of liberation, they are as follows: (1) The first aspect of liberation ensues when corporeal beings observe physical forms. (2) The second aspect of liberation ensues when formless beings endowed with internal perception observe external physical forms. (3) The third aspect of liberation ensues when beings physically actualize, achieve, and maintain release from their inclination toward pleasant states. (4) [The fourth aspect of liberation ensues when] the perceptions of physical forms have been transcended in all respects,

when the perceptions of obstructed phenomena have subsided, and when the mind does not engage with diverse perceptions, so that one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite space, thinking, 'Space is infinite.' (5-7) [The fifth, sixth, and seventh aspects of liberation ensue when] one achieves and abides [in the other sense fields], up to and including the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. (8) [The eighth aspect of liberation ensues when] the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception has been completely transcended in all respects, and one physically actualizes, achieves, and abides in the cessation of all perceptions and feelings. These are called the eight aspects of liberation.

29.17 "If you ask what constitute the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, they are as follows: (1) [The first ensues] when one achieves and maintains the first meditative concentration, that is to say, when there is freedom from desires, and freedom from negative and non-virtuous attributes, while ideation and scrutiny are present, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from that freedom. (2-4) Similarly, [the second, third, and fourth ensue] when one achieves and maintains the second, third, and fourth meditative concentrations. (5-9) Similarly, [the remaining steps ensue] when one achieves and abides in [the formless absorptions], from the sense field of infinite space to the cessation of all perceptions and feelings. These are called the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise.

29.18 "If you ask what constitute the ten powers of the tathāgatas, Subhūti, they are as follows: (1-2) The tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas definitively know that things which are possible are indeed possible, and that things which are impossible are indeed impossible. (3) Moreover, the tathāgatas definitively know through contingencies and causes the maturation of the past, future, and present actions [of sentient beings], and of those who undertake such actions. (4) In addition, the tathāgatas definitively know multiple world systems and diverse sensory elements. (5) Moreover, the tathāgatas definitively know whether the acumen of other sentient beings, and other individuals, is supreme or not. (6) Also, the tathāgatas definitively know the worlds endowed with a diversity of inclinations and a multiplicity of inclinations. (7) Moreover, the tathāgatas definitively know the paths that lead everywhere. (8) Moreover, the tathāgatas definitively know all the afflicted and purified mental states, and their emergence, associated with the meditative concentrations, aspects of liberation, meditative stabilities, and formless absorptions. (9) Moreover, with pure divine clairvoyance, surpassing the sight of human beings, the tathāgatas definitively perceive and definitively know [all the circumstances of] sentient beings, from their death and rebirth to how they proceed to blissful realms, how they proceed to inferior realms, and how they proceed in accordance with their past actions. In addition, the tathāgatas recollect many former abodes. That is to say, having recollected a single past life, they can recollect many former abodes, along with their circumstances and their locales. (10) Moreover, the tathāgatas definitively know that through their extrasensory powers they have actualized, achieved, and maintained in this very lifetime the liberation of mind and the liberation of wisdom in the state that is free from contaminants because all contaminants have ceased, and so they may say, 'My rebirths have come to an end. I have practiced chastity. I have fulfilled my duties. I will not experience other rebirths apart from this one.' These are called the ten powers of the tathāgatas.

29.19 "If you ask what constitute the four assurances [claimed by the buddhas, they are as follows]: "(1) When I claim to have attained genuinely perfect buddhahood, if some virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else should say that I have not attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to these [particular] phen-

omena here, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, based on their worldly doctrines. By correctly disregarding that reason, I have found happiness and abide therein. To have attained this absence of trepidation is to have attained fearlessness. I claim my exalted place as a great leader. I will rightly roar the lion's roar in the midst of the assembly! I will turn the wheel of Brahmā which has not previously been turned [in the world] in conformity with the sacred doctrine by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else!

29.20 “(2) When I claim I am one whose contaminants have ceased, if some virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else should say that these [particular] contaminants of mine have not ceased, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, and so on, in the same vein as before. “(3) When I claim to have explained those things which cause obstacles [on the spiritual path], if some virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else should say in this respect that even though one might depend on those things, there will be no obstacles, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, and so on, in the same vein as before.

29.21 “(4) When I claim to have explained the path through which suffering will genuinely cease, having ascertained that śrāvakas will find it conducive to the attainment of sublime emancipation, if some virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else in the world should say in this respect that this path will not be conducive to emancipation, that there will be no definitive realization, and that the sufferings of those who enact it will not cease, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, and so on, in the same vein as before. These are called the four assurances.

29.22 “If you ask what constitute the four unhindered discernments, they comprise (1) unhindered discernment of meaning, (2) unhindered discernment of the doctrine, (3) unhindered discernment of etymological definitions, and (4) unhindered discernment of inspiration. These are called the four unhindered discernments. “If you ask what constitutes great loving kindness, it is an action in which the tathāgatas engage on behalf of all sentient beings, treating enemies and friends identically. That is called great loving kindness.

29.23 “If you ask what constitutes great compassion, it is unstinting loving kindness even toward sentient beings, when there are actually no sentient beings. That is called great compassion. “If you ask what constitute the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, they are as follows: (1) The tathāgatas are without clumsiness; (2) they are not noisy; (3) they are without false memories; (4) they are without unabsorbed minds; (5) they are without differentiating perceptions; (6) they are without indifference that does not make distinctions; (7) they do not degenerate in their resolution; (8) they do not degenerate in their perseverance; (9) they do not degenerate in their recollection; (10) they do not degenerate in their meditative stability; (11) they do not degenerate in their wisdom; (12) they do not degenerate in their liberation, nor in their perception of liberating pristine cognition; (13) they engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the past; (14) they engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the future; (15) they engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the present; (16) all the activities of their bodies are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition; (17) all the activities of their speech are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition; and (18) all the activities of their minds are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition. These are called the eighteen dis-

tinct qualities of the buddhas.

29.24 “If you ask what are the ‘thirty-two major marks of a superior man that the tathāgatas possess,’ they are as follows: (1) The Blessed One has feet that are well positioned. In this regard, ‘excellent positioning of the feet’ means that the soles of his two feet entirely touch the ground. Just as when the long, evenly balanced legs of a jar are placed on level ground, the whole of the base entirely touches the ground, in the same way, the Blessed One is endowed with feet that are well positioned.

29.25 (2) The Blessed One has feet that are marked with the motif of the wheel. In this regard, the expression ‘marked with the motif of the wheel’ denotes the motif of a wheel with a thousand spokes, a hub, and a circumference, which appears on the soles of his two feet, entirely golden in color. (3) The Blessed One has palms and soles that are tender and soft. In this regard, ‘the tenderness and softness of his palms and soles’ means that they resemble the smooth surface of a kapok sheet or a cotton sheet, unlike those of other human beings.

29.26 (4) The Blessed One has long toes and fingers. In this regard, ‘long toes and fingers’ means that the fingers of his hands and the toes of his feet are exceedingly long, unlike those of other human beings. (5) The Blessed One is endowed with hands and feet that are webbed. In fact, his hands and feet are prominently webbed, unlike those of other human beings.

29.27 (6) The Blessed One is endowed with broad heels. In this regard, ‘broad heels’ means that the bases of his two heels are broad, unlike those of other human beings. (7) The Blessed One is endowed with inconspicuous ankle bones. In this regard, ‘inconspicuous ankle bones’ means that he is well endowed with broad heels and that, his heels being broad, he is also endowed with inconspicuous ankle bones, unlike those of other human beings.

29.28 (8) The Blessed One is endowed with calves resembling those of an antelope. In this regard, ‘calves like those of an antelope’ means that his calves are slender and tapered, just like those of Śarabha Aiṇeya, the king of ungulates. (9) The Blessed One is endowed with arms that reach down to his knees when standing, without bending down. In this regard, the expression ‘arms that reach down to his knees when standing, without bending down’ means that when the Blessed One is standing upright, the palms of both hands can touch and probe around his kneecaps, without him having to bend down.

29.29 (10) The Blessed One is endowed with a contracted male organ. In this regard, the ‘contractedness of his male organ’ means that he resembles a thoroughbred elephant or a thoroughbred steed of noble breed. (11) The Blessed One is endowed with hairs that grow finely and distinctly, curling to the right. In this regard, the expression ‘hairs that grow finely and distinctly, curling to the right’ means that from each of the pores of his skin a single hair finely grows, bluish black in color, curling softly into rings, lustrous and curling to the right.

29.30 (12) The Blessed One is endowed with body hairs that point upwards. In this regard, the ‘pointing upwards of his body hairs’ means that hairs that grow from his head and the hairs of his body point upwards and finely grow, bluish black in color, all curling softly into rings, lustrous and curling to the right. (13) The Blessed One is endowed

with delicate, soft, and lustrous skin. In this regard, the expression 'delicate, soft, and lustrous skin' means that neither water nor dust adhere to his body, or settle upon it.

29.31 (14) The Blessed One is endowed with a golden complexion. This means that his physical form is elegant, fine, and beautiful to behold, just like an offering pot fashioned of finest gold that is adorned with various gemstones, for which reason it is said to resemble the color of gold. (15) The Blessed One is endowed with seven prominent parts. In this regard, the expression 'seven prominent parts' means that the two prominent [backs of] his legs are elegant, fine, and beautiful to behold, their flesh and blood fully distended. Similarly, the two prominent [backs of] his arms are elegant, fine, and beautiful to behold, their flesh and blood fully distended, and there are also two prominent parts at the two shoulders and one prominent part at the nape of the neck, which are elegant, fine, and beautiful to behold, their flesh and blood fully distended.

29.32 (16) The Blessed One is endowed with amply curved shoulders. (17) The Blessed One is endowed with collarbones that are well covered. (18) The Blessed One is born with an extremely upright posture. (19) The Blessed One is endowed with a girth like the banyan tree. In that regard, the expression 'endowed with a girth like the banyan tree' means that the width of his body is proportionate to its length, and its length is proportionate to its width. That is designated a 'girth like the banyan tree.'

29.33 (20) The Blessed One is endowed with lion-like cheeks. (21) The Blessed One is endowed with forty teeth. (22) The Blessed One is endowed with close-fitting teeth. (23) The Blessed One is endowed with teeth whose tips are long, sharp, and white.

29.34 (24) The Blessed One is endowed with a superior organ of taste. This means that within his straight throat he has a gullet that is straight and not crooked, enabling him to swallow without hesitation. (25) The Blessed One is endowed with a long and slender tongue. In this regard, the expression 'long and slender tongue' means that when the Tathāgata wishes, his tongue can protrude from his mouth, and is capable of touching and probing around his nostrils, eye sockets, and ears, and it can even cover his whole face, as far as the hairline.

29.35 (26) The Blessed One is endowed with the divine voice of Brahmā. (27) The Blessed One is endowed with wide eyes and bovine eyelashes. (28) The Blessed One is endowed with deep blue eyes. (29) The Blessed One is endowed with completely perfect eyeballs.

29.36 (30) The Blessed One is endowed with the splendor of an aureole of light, extending a full arm span. (31) The Blessed One is endowed with a visage that resembles the full moon. (32) The Blessed One is endowed with a hair ringlet that grows between his eyebrows, and which is as soft as cotton wool, [white] as a water lily, the moon, a conch, the filament of a lotus, the milk of a cow, and hoar-frost. (33) The Blessed One is endowed with a protuberance on the crown of his head. These are the thirty-two marks of a superior man.

29.37 "Those who have these major marks of a superior man, which the tathāgatas possess, naturally permeate this world system of the great trichilocosm with their luminosity. When the tathāgatas speak, their major marks perme-

ate innumerable, countless, immeasurable world systems with luminosity; then, once sentient beings have been favored with the power of the instructions, the tathāgatas consecrate them within their aureoles, extending a full arm span. When the tathāgatas cease to consecrate them in this way, both the moon and the sun will no longer exist in the world. Months, fortnights, seasons, and the annual cycles will no longer manifest in the world. But once sentient beings have been favored with the power of the instructions, the tathāgatas cause this world system of the great trichiliocosm to understand them by means of their natural buddha speech. When they speak, their mighty voice generates understanding, however exalted sentient beings may be [within the trichiliocosm]. All these enlightened attributes and advantages I have achieved when I was formerly a bodhisattva, by practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom. So it is, Subhūti, that when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they attract sentient beings with their two gifts—the worldly gift and the gift of the sacred doctrine. This, Subhūti, is indeed the wonderful and marvelous doctrine of great bodhisattva beings.

29.38 “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings practice the six transcendent perfections, how, you may ask, do they attract sentient beings with their pleasant speech? Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings practice the six transcendent perfections, in the beginning, they attract sentient beings exclusively through the transcendent perfection of generosity. Subsequently, they do so through the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline. Thereafter, they do so through the transcendent perfection of tolerance. Thereafter, they do so through the transcendent perfection of perseverance. Thereafter, they do so through the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and thereafter, they attract sentient beings through the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Subhūti, it is by means of these six transcendent perfections that great bodhisattva beings attract sentient beings through their pleasant speech. If you ask why, it is because these six transcendent perfections subsume all virtuous attributes.

29.39 “Subhūti, if you ask how great bodhisattva beings attract sentient beings through their purposeful activity, when, Subhūti, they practice the six transcendent perfections over a long period of time, great bodhisattva beings always attract sentient beings without doing anything else. That is to say, they attract them through their gifts, through their pleasant speech, through their purposeful activity, and through their harmony.

29.40 “Subhūti, if you ask what constitute the eighty minor marks which the tathāgatas have, they are as follows: (1) The lord buddhas are endowed with copper-colored nails. (2) Their body is firm, like that of Nārāyaṇa. (3) Their kneecaps are elegant. (4) Their body is clean.

29.41 (5) Their body is soft. (6) Their body is supple. (7) Their body is lustrous. (8) Their body is not slouched.

29.42 (9) Their fingers and toes are compact. (10) The lord buddhas have rounded fingers and toes. (11) Their fingers and toes are tapering. (12) Their blood vessels and nerves are inconspicuous.

29.43 (13) Their ankles are inconspicuous. (14) Their body is well formed. (15) Their body is well proportioned. (16) Their senses are completely purified.

29.44 (17) Their understanding is perfectly pure. (18) Their behavior is excellent. (19) The lord buddhas are endow-

ed with splendor and intelligence. (20) They are worthy of beholding.

29.45 (21) Their mouth is not too wide. (22) Their mouth is without blemish. (23) Their lips are red like the balsam fruit. (24) Their mouth is compact.

29.46 (25) Their voice is deep. (26) Their navel is deep. (27) Their navel is well rounded. (28) Their navel curls to the right.

29.47 (29) Their arms and legs are compact. (30) The lord buddhas are endowed with [well-proportioned] arms and legs, as intended. (31) Their palms are even. (32) The lines of their palms are unbroken.

29.48 (33) The lines of their palms are extended. (34) Their body is immaculate and without unpleasant odors. (35) Their complexion is radiant. (36) Their [sense faculties]—the ‘gates to the sense fields’—are excellent.

29.49 (37) Their face is like the full moon. (38) They speak first. (39) Their face is without frowns of anger. (40) The pores of their bodies all emit a pleasant odor.

29.50 (41) Their mouth is fragrant. (42) Their gait is that of a lion. (43) Their gait is that of a mighty elephant. (44) Their gait is that of a swan.

29.51 (45) Their head is [large], similar to a parasol. (46) Their speech is sweet and fully perfected. (47) They are endowed with sharp eye-teeth. (48) Their nose is prominent.

29.52 (49) Their tongue is red. (50) The lord buddhas have a tongue that is slender and large. (51) Their body hairs are bluish black. (52) Their body hairs are clean.

29.53 (53) Their eyes are wide. (54) Their orifices are without deterioration. (55) Their palms and soles are red. (56) Their navel does not protrude.

29.54 (57) Their abdomen is not misshapen. (58) Their abdomen is slender. (59) The lord buddhas have an abdomen [lit. body] that is unwrinkled. (60) Their joints are elegant.

29.55 (61) Their joints are extended. (62) Their hands and feet are utterly pure. (63) They have a symmetrical aureole of light, extending a full arm span. (64) Their luminosity radiates as they walk.

29.56 (65) They satisfy whichever gods and humans encounter them. (66) They are never mistreated, though visible to all creatures. (67) They instruct sentient beings. (68) Their speech is pervasive, in conformity with their assembly, but it does not extend outside their assembly.

29.57 (69) Their torso resembles that of a lion. (70) The joints of their bodies are well articulated. (71) Their crown

protuberance is inconspicuous. (72) The hair of their heads is bluish black, soft, and long.

29.58 (73) The hair of their heads is not dishevelled. (74) The hairs of their heads point upwards, finely and curling into locks. (75) The hair of their heads is untangled. (76) Their heart is excellently adorned with the śrīvatsa motif.

29.59 (77) The markings on their palms and soles blaze with splendor. (78) They are endowed with markings, as if they were drawn in the colors of vermilion, realgar, minium, indigo bark, and verdigris.

29.60 “Subhūti, these constitute the eighty minor marks. Excellently adorned with these marks, the bodies of the tathāgatas radiantly shine. All these are the [causal and fruitional attributes] which are to be perfected by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

29.61 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, instruct and advise other bodhisattvas as follows: ‘Come, children of enlightened heritage! May you become skilled in the formation of syllables! That is to say, may you become skilled in the formation of a single syllable! May you become skilled in the formation of two syllables! Similarly, may you become skilled in the formation of three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, and similarly twenty, thirty, forty, and up to fifty, up to a hundred syllables, and up to a thousand syllables! Through a single syllable may you realize all the natural expressions of speech! Similarly, may you realize all the natural expressions of speech on the basis of two, three, and up to a hundred and a thousand syllables! Similarly, may you gather the forty-two basic syllables in a single syllable! May you gather a single syllable within the forty-two syllables!’ In this way, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings should gather the forty-two syllables in a single syllable, and they should gather a single syllable within the forty-two syllables. Having mastered the forty-two syllables by means of a single syllable, and similarly having mastered a single syllable by means of the forty-two syllables, they become skilled in the formation of syllables. Having mastered the formation of syllables, they then become skilled in the formation of [speech] that is without syllables. For example, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are skilled in the sacred doctrine and skilled in syllables, and they teach through syllables the sacred doctrine that is without syllables. Indeed, Subhūti, there is no doctrine at all that is not included in the syllables and the absence of syllables.”

29.62 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If, owing to the emptiness of the unlimited and the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, sentient beings, too, are never apprehensible, and nor indeed is the sacred doctrine apprehensible, and nor are even the natural expressions of the sacred doctrine apprehensible, then, [Venerable] Lord, how do great bodhisattva beings who practice the six transcendent perfections, and similarly practice the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, and likewise, the thirty-seven branches of enlightenment, the eighteen aspects of emptiness, the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative absorption, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings by means of the six transcendent perfections which originate from the ripening [of past actions]?”

29.63 “Similarly, how do they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings by means of the six extrasensory powers which originate from the ripening [of past actions]? Sentient beings and the designation ‘sentient being’ are non-apprehensible. Since sentient beings are non-apprehensible, the psycho-physical aggregates, sensory elements, and sense fields are non-apprehensible. Similarly, since sentient beings are non-apprehensible, the six transcendent perfections are non-apprehensible, and in the same vein, [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are non-apprehensible. The eighty minor marks are non-apprehensible. Since sentient beings are non-apprehensible, nothing is designated as a sentient being. Nothing is designated as the psycho-physical aggregates, the sensory elements, and the sense fields, and in the same vein, nothing is designated as [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks. This being the case, Venerable Lord, how would great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings?

29.64 “Venerable Lord! Wouldn’t those great bodhisattva beings encourage sentient beings to acquire attributes that are non-existent, and wouldn’t this cause them to engage in or identify with erroneous views? If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because if those great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not apprehend even the nature of a bodhisattva, how could they possibly apprehend the attributes that are the aspects of enlightenment!”

29.65 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, it is so! It is exactly as you have said. Subhūti, it is because sentient beings are non-apprehensible that one should know the emptiness of internal phenomena, and likewise, the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, and [similarly], the emptiness of the psycho-physical aggregates, the emptiness of the sense fields, the emptiness of the noble truths, the emptiness of dependent origination, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena and of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the self, the emptiness of sentient beings, and the emptiness of living creatures. In the same way, one should know lives, individuals, humankind, human beings, actors, instigators, experiencers, knowers, and viewers to be emptiness.

29.66 “Similarly, one should know the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, and the formless absorptions to be emptiness, and also the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path to be emptiness. Similarly, one should know emptiness to be emptiness, signlessness to be emptiness, and aspirationlessness to be emptiness. Similarly, one should know the eight aspects of liberation and the nine serial steps of meditative absorption to be emptiness. Similarly, one should know the ten powers of the tathāgatas to be emptiness, and likewise the four assurances to be emptiness, the four unhindered discernments to be emptiness, great loving kindness to be emptiness, great compassion to be emptiness, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas to be emptiness.

29.67 “Similarly, one should know the fruit of entering the stream to be emptiness, and [the other fruits], up to and including the fruit of arhatship, to be emptiness, and individual enlightenment to be emptiness, the maturity of the

bodhisattvas to be emptiness, genuinely perfect enlightenment to be emptiness, the buddhfields to be emptiness, and the maturation of sentient beings to be emptiness.

29.68 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, having seen all things as emptiness, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings who have been captivated by erroneous views, but they do not apprehend those sentient beings at all. They teach this sacred doctrine without transgressing those aspects of emptiness at all. Perceiving in this way, they know all things to be without obscuration, and then, without disturbing anything at all and without dualizing, they indeed teach [this sacred doctrine] exactly as it is. Subhūti, just as when an emanation of the tathāgatas projects many thousands of phantoms, some of whom engage in generosity, some in ethical discipline, some in tolerance, some in perseverance, some in meditative concentration, and some in wisdom, while some engage in the immeasurable aspirations, some in the formless absorptions, and some in the extrasensory powers, do you think, Subhūti, that that emanation would have detailed anything at all?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

29.69 The Blessed One continued, “For these reasons, Subhūti, you should know that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom establish sentient beings on the [bodhisattva] levels, just as they teach the sacred doctrine to them, and release them from erroneous views by means of that which is neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because physical forms are naturally neither fettered nor liberated. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are naturally neither fettered nor liberated. Nor does the non-bondage and non-liberation of physical forms constitute physical forms; similarly, the non-bondage and non-liberation of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness do not constitute consciousness [and the aforementioned aggregates]. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because physical forms, and similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are absolutely pure. The same applies also to all conditioned and unconditioned phenomena.

29.70 “So it is, Subhūti, that although great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings, they do not apprehend sentient beings. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those great bodhisattva beings abide in a non-abiding manner in the non-apprehension of all things. They abide in a non-abiding manner with respect to the emptiness of physical forms, and similarly [with respect to the emptiness] of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and they abide in a non-abiding manner with respect to the emptiness of conditioned and unconditioned phenomena.

29.71 “Subhūti, in no respect do they abide in conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, or in the emptiness of conditioned phenomena. If you ask why, it is because those phenomena and those aspects of emptiness are without essential nature and without apprehension in which one might abide. Subhūti, non-entities do not at all abide in non-entity. Intrinsic entities do not abide in intrinsic entities, nor do extraneous entities abide in extraneous entities. If you ask why, it is because they are all non-apprehensible, and where could that which is non-apprehensible abide! So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom thoroughly cultivate these attributes owing to all the [aforementioned] aspects of emptiness.

29.72 “The lord buddhas, great bodhisattva beings, the pratyekabuddhas, the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas, and all sublime beings are all without defect. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those lord buddhas, great bodhisattva beings, pratyekabuddhas, and śrāvakas of the tathāgatas all attain buddhahood and realization in pursuit of this reality, and they have exclusively demonstrated and continue to demonstrate all those phenomena to sentient beings without transcending the reality of those phenomena. If you ask why, it is because those phenomena do not transcend the expanse of reality, the real nature, and the finality of existence. If you ask why, it is because they are without any essential nature which might transcend.”

29.73 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If things do not transcend the expanse of reality, the real nature, and the finality of existence, then are physical forms not one thing and the expanse of reality another, the real nature another, and the finality of existence another? Are [all the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness, not one thing, and mundane and supramundane phenomena another, contaminated and uncontaminated phenomena another, and conditioned and unconditioned phenomena yet another?”

29.74 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, that is not so!” “Venerable Lord! If physical forms are not one thing, and the expanse of reality another, and if [all the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness, are not one thing and the expanse of reality another, and so on, up to and including conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, then, Venerable Lord, how would the ripening of positive and negative past actions be established and how would they become discernible? That is to say, the negative ripening of negative past actions causes sentient beings to become discernible in the hells, and the realms of anguished spirits and animals. The positive ripening of positive past actions causes them to become discernible in the god realms and the human realm. Similarly, the combined positive and negative ripening of combined positive and negative past actions causes them to become discernible among the animal realms and among human beings. Likewise, the neither positive nor negative ripening of neither positive nor negative past actions attains the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

29.75 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, the systematic presentation of the [various] fruits may be disclosed when the relative truth is taken as the standard, but the systematic presentation of the fruits cannot be disclosed in ultimate truth. If you ask why, it is because in ultimate truth physical forms, and similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are without arising, without cessation, without affliction, and without purification. This reality of the emptiness of the unlimited and the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end is non-conceptual and indescribable.”

29.76 “Venerable Lord! If the systematic presentation of the fruits takes place dependent on the relative truth, would not all ordinary people attain the fruit of entering the stream, and similarly, would they not also attain the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?”

29.77 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, do ordinary people understand the relative truth and the ultimate truth?”

Rather, they lack the establishment of the fruit of entering the stream, and so on, up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Subhūti, it is because ordinary people lack the noble eightfold path, do not cultivate the noble eightfold path, and lack the fruit of the noble eightfold path that they do not attain the establishment of the fruits. Rather, Subhūti, it is the sublime individuals who are endowed with the path to nirvāṇa, who cultivate the path to nirvāṇa, and possess the fruit of having cultivated the path to nirvāṇa. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those sublime individuals themselves partake of the establishment of the fruits, while others do not.”

29.78 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Is the fruit then attained when one has cultivated the path, or will one who has not cultivated the path attain the fruit?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, the fruit is not attained even when one has cultivated the path, nor will one who has not cultivated the path attain the fruit. Nor, Subhūti, will the fruit be attained without cultivating the path. The fruit is not attained when one lacks the path, nor is it when one abides on the path. In this way, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom may establish sentient beings in the fruit, but the fruit is not established by eradicating conditioned elements or unconditioned elements.”

29.79 “Venerable Lord! If the fruit is not established by eradicating conditioned or unconditioned elements, yet has the Tathāgata not revealed that the fruit of entering the stream is consequent on having renounced the three fetters, that the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth is consequent on having reduced the desires and malice associated with the world system of desire, that the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth is consequent on having renounced the five fetters associated with the lower realms [of desire], that arhatship is consequent on having renounced the five fetters associated with the higher realms [of form and formlessness], that individual enlightenment is consequent on having understood that all things whatsoever originating from causes are things that will cease, and that unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is consequent on having abandoned involuntary reincarnation through propensities and all afflicted mental states? How should I understand the Venerable Lord’s statement that the fruit is not established by eradicating conditioned and unconditioned phenomena?”

29.80 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, is the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, or unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment conditioned or unconditioned?” “Venerable Lord! All these phenomena are unconditioned.”

29.81 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, can unconditioned phenomena then be eradicated?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

29.82 “Subhūti, when sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage realize that conditioned and unconditioned phenomena have one defining characteristic, namely, that they are without defining characteristics, at that time do they eradicate anything at all that is conditioned or unconditioned?” “No!, Venerable Lord!”

29.83 The Blessed One continued, “Subhūti, the reason why great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom have nothing to eradicate is that they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings, owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena, and owing to the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the em-

ptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics. They themselves do not become fixated on anything at all, and they do not induce others to become fixated on anything at all. They do not become fixated on the transcendent perfection of generosity, or similarly [on the other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They do not become fixated on the first meditative concentration [or on the other meditative concentrations], up to and including the fourth meditative concentration. They do not become fixated on the meditative absorption in loving kindness, or on the meditative absorptions in compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity. Similarly, they do not become fixated on the absorption in the sense field of infinite space, or [on the other formless absorptions], up to and including absorption in the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. Nor do they become fixated on the applications of mindfulness [or the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, or on the three gateways to liberation, and in the same vein, [on the fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience.

29.84 “Since they do not become fixated on these [attributes], they remain unattached to anything at all. Just as when the emanations of a tathāgata dispense generosity, they may indeed experience the fruit of this generosity, but do not dwell on the fruit of this generosity, and though they may indeed practice all the six transcendent perfections, and similarly practice in accordance with contaminated, uncontaminated, mundane, supramundane, conditioned, and unconditioned phenomena, exclusively in order that sentient beings might attain final nirvāṇa, but do not dwell in anything at all, in the same way, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom may practice in accordance with all those phenomena, but they do not dwell in them; nor are they attached to anything at all. If you ask why, it is because they thoroughly realize the defining characteristic of phenomena, of which all things partake.”

29.85 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If the supreme [reality] is that all things are signless—signs being mere imputations that originate from imagination—then how do great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom attain distinction with regard to virtuous attributes, and how do they induce others to attain distinction with regard to virtuous attributes, and engage with them, perfecting the levels, from one to the next, by means of those virtuous attributes, and also induce sentient beings to engage with the three vehicles, and become established therein?”

29.86 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, if great bodhisattva beings cultivate entities or some indication of an entity, and do not cultivate non-entities and signlessness, then those great bodhisattva beings would themselves not attain distinction, and they would not induce others to engage with distinction, and to become established therein. Subhūti, if great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and similarly the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, and the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, exclusively by way of signlessness, and if they perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity exclusively by way of signlessness, and similarly, if they perfect the meditative concentrations exclusively by way of signlessness, if they perfect the immeasurable aspirations and the formless absorptions exclusively by way of signlessness, and similarly, if they meditate on and perfect the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, exclusively by way of signlessness, and similarly, if they perfect the medi-

tative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness exclusively by way of signlessness, and similarly, if they perfect the emptiness of internal phenomena exclusively by way of signlessness, if they perfect the emptiness of external phenomena exclusively by way of signlessness, and in the same vein, if they perfect the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, exclusively by way of signlessness, and similarly, if they perfect the eight aspects of liberation exclusively by way of signlessness, if they perfect the nine serial steps of meditative absorption exclusively by way of signlessness, and similarly, if they perfect the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas exclusively by way of signlessness, then they will not be attached to those [attributes], owing to their exclusive signlessness, and they will also not resort to erroneous views. Having cultivated these virtuous attributes, they will induce others to engage with them and to become established in them.

29.87 “Subhūti, if for those great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom there were to exist an indication of phenomena, even for only the duration of a finger-snap, then, Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom would not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, in which all things are signless, free from recollection, and free from attention, and they would not become established in uncontaminated phenomena, in the real nature. Subhūti, all uncontaminated phenomena are signless, free from recollection, and free from attention. Therefore, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom always act for the sake of sentient beings by means of uncontaminated phenomena.”

29.88 “Venerable Lord! If all things are signless, free from recollection, and free from attention, why are many different designations applied to all things, such as, ‘These are contaminated phenomena. These are uncontaminated. These are mundane. These are supramundane. These are conditioned. These are unconditioned. These are common. These are uncommon. These are the attributes of śrāvakas. These are the attributes of pratyekabuddhas. These are the attributes of bodhisattvas. These are the attributes of genuinely perfect buddhas?’”

29.89 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, do you think that signlessness is one thing and the attributes of the śrāvakas are another?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

29.90 “Subhūti, do you think that signlessness is one thing and the attributes of the pratyekabuddhas are another, that the attributes of the bodhisattvas are also another, and that the attributes of the genuinely perfect buddhas are also another?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

29.91 The Blessed One replied, “Well then, Subhūti, do the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment constitute signlessness?” “Yes, they do, Venerable Lord! Yes they do, Venerable Sugata!”

29.92 The Blessed One replied, “For these reasons, Subhūti, you should know that all things are signlessness. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who train in this signlessness are enhanced by all the roots of virtuous actions. That is to say, they are always enhanced by the six transcendent perfections, the four meditative concentrations, the four

immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, the four applications of mindfulness, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and in the same vein, by all [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.

29.93 “If you ask why, it is because those great bodhisattva beings should not train in anything except emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because all virtuous attributes are gathered in these three gateways to liberation. If you ask why, emptiness as a gateway to liberation implies that all things are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics. Signlessness as a gateway to liberation implies that they lack all signs, aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation implies that they have abandoned all aspirations. Great bodhisattva beings who train in these three gateways to liberation undertake training while observing production and disintegration with respect to the five psycho-physical aggregates, and likewise, the twelve sense fields and the eighteen sensory elements. Similarly, they undertake training while realizing the four noble truths, and they undertake training while fully comprehending the twelve links of dependent origination. Then they train in the emptiness of internal phenomena and in the emptiness of external phenomena, and similarly, they train in the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of non-entities and the emptiness of essential nature. Similarly, they train in the six transcendent perfections. They train in the four applications of mindfulness and [in the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, they train in the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.”

29.94 *This completes the twenty-ninth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “The Gift of the Sacred Doctrine.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE:
THE GIFT OF THE SACRED DOCTRINE

29.A There are two ways in which great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom attract sentient beings with the gift of the sacred doctrine ... These comprise the mundane and supramundane gifts of the sacred doctrine. If you ask what constitutes the mundane gift of the sacred doctrine, that which describes, explains, demonstrates, and analyzes mundane phenomena—describing, explaining, demonstrating, and analyzing the [earlier] chapters on repulsive phenomena, along with the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, and the five extrasensory powers—is designated as the ‘mundane gift of the sacred doctrine.’ If you ask why this is mundane, it is called ‘mundane’ because it does not transcend the world. Having dispensed that mundane gift, for many reasons they then dissuade and turn sentient beings away from those meditative concentrations, immeasurable aspirations, formless absorptions, and extrasensory powers. Then, after dissuading and turning them away, they also establish them through skill in means in the sublime attributes, that is to say ... in the four applications of mindfulness, and ... [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path, and the three gateways to liberation ... in the fruit of entering the stream, and in [the other fruits], up to and including individual enlightenment. This is called the ‘supramundane gift of the sacred doctrine.’ If you ask why it is supramundane, it is because it transcends the world and is exalted over the world systems. If, with regard to the sublime attributes, you ask what is the fruit of the sublime attributes, the term ‘sublime attributes’ denotes

{1} the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment {which comprise the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path}, {2} the three gateways to liberation. {3} the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and {4} the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. The fruits of those sublime attributes comprise the fruit of entering the stream, and in the same vein, [all other fruits], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. At the very least ... the sublime attributes of great bodhisattva beings include the knowledge{s} of the fruit of entering the stream ... of [the other fruits], up to and including ... the fruit of individual enlightenment ... of [the causal attributes], up to and including the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment ... of the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... of [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... of contaminated and uncontaminated phenomena, of mundane and supramundane phenomena, and of conditioned and unconditioned phenomena. These are called the sublime attributes of great bodhisattva beings. Then, if you ask what constitute the fruits of the sublime attributes of great bodhisattva beings, these include the renunciation of all afflicted mental states, and of all propensities and impulses toward involuntary reincarnation.

29.B Great bodhisattva beings will attain omniscience, and, starting from the moment they attain omniscience, they will be called tathāgatas ... The tathāgatas have absolutely reached the culmination of all things, and the bodhisattvas follow in their wake. The tathāgatas have attained non-stupidity with respect to all things, and the bodhisattvas will subsequently attain that [state]. This ... is the distinction between the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas and great bodhisattva beings. This is how they are to be differentiated ... The mundane gift of the sacred doctrine, with which great bodhisattva beings are endowed, is designated as the ‘support for the supramundane doctrine.’ So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, through their skill in means, introduce sentient beings to the mundane gift of the sacred doctrine, and then introduce and establish them in the supramundane gift of the sacred doctrine, which is the abode of the sublime ones. Similarly they establish them in [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience. Moreover ... if you ask what constitutes the supramundane doctrines of great bodhisattva beings that are not shared in common with ordinary people, they comprise the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven aspects of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, the |^{^}supports of the} four immeasurable aspirations^, the four formless absorption-s^|, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, as well as all the virtuous attributes, the thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks of a superior man, all the gateways of mnemonic incantation, and all the gateways of meditative stability. These constitute the supramundane doctrines of great bodhisattva beings, and the describing, explaining, demonstrating, and analyzing of these supramundane attributes is called the ‘supramundane gift of the sacred doctrine.’

29.C If you ask what constitute **the four applications of mindfulness**, great bodhisattva beings who are diligent, alert, and mindful, having eliminated covetousness and sadness with regard to the inner physical body, continue to observe the physical body. This same refrain should be ... applied also to the outer physical body, and similarly to inner and outer feelings, as well as to {inner and outer} mind and phenomena ... If you ask what constitute **the four correct exertions**: Great bodhisattva beings resolve, struggle, strive, persevere with tenacity, and rightly aspire that

... {1} negative and non-virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might not be developed ... {2} negative and non-virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might be renounced ... {3} virtuous attributes which have not yet arisen might be developed ... {4} virtuous attributes which have previously arisen might remain, might not degenerate, and might flourish, further increase, and reach complete perfection ... If you ask what constitute **the four supports for miraculous abilities** ... great bodhisattva beings imbued with renunciation, who dwell in solitude, maintaining detachment and remaining in a state of cessation {of contaminants}, should cultivate the support for miraculous ability combining {1} the meditative stability of resolution ... {2} the meditative stability of perseverance, {3} the meditative stability of mind, and {4} the meditative stability of scrutiny with the formative force of exertion ... If you ask what constitute **the five faculties**, they comprise (1) the faculty of faith, (2) the faculty of perseverance, (3) the faculty of recollection, (4) the faculty of meditative stability, and (5) the faculty of wisdom ... If you ask what constitute **the five powers**, they comprise (1) the power of faith, (2) the power of perseverance, (3) the power of recollection, (4) the power of meditative stability, and (5) the power of wisdom ... If you ask what constitute **the seven branches of enlightenment**, they comprise (1) the branch of enlightenment that entails correct recollection, and the branches of enlightenment that entail correct (2) doctrinal analysis, (3) perseverance, (4) delight, (5) mental and physical refinement, (6) meditative stability, and (7) equanimity ... If you ask what constitutes **the noble eightfold path**, it comprises (1) correct view, (2) correct ideation, (3) correct speech, (4) correct action, (5) correct livelihood, (6) correct effort, (7) correct recollection, and (8) correct meditative stability ... If you ask what constitute **the three gateways to liberation**, they comprise ... {1} one-pointedness of mind based on the aspects of emptiness is called emptiness as a gateway to liberation ... {2} one-pointedness of mind based on the aspects of signlessness is called signlessness as a gateway to liberation ... {and} {3} one-pointedness of mind based on the aspects of impermanence and the aspects of suffering is called aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation.

29.D If you ask what constitute **the eight aspects of liberation**, they are as follows: (1) The first aspect of liberation ensues when corporeal beings observe physical forms. (2) The second ... when formless beings endowed with internal perception observe external physical forms. (3) The third ... when beings physically actualize, achieve, and maintain release from their inclination toward pleasant states. (4) [The fourth ... when] the perceptions of physical forms have been transcended in all respects, when the perceptions of obstructed phenomena have subsided, and when the mind does not engage with diverse perceptions, so that one achieves and abides in the sense field of infinite space, thinking, 'Space is infinite.' (5-7) [The fifth, sixth, and seventh ... when] one achieves and abides [in the other sense fields], up to and including the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception. (8) [The eighth ... when] the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception has been completely transcended in all respects, and one physically actualizes, achieves, and abides in the cessation of all perceptions and feelings ... If you ask what constitute **the nine serial steps of meditative equipoise**, they are as follows: (1) [The first ensues] when one achieves and maintains the first meditative concentration, that is to say, when there is freedom from desires, and freedom from negative and non-virtuous attributes, while ideation and scrutiny are present, alongside the joy and bliss that arise from that freedom. (2-4) Similarly, [the second, third, and fourth ensue] when one achieves and maintains the second, third, and fourth meditative concentrations. (5-9) Similarly, [the remaining steps ensue] when one achieves and abides in [the formless absorptions], from the sense field of infinite space to the cessation of all perceptions and feelings.

29.E If you ask what constitute **the ten powers of the tathāgatas** ... (1-2) The tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas definitively know that things which are possible are indeed possible, and that things which are impossible are indeed impossible. (3) ... definitively know through contingencies and causes the maturation of the past, future, and present actions [of sentient beings], and of those who undertake such actions. (4) ... definitively know multiple world systems and diverse sensory elements. (5) ... definitively know whether the acumen of other sentient beings, and other individuals, is supreme or not. (6) ... definitively know the worlds endowed with a diversity of inclinations and a multiplicity of inclinations. (7) ... definitively know the paths that lead everywhere. (8) ... definitively know all the afflicted and purified mental states, and their emergence, associated with the meditative concentrations, aspects of liberation, meditative stabilities, and formless absorptions. (9) ... with pure divine clairvoyance, surpassing the sight of human beings ... definitively perceive and definitively know [all the circumstances of] sentient beings, from their death and rebirth to how they proceed to blissful realms, how they proceed to inferior realms, and how they proceed in accordance with their past actions. In addition, the tathāgatas recollect many former abodes. That is to say, having recollected a single past life, they can recollect many former abodes, along with their circumstances and their locales. (10) ... definitively know that through their extrasensory powers they have actualized, achieved, and maintained in this very lifetime the liberation of mind and the liberation of wisdom in the state that is free from contaminants because all contaminants have ceased, and so they may say, 'My rebirths have come to an end. I have practiced chastity. I have fulfilled my duties. I will not experience other rebirths apart from this one.' ... If you ask what constitute **the four assurances** {claimed by the buddhas, they are}: "(1) When I claim to have attained genuinely perfect buddhahood, if some virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā {deity}, or anyone else should say that I have not attained manifestly perfect buddhahood with respect to these phenomena here, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, based on their worldly doctrines. By correctly disregarding that reason, I have found happiness and abide therein. To have attained this absence of trepidation is to have attained fearlessness. I claim my exalted place as a great leader. I will rightly roar the lion's roar in the midst of the assembly! I will turn the wheel of Brahmā which has not previously been turned [in the world] in conformity with the sacred doctrine by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā {deity}, or anyone else! (2) When I claim I am one whose contaminants have ceased, if some virtuous ascetic {and so forth} ... or anyone else should say that these contaminants of mine have not ceased, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, and so on, in the same vein as before. (3) When I claim to have explained those things which cause obstacles [on the spiritual path], if some virtuous ascetic {and so forth} ... or anyone else should say in this respect that even though one might depend on those things, there will be no obstacles, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, and so on, in the same vein as before. (4) When I claim to have explained the path through which suffering will genuinely cease, having ascertained that śrāvakas will find it conducive to the attainment of sublime emancipation, if some virtuous ascetic {and so forth} ... or anyone else ... should say in this respect that this path will not be conducive to emancipation, that there will be no definitive realization, and that the sufferings of those who enact it will not cease, I would correctly disregard that reason for contradicting me, and so on, in the same vein as before."

29.F If you ask what constitute **the four unhindered discernments**, they comprise (1) unhindered discernment of meaning, (2) ... of the doctrine, (3) ... of etymological definitions, and (4) ... of inspiration ... If you ask what constitutes **great loving kindness**, it is an action in which the tathāgatas engage on behalf of all sentient beings, treating enemies and friends identically ... If you ask what constitutes **great compassion**, it is unstinting loving kindness even

toward sentient beings, when there are actually no sentient beings {in ultimate reality} ... If you ask what constitute **the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas**, they are as follows: (1) The tathāgatas are without clumsiness; (2) they are not noisy; (3) they are without false memories; (4) ... unabsorbed minds; (5) ... differentiating perceptions; (6) ... {and} indifference that does not make distinctions; (7) they do not degenerate in their resolution; (8) ... in their perseverance; (9) ... in their recollection; (10) ... in their meditative stability; (11) ... in their wisdom; (12) ... in their liberation, nor in their {non-dual omniscient} perception of liberating pristine cognition; (13) they engage in the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the past; (14) ... the future; (15) ... {and} the present; (16) all the activities of their bodies are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition; (17) all the activities of their speech are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition; and (18) all the activities of their minds are preceded by pristine cognition and followed by pristine cognition.

29.G If you ask what are **the ‘thirty-two major marks of a superior man that the tathāgatas possess,’** ... {The Blessed One} (1) ... has feet that are well positioned ... means that the soles of his two feet entirely touch the ground. Just as when the long, evenly balanced legs of a jar are placed on level ground, the whole of the base entirely touches the ground ... (2) ... has feet that are marked with the motif of the wheel ... denotes the motif of a wheel with a thousand spokes, a hub, and a circumference, which appears on the soles of his two feet, entirely golden in color. (3) ... has palms and soles that are tender and soft ... means that they resemble the smooth surface of a ... cotton sheet, unlike those of other human beings. (4) ... has long toes and fingers ... means that the fingers of his hands and the toes of his feet are exceedingly long, unlike those of other human beings. (5) ... is endowed with hands and feet that are ... prominently webbed, unlike those of other human beings. (6) ... is endowed with broad heels ... means that the bases of his two heels are broad, unlike those of other human beings. (7) ... is endowed with inconspicuous ankle bones ... means that he is well endowed with broad heels and that, his heels being broad, he is also endowed with inconspicuous ankle bones, unlike those of other human beings. (8) ... is endowed with calves resembling those of an antelope ... means that his calves are slender and tapered, just like those of Śarabha Aiṇeya, the king of ungalates. (9) ... is endowed with arms that reach down to his knees when standing, without bending down ... means that when the Blessed One is standing upright, the palms of both hands can touch and probe around his kneecaps, without him having to bend down. (10) ... is endowed with a contracted male organ ... means that he resembles a thoroughbred elephant or a ... steed of noble breed. (11) ... is endowed with hairs that grow finely and distinctly, curling to the right ... means that from each of the pores of his skin a single hair finely grows, bluish black in color, curling softly into rings, lustrous and curling to the right. (12) ... is endowed with body hairs that point upwards ... means that the hairs that grow from his head and the hairs of his body point upwards and finely grow, bluish black in color, all curling softly into rings, lustrous and curling to the right. (13) ... is endowed with delicate, soft, and lustrous skin ... means that neither water nor dust adhere to his body, or settle upon it. (14) ... is endowed with a golden complexion ... means that his physical form is elegant, fine, and beautiful to behold, just like an offering post fashioned of finest gold that is adorned with various gemstones ... (15) ... is endowed with seven prominent parts ... means that the two prominent [backs of] his legs ... the two prominent [backs of] his arms ... {and} also two prominent parts at the ... shoulders and one prominent part at the nape of the neck ... are elegant, fine, beautiful to behold, their flesh and blood fully distended. (16) ... is endowed with amply curved shoulders. (17) ... is endowed with collarbones that are well covered. (18) ... is born with an extremely upright posture. (19) ... is endowed with a girth like the banyan tree ... means that the width of his body is proportionate to its length, and its length is proportionate to its width ...

(20) ... is endowed with lion-like cheeks. (21) ... is endowed with forty teeth. (22) ... is endowed with close-fitting teeth. (23) ... is endowed with teeth whose tips are long, sharp, and white. (24) ... is endowed with a superior organ of taste ... means that within his straight throat he has a gullet that is straight and not crooked, enabling him to swallow without hesitation. (25) ... is endowed with a long and slender tongue ... means that when the Tathāgata wishes, his tongue can protrude from his mouth, and is capable of touching and probing around his nostrils, eye sockets, and ears, and it can even cover his whole face, as far as the hairline. (26) ... is endowed with the divine voice of Brahmā. (27) ... is endowed with wide eyes and bovine eyelashes. (28) ... is endowed with deep blue eyes. (29) ... is endowed with completely perfect eyeballs. (30) ... is endowed with the splendor of an aureole of light, extending a full arm span. (31) ... is endowed with a visage that resembles the full moon. (32) ... is endowed with a hair ringlet that grows between his eyebrows, and which is as soft as cotton wool, [white] as a water lily, the moon, a conch, the filament of a lotus, the milk of a cow, and hoar-frost. (33) ... is endowed with a protuberance on the crown of his head.

29.H Those who have these {thirty-two} major marks of a superior man, which the tathāgatas possess, naturally permeate this world system of the great trichiliocosm with their luminosity. When the tathāgatas speak, their major marks permeate innumerable, countless, immeasurable world systems with luminosity; then, once sentient beings have been favored with the power of the instructions, the tathāgatas consecrate them within their aureoles {of light}, extending a full arm span. When the tathāgatas cease to consecrate them in this way, both the moon and the sun will no longer exist in the world. Months, fortnights, seasons, and the annual cycles will no longer manifest in the world. But once sentient beings have been favored with the power of the instructions, the tathāgatas cause this world system of the great trichiliocosm to understand them by means of their natural buddha speech. When they speak, their mighty voice generates understanding, however exalted sentient beings may be [within the trichiliocosm]. All these enlightened attributes and advantages I {Lord Śākyamuni} have achieved when I was formerly a bodhisattva, by practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom. So it is ... that when great bodhisattva beings practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they attract sentient beings with their two gifts—the worldly gift and the gift of the sacred doctrine. This ... is indeed the wonderful and marvelous doctrine of great bodhisattva beings ... When great bodhisattva beings practice the six transcendent perfections, in the beginning, they attract sentient beings exclusively through the transcendent perfection of generosity. Subsequently, they do so through the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline. Thereafter, they do so through the transcendent perfection of tolerance. Thereafter ... through the transcendent perfection of perseverance. Thereafter ... through the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and thereafter ... through the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... It is by means of these six transcendent perfections that great bodhisattva beings attract sentient beings through their pleasant speech. If you ask why, it is because these six transcendent perfections subsume all virtuous attributes ... If you ask how great bodhisattva beings attract sentient beings through their purposeful activity, when ... they practice the six transcendent perfections over a long period of time, great bodhisattva beings always attract sentient beings without doing anything else. That is to say, they attract them through their gifts, through their pleasant speech, through their purposeful activity, and through their harmony.

29.I If you ask what constitute **the eighty minor marks which the tathāgatas have**, they are as follows: (1) The lord buddhas are endowed with copper-colored nails. (2) Their body is firm, like that of Nārāyaṇa. (3) Their kneecaps are elegant. (4) Their body is clean. (5) Their body is soft. (6) Their body is supple. (7) Their body is lustrous. (8) Their

body is not slouched. (9) Their fingers and toes are compact. (10) The lord buddhas have rounded fingers and toes. (11) Their fingers and toes are tapering. (12) Their blood vessels and nerves are inconspicuous. (13) Their ankles are inconspicuous. (14) Their body is well formed. (15) Their body is well proportioned. (16) Their senses are completely purified. (17) Their understanding is perfectly pure. (18) Their behavior is excellent. (19) The lord buddhas are endowed with splendor and intelligence. (20) They are worthy of beholding. (21) Their mouth is not too wide. (22) Their mouth is without blemish. (23) Their lips are red like the balsam fruit. (24) Their mouth is compact. (25) Their voice is deep {like the trumpet of an elephant or the rolling of thunder}. (26) Their navel is deep. (27) Their navel is well rounded. (28) Their navel curls to the right. (29) Their arms and legs are compact. (30) The lord buddhas are endowed with [well-proportioned] arms and legs, as intended. (31) Their palms are even. (32) The lines of their palms are unbroken. (33) The lines of their palms are extended. (34) Their body is immaculate and without unpleasant odors. (35) Their complexion is radiant. (36) Their [sense faculties]—the ‘gates to the sense fields’—are excellent. (37) Their face is like the full moon. (38) They speak first. (39) Their face is without frowns of anger. (40) The pores of their bodies all emit a pleasant odor. (41) Their mouth is fragrant. (42) Their gait is that of a lion. (43) Their gait is that of a mighty elephant. (44) Their gait is that of a swan. (45) Their head is [large], similar to a parasol. (46) Their speech is sweet and fully perfected. (47) They are endowed with sharp eye-teeth. (48) Their nose is prominent. (49) Their tongue is red. (50) The lord buddhas have a tongue that is slender and large. (51) Their body hairs are bluish black. (52) Their body hairs are clean. (53) Their eyes are wide. (54) Their orifices are without deterioration. (55) Their palms and soles are red. (56) Their navel does not protrude. (57) Their abdomen is not misshapen. (58) Their abdomen is slender. (59) The lord buddhas have an abdomen [lit. body] that is unwrinkled. (60) Their joints are elegant. (61) Their joints are extended. (62) Their hands and feet are utterly pure. (63) They have a symmetrical aureole of light, extending a full arm span. (64) Their luminosity radiates as they walk. (65) They satisfy whichever gods and humans encounter them. (66) They are never mistreated, though visible to all creatures. (67) They instruct sentient beings. (68) Their speech is pervasive, in conformity with their assembly, but it does not extend outside their assembly. (69) Their torso resembles that of a lion. (70) The joints of their bodies are well articulated. (71) Their crown protuberance is inconspicuous. (72) The hair of their heads is bluish black, soft, and long. (73) The hair of their heads is not dishevelled. (74) The hairs of their heads point upwards, finely and curling into locks. (75) The hair of their heads is untangled. (76) Their hearts are excellently adorned with the śrīvatsa motif. (77) The markings on their palms and soles blaze with splendor. (78) {The lord buddhas} are endowed with markings, as if they were drawn in the colors of vermilion, realgar, minium, indigo bark, and verdigris ... These constitute the eighty minor marks. Excellently adorned with these marks, the bodies of the tathāgatas radiantly shine. All these are the [causal and fruitional attributes] which are to be perfected by great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

29.J Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings, who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, instruct and advise other bodhisattvas as follows: ‘Come, children of enlightened heritage! May you become skilled in the formation of syllables! That is to say, may you become skilled in the formation of a single syllable! ... in the formation of two syllables! ... in the formation of three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, and similarly twenty, thirty, forty, and up to fifty, up to a hundred syllables, and up to a thousand syllables! Through a single syllable may you realize all the natural expressions of speech! Similarly, may you realize all the natural expressions of speech on the basis of two, three, and up to a hundred and a thousand syllables! Similarly, may you gather the forty-two basic syllables {pertaining to the Sanskrit language} in a single syllable! May you gather a single syllable within the forty-two syllables!

bles!' In this way ... great bodhisattva beings should gather the forty-two syllables in a single syllable, and they should gather a single syllable within the forty-two syllables. Having mastered the forty-two syllables by means of a single syllable, and similarly having mastered a single syllable by means of the forty-two syllables, they become skilled in the formation of syllables. Having mastered the formation of syllables, they then become skilled in the formation of [speech] that {from the perspective of ultimate reality} is without syllables. For example, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are skilled in the sacred doctrine and skilled in syllables, and they teach through syllables the sacred doctrine that {in ultimate reality} is without syllables. Indeed ... there is no doctrine at all that is not included in the syllables {pertaining to relative reality} and the absence of syllables {pertaining to ultimate reality}.

29.K “If, owing to the emptiness of the unlimited and the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, sentient beings, too {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, are never apprehensible, and nor indeed is the sacred doctrine apprehensible, and nor are even the natural expressions of the sacred doctrine apprehensible, then ... how do great bodhisattva beings ... teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings by means of the six transcendent perfections which originate from the ripening [of past actions]? Venerable Lord ... because if those great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not apprehend {as real} even the nature of a bodhisattva, how could they possibly apprehend {as real} the attributes that are the aspects of enlightenment!” ... The Blessed One replied ... “... Subhūti, it is because sentient beings are {from the perspective of ultimate reality} non-apprehensible that one should know the emptiness of internal phenomena, and likewise, the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality {defined in this context as the path of nirvāṇa leading to ultimate reality}, the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all things, the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics, and [similarly], the emptiness of the psycho-physical aggregates, the emptiness of the sense fields, the emptiness of the noble truths, the emptiness of dependent origination, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena and of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the self, the emptiness of sentient beings, and the emptiness of living creatures. In the same way, one should know lives, individuals, humankind, human beings, actors, instigators, experiencers, knowers, and viewers to be emptiness. Similarly, one should know the meditative concentrations ... {and all causal and fruitional attributes and attainments} ... up to and including the fruit of arhatship ... individual enlightenment ... the maturity of the bodhisattvas ... genuinely perfect enlightenment ... the buddhafiels ... and the maturation of sentient beings to be emptiness.”

29.L Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, having seen all things as emptiness, teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings who have been captivated by erroneous views, but they do not apprehend {as real} those sentient beings at all. They teach this sacred doctrine without transgressing those aspects of emptiness at all. Perceiving in this way, they know all things to be without obscuration, and then, without disturbing anything at all and without dualizing, they indeed teach [this sacred doctrine] exactly as it is ... Just as when an emanation of the tathāgatas projects many thousands of phantoms, some of whom engage in generosity, some in ethical discipline, some in tolerance, some in perseverance, some in meditative concentration, and some in wisdom {and so forth} ... that emanation would {not} have detailed anything at all ... For these reasons ... you should know that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom establish sentient beings on the

[bodhisattva] levels, just as they teach the sacred doctrine to them, and release them from erroneous views by means of that which is neither fettered nor liberated. If you ask why ... it is because physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are naturally neither fettered nor liberated. Nor does the non-bondage and non-liberation of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... constitute consciousness {and the other aggregates} ... because physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are absolutely pure {which is indicative that all things are non-arising and unceasing, neither afflicted nor purified and are without apprehension—where all such non-existent things are unconditioned}. The same applies also to all conditioned and unconditioned phenomena. So it is ... that although great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings, they do not apprehend {as real} sentient beings. If you ask why ... it is because those great bodhisattva beings abide in a non-abiding manner in the non-apprehension of all things. They abide in a non-abiding manner with respect to the emptiness of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and they abide in a non-abiding manner with respect to the emptiness of conditioned and unconditioned phenomena ... In no respect do they abide in conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, or in the emptiness of conditioned phenomena ... because those phenomena and those aspects of emptiness are without essential nature and {consequently} without apprehension in which one might abide ... Non-entities do not at all abide in non-entity. Intrinsic entities do not abide in intrinsic entities, nor do extraneous entities abide in extraneous entities. If you ask why, it is because they are all non-apprehensible {as ultimately real}, and where could that which is non-apprehensible abide! So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom thoroughly cultivate these attributes owing to all the [aforementioned] aspects of emptiness.

29.M The lord buddhas, great bodhisattva beings, the pratyekabuddhas, the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas, and all sublime beings are all without defect ... {because they} all attain buddhahood and realization in pursuit of this reality {of phenomena}, and they have exclusively demonstrated and continue to demonstrate all those phenomena to sentient beings without transcending the reality of those phenomena. If you ask why, it is because those phenomena do not transcend the expanse of {relative} reality, the real nature {of phenomena} and the finality of {relative} existence. If you ask why, it is because they are without any essential nature which might transcend ... Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If things do not transcend the expanse of {relative} reality, the real nature {of phenomena}, and the finality of {relative} existence, then are physical forms not one thing and the expanse of {relative} reality another, the real nature {of phenomena} another, and the finality of {relative} existence another {and so forth}? ... The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, that is not so!” “Venerable Lord! If physical forms are not one thing, and the expanse of {relative} reality another ... and so on, up to and including conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, then, Venerable Lord, how would the ripening of positive and negative past actions be established and how would they become discernible?” ... The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, the systematic presentation of the [various] fruits may be disclosed when the relative truth is taken as the standard, but the systematic presentation of the fruits cannot be disclosed in ultimate truth. If you ask why, it is because in ultimate truth physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are without arising, without cessation, without affliction, and without purification. This reality of the emptiness of the unlimited and the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end is {from the perspective of ultimate reality} non-conceptual and indescribable.” “Venerable Lord! If the systematic presentation of the fruits takes place dependent on the relative truth, would not all ordinary peo-

ple attain the fruit of entering the stream ... {up to and including} unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, do ordinary people understand the relative truth and the ultimate truth? Rather, they lack the establishment of the fruit of entering the stream, and so on, up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Subhūti, it is because ordinary people lack the noble eightfold path, do not cultivate the noble eightfold path, and lack the fruit of the noble eightfold path that they do not attain the establishment of the fruits. Rather, Subhūti, it is the sublime individuals who are endowed with the path to nirvāṇa, who cultivate the path to nirvāṇa, and possess the fruit of having cultivated the path to nirvāṇa. If you ask why ... it is because those sublime individuals themselves partake of the establishment of the fruits, while others do not.”

29.N The fruit is not attained {in ultimate reality} even when one has cultivated the path, nor will one who has not cultivated the path attain the fruit. Nor ... will the fruit be attained {in relative reality} without cultivating the path. The fruit is not attained {in relative reality} when one lacks the path, nor is it {attained in ultimate reality} when one abides on the path. In this way ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom may establish sentient beings in the fruit {in relative reality}, but the fruit is not established {in ultimate reality} by eradicating conditioned elements or unconditioned elements. “Venerable Lord! If the fruit is not established by eradicating conditioned or unconditioned elements, yet has the Tathāgata not revealed that the fruit of entering the stream is consequent on having renounced the three fetters ... and that unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is consequent on having abandoned involuntary reincarnation through propensities and all afflicted mental states?” ... The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, is the fruit of entering the stream ... {up to} unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment conditioned or unconditioned?” “Venerable Lord! All these phenomena are unconditioned.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, can unconditioned phenomena then be eradicated?” “No, Venerable Lord!” “Subhūti, when sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage realize that conditioned and unconditioned phenomena have one defining characteristic, namely, that they are without defining characteristics, at that time do they eradicate anything at all that is conditioned or unconditioned?” “No!, Venerable Lord!” The Blessed One continued, “Subhūti, the reason why great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom have nothing to eradicate is that they teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings, owing to the emptiness of internal phenomena, and owing to the other aspects of emptiness ... They themselves do not become fixated on anything at all, and they do not induce others to become fixated on anything at all. They do not become fixated on the transcendent perfection of generosity, or similarly [on the other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... or on the three gateways to liberation, and ... [on the fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience. Since they do not become fixated on these [attributes], they remain unattached to anything at all. Just as when the emanations of a tathāgata dispense generosity, they may indeed experience the fruit of this generosity, but do not dwell on the fruit of this generosity, and though they may indeed practice all the six transcendent perfections, and similarly practice in accordance with contaminated, uncontaminated, mundane, supramundane, conditioned, and unconditioned phenomena, exclusively in order that sentient beings might attain final nirvāṇa, but do not dwell in anything at all, in the same way ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom may practice in accordance with all those phenomena, but they do not dwell in them; nor are they attached to anything at all. If you ask why, it is because they thoroughly realize the defining characteristic of phenomena, of which all things partake.”

29.O “Venerable Lord! If the supreme [reality] is that all things are signless—signs being mere imputations that ori-

ginate from imagination—then how do great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom attain distinction with regard to virtuous attributes, and how do they induce others to attain distinction with regard to virtuous attributes, and engage with them, perfecting the levels, from one to the next, by means of those virtuous attributes, and also induce sentient beings to engage with the three vehicles, and become established therein?” The Blessed One replied ... “Subhūti, if great bodhisattva beings cultivate entities or some indication of an entity {on the path}, and do not {at the same time} cultivate non-entities and signlessness, then those great bodhisattva beings would themselves not attain distinction, and they would not induce others to engage with distinction, and to become established therein ... If great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom perfect the transcendent perfection{s} of meditative concentration ... perseverance ... tolerance ... ethical discipline ... {and} generosity exclusively by way of signlessness, and similarly, if they perfect the meditative concentrations ... the immeasurable aspirations and the formless absorptions ... the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, and [the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the meditative stabilities of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... {and} the other aspects of emptiness ... the eight aspects of liberation ... the nine serial steps of meditative absorption ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas exclusively by way of signlessness, then they will not be attached to those [attributes], owing to their exclusive signlessness, and they will also not resort to erroneous views. Having cultivated these virtuous attributes, they will induce others to engage with them and to become established in them ... If for those great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom there were to exist an indication of phenomena {as being ultimately existent}, even for only the duration of a finger-snap, then, Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings ... would not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, in which all things are signless, free from recollection, and free from attention, and they would not become established in uncontaminated phenomena, in the real nature {of phenomena, in which all phenomena are empty of inherent existence} ... All uncontaminated phenomena are signless, free from recollection, and free from attention. Therefore ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom always act for the sake of sentient beings by means of uncontaminated phenomena.”

29.P “Venerable Lord! If all things are signless, free from recollection, and free from attention, why are many different designations applied to all things, such as, ‘These are contaminated phenomena ... These are the attributes of genuinely perfect buddhas?’” ... “Subhūti, do the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment constitute signlessness?” “Yes, they do, Venerable Lord!” ... The Blessed One replied, “For these reasons, Subhūti, you should know that all things are signlessness ... Great bodhisattva beings who train in this signlessness are enhanced by all the roots of virtuous actions. That is to say, they are always enhanced by the six transcendent perfections ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. If you ask why, it is because those great bodhisattva beings should not train in anything except emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness ... because all virtuous attributes are gathered in these three gateways to liberation. If you ask why, emptiness as a gateway to liberation implies that all things are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics. Signlessness as a gateway to liberation implies that they lack all signs, aspirationlessness as a gateway to liberation implies that they have abandoned all aspirations. Great bodhisattva beings who train in these three gateways to liberation undertake

training while observing production and disintegration {of all non-existent phenomena} with respect to the five psycho-physical aggregates, and likewise, the twelve sense fields and the eighteen sensory elements. Similarly, they undertake training while realizing the four noble truths, and ... while fully comprehending the twelve links of dependent origination. Then they train in the emptiness of internal phenomena and ... in the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of non-entities and the emptiness of essential nature. Similarly, they train in the six transcendent perfections ... the four applications of mindfulness and [in the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas.”

COMMENTARY

Within this realm of ‘relative’ existence—within the confines of space and time—the great illusionist, Vajradhara, has conjured a multitude of individuated beings, to rise from a state of ‘un-enlightenment’ to a state of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. This enlightened state is the enlightening of the mind, that when fully enlightened, causes the conjured individuated being to illuminate the world systems of the great trichilocosm as a natural expanse of beryl. Until this state of perfect enlightenment, the mind of the conjured individuated being perceives the absence of the full expression of light ~ perceiving that which is illusion, that which is delusion, and that which is confusion in the absence of light, where darkness abounds, and is perceived as night. For within space and time, this realm of relative existence is abounding in the darkness of the absence of light, which is the illusory platform enabling the conjured individuated being to perceive the absence of the full expression of light. Here in this illusory dimension of space and time, can secondary sources of created light be perceived by the mind as ‘objects of light’ through the ongoing maintenance of the illusory filter of the five psycho-physical aggregates. Only a great bodhisattva being who maintains this filter for the purpose of awakening all sentient beings, can see through the illusory refractions of this filter, and perceive the indivisible ‘oneness’ of all life. **For it is only by being favored by instruction in this perception—of the liberating pristine cognition of the omniscient mind—will the unenlightened mind become perfectly enlightened ~ fully consecrated by the Tathāgata’s aureole of light.** Only when every conjured individuated being has been consecrated by the Tathāgata’s aureole of light, will maintenance of the filter of the five psycho-physical aggregates no longer be maintained; and will the perception of the illusion of the sun and the moon, the perception of the illusion of the individuated self, and the perception of the illusion of space and time, no longer be maintained ~ for the sphere that once was, that never was, that allowed for the continuum of space and time, that allowed for the illusion of ‘relative’ existence, that allowed for the illusion of conjured individuated beings, is forever filled—beyond all space and time—with a great expanse of light. Thus does the Buddha reveal (above): *“Once sentient beings have been favored with the power of the instructions {of the gift of the sacred doctrine}, the tathāgatas consecrate them within their aureoles {of light} ... {Yet} when the tathāgatas cease to consecrate them in this way, both the moon and the sun will no longer exist in the world. Months, fortnights, seasons, and the annual cycles will no longer manifest in the world.”*

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Only when every conjured individuated being stops imagining as real the unreality of the illusion of ‘relative’ reality, the unreality of the illusion of individuality, and the unreality of the whole theatre of duality, will the projection of all unconditioned phenomena, through the projection of the five psycho-physical aggregates, cease to occupy any spa-

ce within the one undivided natural luminosity of mind of every conjured individuated being. Thus does the Buddha reveal in chapter twenty-seven of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: “Abiding in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, {great bodhisattva beings} discern physical forms as resembling a mass of foam ... feelings as resembling a water bubble, perceptions as resembling a mirage, formative predispositions as resembling a hollow plantain, and consciousness as resembling a magical display ... **{And} when making such discernments, they always maintain the {unreal} perception that the five psycho-physical aggregates are essenceless.**”

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In a general sense, the word “Brahma/Brahmā” means highest, supreme deity or God, and its use in different senses, and with multiple meanings, means its intended meaning is often misunderstood and applied. In the chapter (above) the Buddha states: “I will turn the wheel of Brahmā which has not previously been turned [in the world] in conformity with the sacred doctrine by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā {deity}, or anyone else!” In the *Lotus Sūtra* the Buddha clarifies: “Just as Great Brahma is the father of all the sentient beings, in the same way this sūtra is the father of all the wise.” But who is the Tathāgata in relation to Brahmā, described as the father of all the sentient beings? The Buddha reveals in the *Aggañña Sūtra*[^]: “Indeed whoever is lost, Vāseṭṭha, where the root of faith arises and is firmly established in the Tathāgata, holding steadfast, immovable and well established—whether an ascetic, or Brahmin, or deva [spirit], or Māra [spirit], or god, or anyone in the world—it is proper for this or that one to say: ‘I am the Bhagavān’s own son, born from the mouth of the Dharma, belonging to the Order of the Dharma—and an heir of the Dharma!’ But why is this so? Because, Vāseṭṭha, **this one Tathāgata is designated as thus: ‘The Body of Dharma’, and also thus: ‘The Body of Brahma’, and also thus: ‘The Manifestation of Dharma’ and also thus: ‘The Manifestation of Brahma.’**” Thus is this ‘one and only’ Tathāgata designated as: ‘the Body of Truth’, ‘the Body of God’, ‘the Manifestation of Truth’, and ‘the Manifestation of God’ ~ turning the wheel of God, known as the ‘wheel of Brahmā’ in conformity with the sacred doctrine, known as the ‘wheel of Dharma’. [[^]*Aggañña Sūtra*, p. 657]

CHAPTER THIRTY: INHERENT EXISTENCE

30.1 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom observe and study production and disintegration with respect to the five psycho-physical aggregates, while training in these three gateways to liberation?”

30.2 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom correctly perceive physical forms. They correctly perceive the real nature of physical forms—that physical forms neither arise from anywhere, nor do they cease anywhere. If you ask how they correctly perceive physical forms, they see that physical forms are utterly porous or utterly fallacious, just as a mass of foam is insubstantial. If you ask how they perceive the arising of physical forms, inasmuch as physical forms neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, they correctly perceive the non-arising of physical forms from anywhere and their non-going to anywhere. So it is that they perceive the arising of physical forms.

30.3 “If you ask how they perceive the cessation of physical forms, inasmuch as physical forms neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, but are subject to consummation and disintegration, so it is that they perceive

the cessation of physical forms. If you ask how they correctly perceive the real nature of physical forms, inasmuch as the real nature of physical forms is subject neither to arising nor cessation, neither comes nor goes, is neither afflicted nor purified, and is neither enhanced nor diminished, so it is that they correctly perceive the real nature of physical forms.

30.4 “If you ask how they correctly perceive feelings, they correctly perceive that feelings are utterly ripe and utterly painful, resembling, for example, the [fleeting] condition of a bubble in water. Inasmuch as feelings neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, but emerge through the threefold combination [of happiness, suffering, and neutrality], so it is that they correctly perceive the arising of feelings. Inasmuch as feelings neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, but are subject to consummation and disintegration, so it is that they correctly perceive the cessation of feelings. Inasmuch as the real nature of feelings is neither afflicted nor purified, and is neither enhanced nor diminished, so it is that they correctly perceive the real nature of feelings.

30.5 “If you ask how they correctly perceive perceptions, it is the case that they correctly perceive perceptions to resemble, for example, a mirage which deceives those who crave water despite the fact that in a mirage actual water is non-apprehensible. Inasmuch as perceptions neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, but emerge through false imagination and are conventionally designated, so it is that they correctly perceive the arising of perceptions. Inasmuch as perceptions neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, but are subject to consummation and disintegration, so it is that they correctly perceive the cessation of perceptions. Inasmuch as the real nature of perceptions is neither afflicted nor purified, and is neither enhanced nor diminished, so it is that they correctly perceive the real nature of perceptions.

30.6 “If you ask how they correctly perceive formative predispositions, it is the case that they correctly perceive formative predispositions to resemble a plantain tree, in which the actual core is non-apprehensible when the outer layers are peeled away. Inasmuch as formative predispositions neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, but emerge through false imagination, so it is that they correctly perceive the arising of formative predispositions. Inasmuch as formative predispositions neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, but are subject to consummation and disintegration, so it is that they correctly perceive the cessation of formative predispositions. Inasmuch as the real nature of formative predispositions neither arises nor ceases, is neither afflicted nor purified, and is neither enhanced nor diminished, so it is that they correctly perceive the real nature of formative predispositions.

30.7 “If you ask how they correctly perceive consciousness, just as an illusionist, standing at a crossroads in the presence of a crowd of common folk, may deceive childish persons by conjuring up the four corps of an army—the elephant corps, the cavalry corps, the chariot corps, and the infantry corps—so it is that they correctly perceive consciousness. Inasmuch as consciousness neither arises from anywhere, nor does it go anywhere, but emerges through formative predispositions, and is also generated through the conditions of formative predispositions, so it is that they correctly perceive the arising of consciousness. Inasmuch as consciousness neither arises from anywhere, nor does it go anywhere, but is subject to consummation and disintegration, so it is that they correctly perceive the cessation of consciousness. Inasmuch as the real nature of consciousness neither arises nor ceases, is neither afflicted

nor purified, and is neither enhanced nor diminished, so it is that they correctly perceive the real nature of consciousness.

30.8 “If you ask how they correctly perceive the sensory elements, they correctly perceive that the sensory element of the eyes is empty of inherent existence. Similarly, they correctly perceive that the sensory element of sights and the sensory element of visual consciousness are empty of inherent existence; in the same vein, they perceive that [all the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness, are empty of the inherent existence of mental consciousness [and the other sensory elements]. So it is that they correctly perceive the sensory elements.

30.9 “If you ask how they correctly perceive the sense fields, they correctly perceive the six internal sense fields to be empty of the six internal sense fields. Similarly, they correctly perceive the six external sense fields to be empty of the six external sense fields. So it is that they correctly perceive the sense fields.

30.10 “If you ask how they correctly perceive the four noble truths, they correctly perceive that the defining characteristic of [the truth of] suffering is harm, the defining characteristic of [the truth of] the origin of suffering is production, the defining characteristic of [the truth of] cessation is peace, and the defining characteristic of [the truth of] the path is emancipation. They correctly perceive that liberation ensues from the [last] two noble truths, but they also correctly perceive that [liberation] does not ensue from the [former] two noble truths.

30.11 “If you ask how they correctly perceive dependent origination, they correctly perceive that it neither arises nor ceases, that it is neither nihilistic nor eternalistic, that it is neither confined to a single meaning nor are its meanings manifold, that it neither comes nor goes, and that it is free from conceptual elaboration, and calm. So it is that they correctly perceive dependent origination.”

30.12 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom were to investigate phenomena that are so different from one another in this manner, would the expanse of reality not be disrupted?”

30.13 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, the expanse of reality would be disrupted if there were any extraneous phenomena existing apart from it, but, Subhūti, there are indeed no apprehensible phenomena apart from the expanse of reality. If there were any such apprehensible phenomena, the expanse of reality would indeed be disrupted. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because there is nothing which the tathāgatas, bodhisattvas, pratyekabuddhas, and the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas apprehend outside the expanse of reality. Since there is nothing to apprehend, there is nothing to explain. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should train in the expanse of reality which is indivisible and undisrupted.”

30.14 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! In what have those great bodhisattva beings who train in the expanse of reality actually trained?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who train in the expanse of reality have trained in all phenomena. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because all phenome-

na are gathered in the expanse of reality.”

30.15 “Venerable Lord! Why are all phenomena gathered in the expanse of reality?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, whether the tathāgatas have appeared or whether they have not appeared, the expanse of reality, which includes all phenomena, itself abides indivisibly. Subhūti, the expanse of reality indeed comprises all things—attributes that are virtuous and non-virtuous, specified and non-specified, contaminated and uncontaminated, mundane and supramundane, and conditioned and unconditioned. The expression ‘all phenomena’ designates all these.”

30.16 “Venerable Lord! If all phenomena are the expanse of reality, then, Venerable Lord, how should great bodhisattva beings train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom? Similarly, how should they train in the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration? How should they train in the transcendent perfection of perseverance? How should they train in the transcendent perfection of tolerance? How should they train in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and how should they train in the transcendent perfection of generosity? Similarly, how should they train in the first meditative concentration? How should they train in the second meditative concentration? How should they train in the third meditative concentration, and how should they train in the fourth meditative concentration?”

30.17 “Similarly, how should they train in loving kindness? How should they train in compassion? How should they train in empathetic joy? How should they train in equanimity? Similarly, how should they train in the meditative absorption of the sense field of infinite space, and how should they train [in the other meditative absorptions], up to and including the meditative absorption in the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception? Similarly, how should they train in the applications of mindfulness? Similarly, how should they train in the correct exertions, and likewise, how should they train in the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path?”

30.18 “How should they train in emptiness, and how should they train in signlessness and how should they train in aspirationlessness? How should they train in the eight aspects of liberation? How should they train in the nine serial steps of meditative absorption? How should they train in the ten powers of the tathāgatas? How should they train in the four assurances, and how should they train in the four unhindered discernments? How should they train in great loving kindness? How should they train in great compassion? How should they train in the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas? How should they train in the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, and how should they train in the eighty minor marks?”

30.19 “How should they train to achieve rebirth among the royal class, standing out like a tall sāl tree? How should they train to achieve rebirth among the priestly class, standing out like a tall sāl tree? How should they train to achieve rebirth among the householder class, standing out like a tall sāl tree? How should they train to be reborn in the god realm of Caturmahārājakāyika? How should they train to be reborn in the god realm of Trayatṛiṃśa? Similarly, how should they train to be reborn in the [other] god realms, up to and including Paranirmitavaśavartin? How should they train to be reborn in the god realm of Brahmakāyika? How should they train to be reborn in the god realms of Ābhāsvara, Śubhakarṣna, and Bṛhatphala? How should they train to be reborn in the god realms of non-perceptual

sentient beings?”

30.20 “How should they train to be reborn in the god realms of the Pure Abodes, and also how should they avoid being reborn therein? How should they train to be reborn in the god realm of the sense field of infinite space, and also how should they avoid being reborn therein? In the same vein, how should they train to be reborn in the god realms of [the other sense fields of the world system of formlessness], up to and including the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception, and also how should they avoid being reborn therein?”

30.21 “How should they train in the first setting of their mind on enlightenment? How should they train in the second, the third, and in [all the other settings of their mind on enlightenment], up to and including the tenth setting of their mind on enlightenment? How should they train in the first bodhisattva level? Similarly, how should they train in [the other bodhisattva levels], up to and including the tenth bodhisattva level? How should they train in the level of the śrāvakas? How should they train in the level of the pratyekabuddhas? How should they train in the maturity of the bodhisattvas? How should they train in the maturation of sentient beings? How should they train in the refinement of the buddhafiels? How should they train in all the gateways of mnemonic incantation? How should they train in all the gateways of meditative stability? How should they train in the path of the bodhisattvas, whereby those who have trained therein investigate the modalities of all phenomena?”

30.22 “Venerable Lord! Since such false imaginations do not exist in this expanse of reality, Venerable Lord, would great bodhisattva beings not then engage or identify with erroneous views? If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because these false imaginations do not exist in the expanse of reality.

30.23 “Physical forms indeed are not the expanse of reality; nor are feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, consciousness, the sense field of the eyes, or [all the other sense fields], up to and including the sense field of mental phenomena; and nor are the sensory element of the eyes, and [all the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness. However, the expanse of reality does not exist apart from physical forms, feelings, perceptions, and formative predispositions, nor does it exist apart from consciousness. The expanse of reality does not exist apart from the sense field of the eyes and [the other sense fields], up to and including the sense field of mental phenomena. The expanse of reality does not exist apart from the sensory element of the eyes and [the other sensory elements], up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness. Physical forms themselves are the expanse of reality, and the expanse of reality is itself physical forms. Similarly, consciousness [and so forth] are themselves the expanse of reality and the expanse of reality is itself consciousness [and so forth]. This refrain should be extensively applied to all phenomena, just as it has been applied to them in previous contexts.”

30.24 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti, as follows: “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have said. All these false imaginations do not exist in the expanse of reality. Physical forms indeed are not the expanse of reality, nor does the expanse of reality exist separate from physical forms. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are not the expanse of reality, nor does the expanse of reality exist separate from consciousness [and the aforementioned aggregates]. Rather, the very nature of physical forms is the expanse of reality, and

the expanse of reality is itself physical forms. Similarly, the very nature of [the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness, is the expanse of reality, and the expanse of reality is itself consciousness [and the rest]. This refrain should be extensively applied to the sense fields, just as it has been juxtaposed here in the context of the psycho-physical aggregates.

30.25 “Subhūti, if great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom were to see anything apart from the expanse of reality, then they would not be intent on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. This is why, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not see anything apart from the expanse of reality. Therefore, when all phenomena are known to be the expanse of reality, all those nameless phenomena can then be denoted by the symbolic conventions of names, as follows: ‘These are physical forms. These are feelings. These are perceptions. These are formative predispositions. This is consciousness,’ and so on [with all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to, ‘This is unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.’

30.26 “Subhūti, if an illusionist or the skilled apprentice of an illusionist were to empower some visible form and then exhibit it in a diversity of other forms—in the form of a man, the form of a woman; the forms of an elephant, horse, or bull; or in the diverse forms of a pleasant garden, a pleasant river, a pleasant pool, or a pleasant tree—in the presence of a crowd of common folk; and if, in that same place, he were then to exhibit a diversity of mats or clothing, and even exhibit a diversity of flower garlands, and a diversity of foods, delicacies, savories, cooked food, and drinks; and if he were to delight the crowd with songs and the manifold sounds of music; and exhibit himself dispensing generosity, or exhibit himself keeping [the vows of] ethical discipline, cultivating tolerance, undertaking perseverance, being absorbed in meditative concentration, or cultivating wisdom; and even if through these images, he were to exhibit himself reborn among the royal class, standing out like a tall sāl tree, and similarly exhibit himself reborn among the priestly class, standing out like a tall sāl tree, or reborn among the householder class, standing out like a tall sāl tree, or similarly exhibit himself reborn among the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm, or similarly, exhibit himself reborn among the gods of the Trayatṛiṃśa realm, the Yāma realm, the Tuṣita realm, the Nirmāṇarata realm, or Paranirmitavaśavartin realm; and similarly, if he were to exhibit himself reborn in the Brahmā worlds, or exhibit himself approaching the sense field of infinite space, or exhibit himself approaching [the other sense fields], up to and including the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception; or else, if he were similarly to exhibit himself entering the stream, or being tied to one more rebirth, or no longer being subject to rebirth, or as an arhat or pratyekabuddha; or if he were to exhibit himself as a great bodhisattva being, as one who had first begun to set the mind on enlightenment, and then as one who has practiced the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom; and similarly, as one who engages with the first bodhisattva level, and who engages with [the other bodhisattva levels], up to and including the tenth level; and similarly as one who actualizes the extrasensory powers and, displaying those extrasensory powers, illuminates the world systems, brings sentient beings to maturity, and refines the buddhafields; and even exhibit himself displaying the meditative concentrations, the meditative stabilities, and the meditative absorptions; or similarly, exhibit himself attaining the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, and great loving kindness, or possessing great compassion and the eighteen distinct

qualities of the buddhas; or exhibit himself with his body excellently adorned with the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, and his body radiant with the eighty minor marks—in all such cases, those men, women, boys, and girls, who have the disposition of ordinary people, would think, ‘O! How well trained is this man who exhibits himself [in various forms], up to and including the form of the tathāgata, delighting these folk with a diversity of forms that are attractive to behold and pleasant. What beauty he creates!’

30.27 “Then, there might be some men, women, boys, or girls with the disposition of the wise, who were knowledgeable and endowed with ideation and scrutiny, who would think, ‘Since this illusory act is non-apprehensible, it is a wonderful and marvelous phenomenon that this man delights these folk with phenomena which are non-existent, deluding the eye and the mental faculty, and that these sentient beings with a childish disposition perceive that which does not exist as a sentient being, and can perceive that which is insubstantial as something substantial!’

30.28 “In the same way, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not apprehend anything that is apprehensible apart from the expanse of reality, and they do not perceive anything at all apart from the expanse of reality. Yet, although they apprehend no sentient beings or anything that is designated as a sentient being, owing to their skill in means, they themselves dispense generosity and they encourage others to acquire generosity. Similarly, they encourage others to cultivate ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom. They speak in praise of wisdom, [and so forth], and they rejoice in and speak in praise of others who cultivate generosity, ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom.

30.29 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, owing to their skill in means, will not be discouraged from benefiting themselves and from benefiting others. The same refrain should be applied to all phenomena, as it has been indicated here in the context of the transcendent perfections.”

30.30 “Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If all phenomena are empty of inherent existence, and if in the emptiness of inherent existence no sentient beings or anything at all is apprehensible, then how do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, strive toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings?”

30.31 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, that is right! It is just as you have said. All things are empty of inherent existence. Subhūti, if all things were not empty of inherent existence, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, would not demonstrate to sentient beings that all things are empty of inherent existence. So, Subhūti, it is because all things are empty of inherent existence that great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the emptiness of inherent existence, demonstrate to sentient beings that all things are empty of inherent existence.

30.32 “If, Subhūti, you ask what are all the phenomena with respect to which the emptiness of inherent existence is applicable, they are as follows: Physical forms are empty of inherent existence. Similarly, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of inherent existence. Therefore, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the emptiness of inherent existence, correctly perceive that these five psycho-physical aggregates are empty

of inherent existence. Knowing this, they demonstrate the sacred doctrine accordingly to sentient beings.

30.33 “Similarly, knowing that the twelve sense fields and the eighteen sensory elements are empty of inherent existence, they demonstrate the sacred doctrine accordingly to sentient beings. Similarly, knowing that the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable aspirations, and the four formless absorptions are empty of inherent existence, they demonstrate the sacred doctrine accordingly to sentient beings. Similarly, knowing that the four applications of mindfulness and [all other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path and the three gateways to liberation, are empty of inherent existence, they demonstrate the sacred doctrine accordingly to sentient beings. Similarly, knowing that the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative absorption, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, and the eighty minor marks are all empty of inherent existence, they demonstrate the sacred doctrine accordingly to sentient beings. Similarly, knowing that the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in which all involuntary reincarnation through propensities and all afflicted mental states have been abandoned, are empty of inherent existence, they demonstrate the sacred doctrine accordingly to sentient beings.

30.34 “Subhūti, if the emptiness of internal phenomena were an entity, great bodhisattva beings would not demonstrate to sentient beings [the sacred] doctrine that all things are empty of inherent existence, and the emptiness of inherent existence would indeed disintegrate. Similarly, if the emptiness of external phenomena, the emptiness of both external and internal phenomena, the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of great extent, the emptiness of ultimate reality, the emptiness of conditioned phenomena, the emptiness of unconditioned phenomena, the emptiness of the unlimited, the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end, the emptiness of non-dispersal, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness of all things, and the emptiness of intrinsic defining characteristics were all entities, great bodhisattva beings would not demonstrate to sentient beings [the sacred] doctrine that all things are empty of inherent existence, and the emptiness of inherent existence would indeed disintegrate.

30.35 “However, the emptiness of inherent existence will neither disintegrate, nor will it endure, and nor will it go away. If you ask why, it is because it does not abide in any location, it does not abide in any direction, it does not arise from anywhere, and it does not go anywhere. It is the abiding nature of all things. In it there is nothing at all that accrues or disintegrates, nothing that is enhanced or diminished, nothing that arises or ceases, and nothing that is afflicted or purified. It is the natural expression of all things.

30.36 “Abiding in that natural expression, great bodhisattva beings strive toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and yet they do not see anything at all in which they would engage. Rather they see that all things are not to be engaged in and are non-abiding. This is the abiding nature of all things. Therefore, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom see that all things are empty of inherent existence, and they do not turn back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because, in the emptiness of inherent existence, self, sentient beings, living creatures, lives, individuals, humankind, human beings, actors, agents, experiencers, experiencing subjects, knowers, and viewers are all non-apprehensible. Similarly, physical

forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are non-apprehensible, and in the same vein, [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks, are non-apprehensible. Abiding in the emptiness of inherent existence, with regard to which this same refrain extensively applies, they do not see anything at all that is obscured, and they see that all things are without obscuration.

30.37 “If, for example, a fully ordained monk, nun, layman, or laywoman emanated by the tathāgatas were to teach the sacred doctrine continuously for an eon or for more than an eon to [phantom] persons also emanated by the tathāgatas, do you think, Subhūti, that those [phantom] persons emanated by the tathāgatas would have the good fortune to attain the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, or arhatship?” “No, Venerable Lord! If one were to ask why, it is because they are not entities.”

30.38 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so. It is so! How could non-entities attain these fruits? Subhūti, since all things are non-entities, which discerning persons would be fixated on the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, or unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? On the contrary, they would propel living creatures who have fallen into erroneous views toward non-erroneous views and establish them therein. Since they are without false imaginations, they are without erroneous views. Where there are no erroneous views, there is no self, and there are no sentient beings, and [no other posited subject], up to and including knowers and viewers, and there are no physical forms, no feelings, no perceptions, no formative predispositions, and no consciousness. Where there are no physical forms, no feelings, no perceptions, no formative predispositions, and no consciousness, there is no self, and so on; there are also no [causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks.

30.39 “This is the emptiness of inherent existence. Abiding therein, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom liberate sentient beings from erroneous views. That is to say, they liberate those sentient beings who perceive that non-sentient beings are sentient, and similarly, who perceive that they are permanent, who perceive that they are imbued with happiness, who perceive that they are a self, who perceive that they are attractive, and similarly who perceive that there are physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, from [all these notions], up to and including the notion that there is consciousness.

30.40 “This refrain should also be applied, in the same vein, to all phenomena, up to and including things that are contaminated and things that are uncontaminated. As for the things which are uncontaminated, comprising the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, and in the same vein, [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, they too are not existent, in the manner of an unconditioned phenomenon [viewed] from the standpoint of ultimate reality, for these phenomena are uncreated. They are non-entities. They are the emptiness of inherent existence. This is the enlightenment of the lord buddhas, wherein there is no self, no sentient beings, and [no other posited subjects], up to and including knowers and viewers. There are no physical forms, no feelings, no perceptions, no formative predispositions, and no consciousness, and, in the same vein, there are no [causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks.

30.41 “Great bodhisattva beings do not deliberately follow the path that leads to perfect enlightenment for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, except for the sake of the emptiness of inherent existence. This emptiness of inherent existence is the emptiness of inherent existence with respect to the limits of past time, the limits of future time, and the limits of [the present time] in between. Great bodhisattva beings, abiding in this emptiness of inherent existence, practice the understanding of the aspects of the path in order to liberate from all notions those sentient beings who have the notion that they are sentient beings. When they practice the understanding of the aspects of the path, they practice the path of the śrāvakas, the path of the pratyekabuddhas, the path of genuinely perfect enlightenment, and all [other] paths. When they have perfected those paths, brought sentient beings to maturity, refined the buddhafi elds, and are blessed with the formative predispositions conducive to longevity, they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, the way of the buddhas will not be interrupted.

30.42 “If you ask what is the way of the buddhas, it is this very emptiness of inherent existence. The way of the sacred teachings of the lord buddhas who appeared in the past was indeed this emptiness of inherent existence, and it will also be the way of the sacred teachings of the lord buddhas who will appear in the future. The way of the sacred teachings of the lord buddhas who reside and are present in the innumerable world systems of the ten directions at the present time is also this same emptiness of inherent existence. Apart from the emptiness of inherent existence, there are no lord buddhas who will appear in the world. So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings should practice the six transcendent perfections, which are the emptiness of inherent existence. This is the conduct conducive to enlightenment. Great bodhisattva beings who practice it will not regress from omniscience.”

30.43 “O Venerable Lord! It is wonderful that great bodhisattva beings have practiced the emptiness of inherent existence with respect to all things, and yet do not disrupt the emptiness of inherent existence by [holding] that physical forms are one thing, feelings are another, perceptions are another, formative predispositions are another, consciousness another, and the emptiness of inherent existence yet another, and in the same vein, that [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, are distinct things, and that even unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is distinct, and the emptiness of inherent existence is something else. Rather, the emptiness of inherent existence is unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is itself the emptiness of inherent existence.”

30.44 The Blessed One then replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, if physical forms were one thing and the emptiness of inherent existence another, and similarly, if feelings were one thing, perceptions another thing, formative predispositions another thing, consciousness another thing, and the emptiness of inherent existence yet another, and if [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including enlightenment, were distinct things, and the emptiness of inherent existence something else, then great bodhisattva beings would indeed not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in omniscience.

30.45 “Subhūti, it is because the emptiness of inherent existence is physical forms, and similarly, feelings, perceptions, and formative predispositions, and because the emptiness of inherent existence is consciousness, and the emp-

teness of inherent existence is [all the attributes and attainments], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom know all things to be empty of inherent existence, and then attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, in this emptiness of inherent existence there is nothing at all that disintegrates, endures, or departs.

30.46 “Those ordinary people with diverse notions think that physical forms are one distinct thing and the emptiness of inherent existence another, and similarly they think that [the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness, are distinct things and the emptiness of inherent existence another, and in the same vein, they think that [all the attributes and attainments], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, are distinct things and the emptiness of inherent existence another. By thinking accordingly, they become fixated on physical forms. Similarly, they become fixated on feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and so they indulge in notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ and also become fixated upon them. Having become fixated, they will [at the time of their rebirth] generate physical forms, and similarly they will generate feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. They will not be liberated from rebirth, aging, ill health, death, sorrow, lamentations, sufferings, discomforts, and agitations. They will not be released from the cycle of cyclic existence, with its five classes of living beings.

30.47 “So it is that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not hold that physical forms are either empty or not empty, and they neither grasp nor disrupt them. Similarly, they do not hold that feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are either empty or not empty, and they neither grasp nor disrupt them. In the same vein, they do not hold that [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including enlightenment, are either empty or not empty, and they neither grasp nor disrupt them. If you ask why, it is because they do not disrupt physical forms, and they do not disrupt feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, claiming that, ‘Emptiness is physical forms. It is [the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness. It is [all the attributes and attainments], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’

30.48 “For example, Subhūti, just as space does not disrupt space, the internal space element does not at all disrupt the external space element, and the external space element does not at all disrupt the internal space element, in the same way, Subhūti, physical forms do not disrupt emptiness, nor does emptiness disrupt physical forms. Similarly, [the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness, do not disrupt emptiness, nor does emptiness disrupt [the other aggregates], up to and including consciousness. In the same vein, [all the attributes and attainments], up to and including enlightenment, do not disrupt emptiness, nor does emptiness disrupt [all the attributes and attainments], up to and including enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because all things are without an essential nature concerning which one might be misled into thinking, ‘This is empty. This is not empty!’”

30.49 *This completes the thirtieth chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Inherent Existence.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTY:

INHERENT EXISTENCE

30.A Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom observe and study production and disintegration {of phenomena} with respect to the five psycho-physical aggregates, while training in these three gateways to liberation ... **correctly perceive physical forms** ... are utterly porous or utterly fallacious, just as a mass of foam is insubstantial. If you ask how they perceive the arising of physical forms, inasmuch as physical forms neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere {in ultimate reality}, they correctly perceive the non-arising of physical forms from anywhere and their non-going to anywhere ... If you ask how they perceive the cessation of physical forms, inasmuch as physical forms neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, but are subject to consummation and disintegration {in relative reality}, so it is that they perceive the cessation of physical forms. If you ask how they correctly perceive the real nature of physical forms, inasmuch as the real nature of physical forms is subject neither to arising nor cessation, neither comes nor goes, is neither afflicted nor purified, and is neither enhanced nor diminished, so it is that they correctly perceive the real nature of physical forms ... **They correctly perceive feelings** ... are utterly ripe and utterly painful, resembling, for example, the [fleeting] condition of a bubble in water. Inasmuch as feelings neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere {in ultimate reality}, but emerge {in relative reality} through the threefold combination [of happiness, suffering, and neutrality], so it is that they correctly perceive the arising of feelings. Inasmuch as feelings neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, but are subject to consummation and disintegration {in relative reality}, so it is that they correctly perceive the cessation of feelings. Inasmuch as the real nature of feelings is neither afflicted nor purified, and is neither enhanced nor diminished, so it is that they correctly perceive the real nature of feelings ... **They correctly perceive perceptions** ... to resemble, for example, a mirage which deceives those who crave water despite the fact that in a mirage actual water is non-apprehensible. Inasmuch as perceptions neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere {in ultimate reality}, but emerge {in relative reality} through false imagination and are conventionally designated, so it is that they correctly perceive the arising of perceptions. Inasmuch as perceptions neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, but are subject to consummation and disintegration {in relative reality}, so it is that they correctly perceive the cessation of perceptions. Inasmuch as the real nature of perceptions is neither afflicted nor purified, and is neither enhanced nor diminished, so it is that they correctly perceive the real nature of perceptions ... **They correctly perceive formative predispositions** ... to resemble a plantain tree, in which the actual core is non-apprehensible when the outer layers are peeled away. Inasmuch as formative predispositions neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere {in ultimate reality}, but emerge {in relative reality} through false imagination, so it is that they correctly perceive the arising of formative predispositions. Inasmuch as formative predispositions neither arise from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere, but are subject to consummation and disintegration {in relative reality}, so it is that they correctly perceive the cessation of formative predispositions. Inasmuch as the real nature of formative predispositions neither arises nor ceases, is neither afflicted nor purified, and is neither enhanced nor diminished, so it is that they correctly perceive the real nature of formative predispositions ... **They correctly perceive consciousness** ... just as an illusionist, standing at a crossroads in the presence of a crowd of common folk, may deceive childish persons by conjuring up the four corps of an army—the elephant corps, the cavalry corps, the chariot corps, and the infantry corps—so it is that they correctly perceive consciousness. Inasmuch as consciousness neither arises from anywhere, nor does it go anywhere {in ultimate reality}, but emerges {in relative reality} through formative predispositions, and is also generated through the conditions of formative predispositions, so it is that they correctly

perceive the arising of consciousness. Inasmuch as consciousness neither arises from anywhere, nor does it go anywhere, but is subject to consummation and disintegration {in relative reality}, so it is that they correctly perceive the cessation of consciousness. Inasmuch as the real nature of consciousness neither arises nor ceases, is neither afflicted nor purified, and is neither enhanced nor diminished, so it is that they correctly perceive the real nature of consciousness ... **They correctly perceive that the {eighteen} sensory element{s}** of the eyes ... sights and ... visual consciousness ... up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness, are empty of the inherent existence of mental consciousness [and the other sensory elements] ... **They correctly perceive the six internal sense fields ... {and} the six external sense fields** to be empty of the six {internal and six} external sense fields ... **They correctly perceive the four noble truths** ... correctly perceiv{ing} that the defining characteristic of [the truth of] suffering is harm, the defining characteristic of [the truth of] the origin of suffering is production, the defining characteristic of [the truth of] cessation is peace, and the defining characteristic of [the truth of] the path is emancipation. They correctly perceive that liberation ensues from the [last] two noble truths, but they also correctly perceive that [liberation] does not ensue from the [former] two noble truths ... **They correctly perceive dependent origination** ... correctly perceiv{ing} that it neither arises nor ceases, that it is neither nihilistic nor eternalistic, that it is neither confined to a single meaning nor are its meanings manifold, that it neither comes nor goes, and that it is free from conceptual elaboration*, and {*therefore} calm.

30.B “Venerable Lord! If great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom were to investigate phenomena that are so different from one another in this manner, would the expanse of {relative} reality not be disrupted?” ... “Subhūti, the expanse of {relative} reality would be disrupted if there were any extraneous phenomena existing apart from it, but ... there are indeed no apprehensible phenomena apart from the expanse of {relative} reality. If there were any such apprehensible phenomena, the expanse of {relative} reality would indeed be disrupted. If you ask why ... it is because there is nothing which the tathāgatas, bodhisattvas, pratyekabuddhas, and the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas apprehend outside the {illusory} expanse of {relative} reality. Since there is nothing to apprehend, there is nothing to explain ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom should train in the expanse of {relative} reality which is indivisible and undisrupted ... Great bodhisattva beings who train in the expanse of {relative} reality have trained in all phenomena ... because all phenomena are gathered in the expanse of {relative} reality ... Whether the tathāgatas have appeared or ... not appeared, the expanse of {relative} reality, which includes all phenomena, itself abides indivisibly ... The expanse of {relative} reality indeed comprises all things—attributes that are virtuous and non-virtuous, specified and non-specified, contaminated and uncontaminated, mundane and supramundane, and conditioned and unconditioned. The expression ‘all phenomena’ designates all these.”

30.C “Venerable Lord! If all phenomena are the expanse of {relative} reality, then ... how should great bodhisattva beings train in the transcendent perfection{s} of wisdom ... meditative concentration ... perseverance ... tolerance ... ethical discipline, and ... generosity ... {and in all other causal and fruitional attributes, up to and including} the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, and ... the eighty minor marks? How should they train to achieve rebirth among the royal class ... the priestly class ... {or} the householder class, standing out like a tall sāl tree ... to be reborn in the god realm{s} of Caturmahārājakāyika {and so forth} ... to be reborn in the god realms of non-perceptual sentient beings ... in the god realms of the Pure Abodes, and also how

should they avoid being reborn therein ... to be reborn in the god realm of the sense field of infinite space ... up to and including the sense field of neither perception nor non-perception, and also how should they avoid being reborn therein? How should they train in the first setting of their mind on enlightenment ... up to and including the tenth setting of their mind on enlightenment ... in the first bodhisattva level ... up to and including the tenth bodhisattva level ... in the level{s} of the śrāvakas ... the pratyekabuddhas ... {and} the maturity of the bodhisattvas ... in the maturation of sentient beings ... in the refinement of the buddhafi elds ... in all the gateways of mnemonic incantation ... in all the gateways of meditative stability ... in the path of the bodhisattvas, whereby those who have trained therein investigate the modalities of all phenomena? Venerable Lord! Since such false imaginations do not {ultimately} exist in this expanse of {relative} reality ... would great bodhisattva beings not then engage or identify with erroneous views? If one were to ask why ... it is because these false imaginations do not {ultimately} exist in the expanse of {relative} reality. {From the perspective of ultimate reality} physical forms indeed are not the expanse of {relative} reality; nor are feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, consciousness ... up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness. However, the expanse of {relative} reality does not exist apart from physical forms ... up to and including the sensory element of mental consciousness. Physical forms themselves are the expanse of {relative} reality, and the expanse of {relative} reality is itself physical forms {owing to the indivisibility of the absolute purity of all phenomena, which is indicative that all things are non-arising and unceasing, neither afflicted nor purified and are without apprehension}. Similarly, consciousness [and so forth] are themselves the expanse of {relative} reality and the expanse of {relative} reality is itself consciousness [and so forth].” ... The Blessed One replied ... “Subhūti, it is so! ... All these false imaginations do not {ultimately} exist in the expanse of {relative} reality. Physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are not the expanse of {relative} reality {from the perspective of ultimate reality}, nor does the expanse of {relative} reality exist separate from consciousness {and the rest}. Rather, the very {abiding*} nature of physical forms ... up to and including consciousness {and so forth, *which is that all phenomena are inherently non-existent}, is the expanse of {relative} reality, and the expanse of {relative} reality is itself consciousness [and the rest] ... If great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom were to see anything {that is any phenomena, existing} apart from the expanse of {relative} reality, then they would not be intent on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... Therefore, when all phenomena are known to be the expanse of {relative} reality, all those nameless phenomena can then be denoted by the symbolic conventions of names, as follows: ‘These are physical forms ... up to, ‘This is unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.’”

30.D If an illusionist or the skilled apprentice of an illusionist were to empower some visible form and then exhibit it in a diversity of other forms—in the form of a man, the form of a woman; the forms of an elephant, horse, or bull; or in the diverse forms of a pleasant garden, a pleasant river, a pleasant pool, or a pleasant tree—in the presence of a crowd of common folk; and if, in that same place, he were then to exhibit a diversity of mats or clothing, and even exhibit a diversity of flower garlands, and a diversity of foods, delicacies, savories, cooked food, and drinks; and if he were to delight the crowd with songs and the manifold sounds of music; and exhibit himself dispensing generosity, or exhibit himself keeping [the vows of] ethical discipline, cultivating tolerance, undertaking perseverance, being absorbed in meditative concentration, or cultivating wisdom; and even if through these {illusory} images, he were to exhibit himself reborn among the royal class ... the priestly class ... {or} among the householder class, standing out like a tall sāl tree, or similarly exhibit himself reborn among the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm {and so forth} ... or exhibit himself approaching the sense field of infinite space ... up to and including the sense field of neither

perception nor non-perception; or else, if he were similarly to exhibit himself entering the stream, or being tied to one more rebirth, or no longer being subject to rebirth, or as an arhat or pratyekabuddha; or if he were to exhibit himself as a great bodhisattva being, as one who had first began to set the mind on enlightenment, and then as one who has practiced the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom; and similarly, as one who engages with the first bodhisattva level ... up to and including the tenth {bodhisattva} level; and similarly as one who actualizes the extrasensory powers and, displaying those extrasensory powers, illuminates the world systems, brings sentient beings to maturity, and refines the buddhafi elds; and even exhibit himself displaying the meditative concentrations, the meditative stabilities, and the meditative absorptions; or similarly, exhibit himself attaining the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, and great loving kindness, or possessing great compassion and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas; or exhibit himself with his body excellently adorned with the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, and his body radiant with the eighty minor marks—in all such cases, those men, women, boys, and girls, who have the disposition of ordinary people, would think, ‘O! How well trained is this man who exhibits himself [in various forms], up to and including the form of the tathāgata, delighting these folk with a diversity of forms that are attractive to behold and pleasant. What beauty he creates!’ Then, there might be some ... with the disposition of the wise, who were knowledgeable and endowed with ideation and scrutiny, who would think, ‘Since this illusory act is non-apprehensible, it is a wonderful and marvelous phenomenon that this man delights these folk with phenomena which are non-existent, deluding the eye and the mental faculty, and that these sentient beings with a childish disposition perceive that which does not exist as a sentient being, and ... that which is insubstantial as something substantial!’ In the same way ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not apprehend anything that is apprehensible apart from the expanse of {relative} reality, and they do not perceive anything at all apart from the expanse of {relative} reality {for in ultimate reality there is no other ‘thing’ to perceive}. Yet, although they {ultimately} apprehend no sentient beings or anything that is designated as a sentient being, owing to their skill in means, they themselves dispense generosity and they encourage others to acquire generosity. Similarly, they encourage others to cultivate ethical discipline, tolerance, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom ... and they rejoice in and speak in praise of others who cultivate generosity {and so forth} ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, owing to their skill in means, will not be discouraged from benefiting themselves and ... others.

30.E “Venerable Lord! If all phenomena are empty of inherent existence, and if in the emptiness of inherent existence no sentient beings or anything at all is apprehensible {as ultimately real}, then how do great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, strive toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, that is right! It is just as you have said. All things are empty of inherent existence ... If all things were not empty of inherent existence, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, would not demonstrate to sentient beings that all things are empty of inherent existence ... If, Subhūti, you ask what are all the phenomena with respect to which the emptiness of inherent existence is applicable, they are as follows: Physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are empty of inherent existence. Therefore, great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the emptiness of inherent existence, correctly perceive that these five psycho-physical aggregates are empty of inherent existence. Knowing this, they demonstrate the sacred doctrine accordingly to sentient beings. Similarly, knowing that ...

{all other causal and fruitional attributes}, up to and including the noble eightfold path and the three gateways to liberation ... the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative absorption, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, the thirty-two major marks of a superior man, and the eighty minor marks ... {as well as the attainments of the path of} the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, and the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, in which all involuntary reincarnation through propensities and all afflicted mental states have been abandoned, are empty of inherent existence, they demonstrate the sacred doctrine accordingly to sentient beings.”

30.F If the emptiness of internal phenomena {and all other aspects of emptiness} were an entity, great bodhisattva beings would not demonstrate to sentient beings [the sacred] doctrine that all things are empty of inherent existence, and the emptiness of inherent existence would indeed disintegrate ... However, the emptiness of inherent existence will neither disintegrate, nor will it endure, and nor will it go away ... because it does not abide in any location, it does not abide in any direction, it does not arise from anywhere, and it does not go anywhere. It is the abiding nature of all things. In it there is nothing at all that accrues or disintegrates, nothing that is enhanced or diminished, nothing that arises or ceases, and nothing that is afflicted or purified. It is the natural expression of all things. Abiding in that natural expression, great bodhisattva beings strive toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and yet they do not see anything at all {as ultimately real} in which they would engage. Rather they see that all things are not to be engaged in and are {from the perspective of ultimate reality} non-abiding. This is the abiding nature of all things. Therefore, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom see that all things are empty of inherent existence, and they do not turn back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because, in the emptiness of inherent existence, {created phenomena of} self, sentient beings, living creatures, lives, individuals, humankind, human beings, actors, agents, experiencers, experiencing subjects, knowers, and viewers are all non-apprehensible. Similarly, physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... {and} [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks, are non-apprehensible. Abiding in the emptiness of inherent existence, with regard to which this same refrain extensively applies, they do not {in ultimate reality} see anything at all that is obscured, and they see that all things {in relative reality} are without obscuration.

30.G “If, for example, a fully ordained monk, nun, layman, or laywoman emanated by the tathāgatas were to teach the sacred doctrine continuously for an eon or for more than an eon to [phantom] persons also emanated by the tathāgatas, do you think, Subhūti, that those [phantom] persons emanated by the tathāgatas would have the good fortune to attain the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, or arhatship?” “No, Venerable Lord! If one were to ask why, it is because they are not entities.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so. It is so! How could non-entities attain these fruits? Subhūti, since all things are non-entities, which discerning persons would be fixated on the fruit of entering the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, or unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? On the contrary, they would propel living creatures who have fallen into erroneous views toward non-erroneous views and establish them therein. Since they are without false imagina-

tions, they are without erroneous views. Where there are no erroneous views, there is {ultimately} no self, and ... no sentient beings, and [no other posited subject], up to and including knowers and viewers, and there are no physical forms, no feelings, no perceptions, no formative predispositions, and no consciousness. Where there are no physical forms, no feelings, no perceptions, no formative predispositions, and no consciousness, there is no self, and so on; there are also no [causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks. This is the emptiness of inherent existence. Abiding therein, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom liberate sentient beings from erroneous views ... who perceive that non-sentient beings are sentient, and ... who perceive that they are permanent ... imbued with happiness ... are a self ... are attractive, and ... who perceive that there are physical forms ... up to and including the notion that there is consciousness. This refrain should also be applied ... to all phenomena, up to and including things that are contaminated and ... uncontaminated. As for the things which are uncontaminated, comprising the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, and ... [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, they too are not existent, in the manner of an unconditioned phenomenon [viewed] from the standpoint of ultimate reality, for these phenomena are {ultimately} uncreated. They are non-entities. They are the emptiness of inherent existence. This is the enlightenment of the lord buddhas, wherein there is no self, no sentient beings, and [no other posited subjects], up to and including knowers and viewers. There are no physical forms ... {up to and including} no consciousness, and ... no [causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighty minor marks.”

30.H Great bodhisattva beings do not deliberately follow the path that leads to perfect enlightenment for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, except for the sake of the emptiness of inherent existence. This emptiness of inherent existence is the emptiness of inherent existence with respect to the limits of past time, the limits of future time, and the limits of [the present time] in between. Great bodhisattva beings, abiding in this emptiness of inherent existence, practice the understanding of the aspects of the path in order to liberate from all notions those sentient beings who have the notion that they are sentient beings. When they practice the understanding of the aspects of the path, they practice the path of the śrāvakas, the path of the pratyekabuddhas, the path of genuinely perfect enlightenment, and all [other] paths. When they have perfected those paths, brought sentient beings to maturity, refined the buddhafi elds, and are blessed with the formative predispositions conducive to longevity, they will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, the way of the buddhas will not be interrupted. If you ask what is the way of the buddhas, it is this very emptiness of inherent existence. The way of the sacred teachings of the lord buddhas who appeared in the past was indeed this emptiness of inherent existence, and it will also be the way of the sacred teachings of the lord buddhas who will appear in the future. The way of the sacred teachings of the lord buddhas who reside ... in the innumerable world systems ... at the present time is also this same emptiness of inherent existence. Apart from the emptiness of inherent existence, there are no lord buddhas who will appear in the world. So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings should practice the six transcendent perfections, which are the emptiness of inherent existence. This is the conduct conducive to enlightenment. Great bodhisattva beings who practice it will not regress from omniscience.

30.1 “O Venerable Lord! It is wonderful that great bodhisattva beings have practiced the emptiness of inherent existence with respect to all things, and yet do not disrupt the emptiness of inherent existence by [holding] that physical forms are one thing, feelings are another {and so forth}.” The Blessed One then replied ... “Subhūti, if physical forms were one thing and the emptiness of inherent existence another ... and if [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including enlightenment, were distinct things, and the emptiness of inherent existence something else, then great bodhisattva beings would indeed not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in omniscience ... It is because the emptiness of inherent existence is physical forms {and so forth} ... up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom know all things to be empty of inherent existence, and then attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, in this emptiness of inherent existence there is nothing at all that disintegrates, endures, or departs. Those ordinary people with diverse notions think that physical forms {and so forth} ... {and} [all the attributes and attainments], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, are distinct things and the emptiness of inherent existence another. By thinking accordingly, they become fixated on physical forms ... {and on} feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and so they indulge in notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ and also become fixated upon them. Having become fixated, they will [at the time of their rebirth] generate physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness. They will not be liberated from rebirth, aging {and so forth} ... {and thus} be released from the cycle of cyclic existence ... So it is that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not hold that {non-existent} physical forms ... up to and including {non-existent unsurpassed, genuinely perfect} enlightenment, are either empty or not empty, and they neither grasp nor disrupt them ... claiming that, ‘Emptiness is physical forms ... up to and including {emptiness is} unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’ For example ... just as space does not disrupt space, the internal space element does not at all disrupt the external space element, and the external space element does not at all disrupt the internal space element, in the same way ... physical forms ... {and all the other aggregates, attributes and attainments}, up to and including {unsurpassed, genuinely perfect} enlightenment, do not disrupt emptiness, nor does emptiness disrupt {all the other aggregates, attributes and attainments}, up to and including {unsurpassed, genuinely perfect} enlightenment ... {This is} because all things are without an essential nature concerning which one might be misled into thinking, ‘This is empty. This is not empty!’”

COMMENTARY

The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom sūtras are described by the bodhisattva Maitreya in the *Ornament of Clear Realization* as the ‘mother’ of all buddhas ~ and indeed they are an inseparable expression of the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas. For it is through their wisdom that the *Mother of all Wisdom* gives birth to the ‘immaculate conception’ of the perfected Son—created by the great illusionist Vajradhara, who is the ‘diamond-holder’ of God's diamond-being—known as Vajrasattva, the manifest Son. **This expression, this exhibit, this manifestation of God's being, is the conjuring of every conjured individuated being,** set sail from the shores of ‘un-enlightenment’ to attain unsurpassed genuinely perfect enlightenment, through the maturation of understanding of the non-dual wisdom that God's being is unequivocally and indivisibly ‘one’. Thus has the great illusionist, Vajradhara, empowered a visible form of His diamond-being, who has then in the form of Vajrasattva, empowered a diversity of other forms in the world of creation. It is through these forms He exhibits Himself, unbeknown to the mind of the ordinary man, from the lowest of lows to the highest of highs, on a course from the shores of un-enlightenment through the stages

of enlightenment to the thirty-two major marks of a superior man. Thus He creates as the Father Creator of all, every aspect of Himself as the manifest Son, to accept through the understanding of self-origination, that He is nothing other than the undivided 'One'. Thus does the Buddha reveal in the chapter (above): *"If an illusionist ... were to empower some visible form and then exhibit it in a diversity of other forms—in the form of a man, the form of a woman ... and exhibit himself dispensing generosity, or ... cultivating wisdom; and even if through these {illusory} images, he were to exhibit himself reborn among the royal class ... or ... as a great bodhisattva being ... or ... exhibit himself attaining the ten powers of the tathāgatas ... or exhibit himself with his body excellently adorned with the thirty-two major marks of a superior man ... in all such cases, those men, women, boys, and girls, who have the disposition of ordinary people, would think, 'O! How well trained is this man who exhibits himself [in various forms], up to and including the form of the tathāgata, delighting these folk with a diversity of forms that are attractive to behold and pleasant. **What beauty he creates!**' Then, there might be some ... with the disposition of the wise, who were knowledgeable and endowed with ideation and scrutiny, who would think, 'Since this illusory act is non-apprehensible, it is a wonderful and marvelous phenomenon that this man delights these folk with phenomena which are non-existent, deluding the eye and the mental faculty, and that these sentient beings with a childish disposition perceive that which does not exist as a sentient being, and can perceive that which is insubstantial as something substantial!'"* Thus does the great illusionist, Vajradhara, create all these phenomena which are non-existent, deluding the eye and the mental faculty, for the singular purpose of attaining unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, as the 'illusionary' Father Creator of all.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE: IRREVERSIBILITY

31.1 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, "Venerable Lord! Are great bodhisattva beings, who properly realize the defining characteristics of phenomena in this way, irreversible?" "Yes, they are, Subhūti!"

31.2 "Venerable Lord! What are the attributes of the irreversible great bodhisattva beings? What are their indications? What are their signs? How should we properly understand the irreversible great bodhisattva beings?" The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti, "That which has been explained as the level of ordinary people, the level of the śrāvakas, the level of the pratyekabuddhas, the level of the bodhisattvas, and the level of the tathāgatas—all these levels are [identical with] the real nature of phenomena, which is unchanging, non-conceptual, non-dual, and indivisible. The real nature of those great bodhisattva beings engages with this real nature of phenomena, but their real nature does not conceive of the real nature of phenomena. They engage with the real nature of phenomena absolutely non-conceptually, and when they have done so, and understood the real nature of those [phenomena], they do not then reject it, doubting that this is not the real nature of phenomena. Rather, they think, 'This real nature is absolutely unique. It is the expanse of reality, and the maturity of reality!' They do not prattle incoherently. They speak words that are entirely meaningful, without speaking meaninglessly. They do not look upon what others have and have not done. They endeavour to speak well. Subhūti, one should know that great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are irreversible."

31.3 "Venerable Lord! Through which attributes, indications, and signs are great bodhisattva beings revealed to be irreversible?" The Blessed One replied, "All phenomena are without attributes, without indications, and without signs!"

31.4 “If all phenomena are without attributes, without indications, and without signs, then from what phenomena have great bodhisattva beings turned away when they are revealed to be irreversible?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings have turned away from physical forms, and similarly, when they have turned away from feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, those great bodhisattva beings are revealed to be irreversible. Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings have turned away from the level of ordinary people, have turned away from the level of the śrāvakas, and have turned away from the level of the pratyekabuddhas, they are revealed to be irreversible. Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings have not turned away from the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly, when they have not turned away from the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom; when they have not turned away from the emptiness of internal phenomena, and not turned away from the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities; and in the same vein, when they have not turned away from [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, at that time, those great bodhisattva beings are revealed to be irreversible.

31.5 “Moreover, Subhūti, in the presence of virtuous ascetics and brāhmins who are non-Buddhists, the irreversible great bodhisattva beings do not say that those virtuous ascetics and brāhmins know what should be known, see what should be seen, or discern the correct view. On the contrary, that view would be impossible for them! Therefore, the bodhisattvas do not cause them to doubt the discipline of the sacred doctrine which has been excellently taught. Nor do they maintain the supremacy of their ethical discipline and ascetic disciplines. They do not fall into wrong views. They do not hold them to be pure owing to their sacred threads and auspicious ceremonies. They do not pay homage to strange gods. They do not offer them garlands, perfume, unguents, butter lamps, incense, powders, clothing, parasols, victory banners, and ribbons, nor do they consider doing so.

31.6 “Subhūti, the irreversible great bodhisattva beings who possess these attributes, indications, and signs will not be reborn among lower social classes or among inferior classes. That is to say, they will not be reborn among the outcastes, among the scavengers or garbage collectors, among the reed flute-makers, or among other inferior classes, and so on, up to and including in the eight unfavorable conditions [for practicing the sacred doctrine]. Nor will they assume the physical form of a woman [necessarily enduring great hardships]. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.7 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible adopt and maintain the ways of the ten virtuous actions. They themselves will have renounced the killing of living creatures, and they also encourage others to successfully abstain from killing living creatures. They praise others who have abstained from killing living creatures. In the same vein, they themselves will have renounced [all the other non-virtuous actions], up to and including the holding of wrong views, and they encourage others to successfully abstain from wrong views, and so forth. They also praise others who would successfully abstain from wrong views. They praise and rejoice in others who have abstained from wrong views. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.8 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not habitually engage in the ways of

the ten non-virtuous actions, even in their dreams, let alone when they are awake. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.9 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible always maintain the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, they always maintain the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom. It is for the sake of sentient beings that they cultivate this generosity, [and so forth], but they cultivate it without apprehending anything. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.10 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible dispense the gift of the sacred doctrine, comprising the [various] scriptural categories, they think, ‘May the wishes of all sentient beings be fulfilled by means of this gift of the sacred doctrine!’ Making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate that gift of the sacred doctrine toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, but they make this dedication without apprehending anything. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.11 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible have no doubt, indecision, or hesitation with regard to profound phenomena and attributes.”

31.12 “Venerable Lord! Why do great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible have no doubt, indecision, or hesitation with regard to profound phenomena and attributes?”

31.13 The Blessed One replied, “Great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not consider anything at all with respect to which they might have doubt, indecision, or hesitation. That is to say, they do not consider physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, or consciousness, and in the same vein, they do not consider [the attributes and attainments], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.14 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible undertake gentle physical actions, gentle verbal actions, and gentle mental actions; they are also without thoughts of hostility toward all sentient beings. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.15 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible always undertake physical actions imbued with loving kindness, and similarly, they undertake verbal actions imbued with loving kindness, and mental actions imbued with loving kindness. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.16 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not instinctively maintain the five obscurations. If you ask what these five are, they do not instinctively maintain longing for sensual pleasure, harmful inte-

ntion, dullness and sleepiness, agitation and regret, and hesitation. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.17 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible are in every respect free from all latent impulses. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.18 “Moreover, Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible move about, they do so in accordance with the applications of mindfulness. They move about mindfully. They exclusively walk, stand, sit, and lie down mindfully. They do not put their feet on the ground impulsively and they do not raise their feet above the ground impulsively. Rather, they put their feet on the ground entirely mindfully and they raise their feet above the ground entirely mindfully. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.19 “Moreover, Subhūti, the condition of the robes belonging to great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible is never unkempt but always clean and free from bad odors. They themselves have few ailments, and they are free from dust and stains. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.20 “Moreover, Subhūti, the bodies of great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible are without the eighty thousand kinds of animalcules which are present within the human body, and consume it. If you ask why, Subhūti, their roots of virtue surpass all worlds, and are supreme in all the worlds. For this reason, the bodies of those bodhisattvas are without those kinds of animalcules.

31.21 “Subhūti, the more those roots of virtue of great bodhisattva beings increase, the more will those great bodhisattva beings assume physical, verbal, and mental purity. They can withstand cold, heat, hunger, thirst, sun, wind, and biting insects. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.”

31.22 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What is the physical purity of those great bodhisattva beings? What is their verbal purity? What is their mental purity?”

31.23 The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, the more those roots of virtue of great bodhisattva beings increase, the more will the physical deformity and crookedness, the verbal deformity and crookedness, and the mental deformity and crookedness of these great bodhisattva beings be purified in accordance with those roots of virtue. Insofar as they physically practice the three modes of excellent conduct, verbally practice the four modes of excellent conduct, and mentally practice the three modes of excellent conduct, the bodies of those great bodhisattva beings will be purified, their speech will be purified, and their minds will be purified. Those who possess physical purity, verbal purity, and mental purity transcend the level of the śrāvakas and also the level of the pratyekabuddhas. They indeed enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas, but they do not yet actualize the finality of ex-

istence. Subhūti, you should know this indeed to be the physical purity, the verbal purity, and the mental purity of those bodhisattvas. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.24 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible are not attracted to profit, veneration, and eulogistic verses. They are not attracted to religious robes, alms, bedding, and seats, but they assume and maintain the twelve ascetic virtues. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.25 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible never cultivate thoughts of miserliness, and they never cultivate thoughts of degenerate morality, thoughts of indolence, thoughts of distraction, or thoughts of delusion. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are steadfast. They respectfully listen to the sacred doctrine from others and whatever they hear, they integrate all of it with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They also know, entirely without effort and dependent on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, those activities which are mundane, and these too they integrate with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They do not consider anything at all that is not integrated within the expanse of reality, but they do consider that all these [phenomena] are integrated with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.26 “Subhūti, if the evil Māra were to conjure up the eight great hells with their sentient denizens in the presence of those great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible, and if he were also to reveal in each of these hells with their sentient denizens many thousands of bodhisattvas and many hundreds of thousands of bodhisattvas, and if he were to conjure up and reveal them being burned, cooked, and boiled by the fires of hell, experiencing unbearable, strong, and excruciating sufferings, and even if he were then to say to those bodhisattvas, ‘These great bodhisattva beings have been exclusively foreordained by the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas to be irreversible in their attainment of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, but they have all been reborn among these denizens of the hells. Alas! You, too, who have been foreordained by the tathāgatas to be irreversible in your attainment of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment will end up as denizens of the hells. Alas! Right now you should reject this cultivation of the mind that is set on enlightenment and you will consequently be released from these sentient hells, and subsequently you will not be reborn here, but on passing away, you will proceed to the higher realms,’ Subhūti, there is no possibility and no chance for the minds of those great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible to be alienated [in the hells]. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because they well realize the defining characteristic of the sacred doctrine to be that the fruit of non-virtuous actions is unpleasant, and because the tathāgatas, endowed with great compassionate spirituality, the treasure of the sacred doctrine, do not speak falsely inasmuch as they profess to benefit all living beings. Subhūti! There is no possibility and no chance for that to happen. For this reason, it is impossible for those great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible to be reborn among the denizens of the hells, or among the animals, or among anguished spirits. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.27 “Moreover, Subhūti, the evil Māra, approaching in the guise of a virtuous ascetic, might say, ‘All that you have

heard, namely, that you should perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity, that you should perfect the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and that you should consequently attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment—all of that you have misheard. You should confess once again all these errors! You should confess once again all your rejoicing in the roots of virtue of the past, future, and present tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, and their śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, from the time when they first began to set their mind on enlightenment until they became established in the sacred doctrine! You should reject them once again! You and they are mistaken! Alas! You should once again confess and reject those roots of virtue! If you act according to my words, you will swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. That which you have heard is not the word of the Buddha—it is poetic fabrication! But since that which I am teaching you is genuine, it is the word of the Buddha.’ If, on that occasion, these bodhisattvas are disturbed and if they are doubtful and hesitant, you should know that these bodhisattvas will not have been foreordained by the tathāgatas to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They would not abide on the irreversible levels.

31.28 “Subhūti, if, on the other hand, when the evil Māra opposes their aspiration, these great bodhisattva beings are not disturbed, are neither doubtful nor hesitant, have no confidence in his words, have no confidence in others, and do not depend on others for the transcendent perfection of generosity, or for the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly for [the attributes and attainments], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, then, Subhūti, you should know that these great bodhisattva beings will not turn back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

31.29 “Subhūti, just as an arhat endowed with the cessation of contaminants never has confidence in anyone else because he directly perceives phenomena, and is not captivated even by the evil Māra, let alone by others, in the same way, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not have confidence in anyone else, and they cannot be crushed by any of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, or even by the evil Māra. They will not turn back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They do not have confidence in anyone. Since they do not progress through faith, even in the tathāgatas, how could they have confidence in other virtuous ascetics, brāhmins, sectarian vagabonds, wandering mendicants, or the evil Māra! That would be impossible! If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because these great bodhisattva beings do not consider any physical forms in which they should have confidence. Similarly, they do not consider any feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, or consciousness in which they should have confidence. Similarly, they do not consider any real nature of physical forms, real nature of feelings, real nature of perceptions, real nature of formative predispositions, or real nature of consciousness in which they should have confidence. In the same vein, they do not consider any real nature of [the attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience, in which they should have confidence. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.30 “Moreover, Subhūti, the evil Māra, approaching in the guise of a fully ordained monk, might say to these bodhisattvas, ‘This is the conduct associated with cyclic existence, but not the conduct of a bodhisattva! Alas! Right here in my presence you should put an end to suffering!’ and he would reveal to these bodhisattvas a counterfeit path to perfect enlightenment—a counterfeit path that is indeed subsumed in the mundane conduct associated with cyclic

existence. Or else he would reveal the contemplation of a skeleton, or the contemplations of a blue-black corpse, a putrefied corpse, a bloated corpse, a bloody corpse, or a devoured corpse, or else he would reveal loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, or equanimity, or else he would reveal the first meditative concentration, or the other meditative concentrations, up to and including the fourth meditative concentration, or else he would reveal the four formless absorptions, saying to these great bodhisattva beings, ‘Senior One! Through this path and through this earnest application, you will attain the fruit of one who has entered the stream, and you will attain [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship and individual enlightenment. Alas! Right here in my presence you should put an end to suffering! Subsequently you will not experience those sufferings associated with conduct that pertains to cyclic existence! Alternatively, if you are disillusioned with this physical incarnation, or if you are thinking not to hold on to it, you should purify the sense fields right here and now!’

31.31 “Subhūti, if even when he speaks such words, the bodhisattvas are undisturbed and undistracted, thinking in addition, ‘This monk who reveals to me a counterfeit path which will not actualize the fruit of entering the stream, and will not actualize [the other fruits], up to and including the fruit of arhatship, and which will not even actualize the fruit of individual enlightenment, is useful to me in many ways!’ and if they further rejoice, thinking, ‘This monk who expounds attachment to me is useful to me in many ways! Knowing the circumstances of this attachment, I should train in all the three vehicles!’, then the evil Māra, knowing that they are rejoicing, might say, ‘O child of enlightened heritage! You wish to see great bodhisattva beings who have honored the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, with robes, food, lodging, mats, medications, and [other] resources; as well as those who have cultivated the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly cultivated the [other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, in the presence of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges; and those who have venerated the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, asking them how, for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, great bodhisattva beings should abide on the path of perfect enlightenment by practicing the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly by practicing the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, by practicing the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly by practicing the applications of mindfulness, the correct exertions, the supports for miraculous ability, the faculties, the powers, the branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, the three gateways to liberation, and in the same vein, [the fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. But even those great bodhisattva beings who, abiding in accordance with the exegeses imparted by the buddhas, have practiced in that manner and engaged in union with them, have not attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Since those who have been taught in this way, those who have been instructed in this way, and those who have been trained in this way have not attained omniscience, you should consider how you could possibly attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’

31.32 “If, when the evil Māra says such words, the minds of those great bodhisattva beings are not alienated and frightened, and if in addition they rejoice, thinking, ‘This monk who expounds to me the attachment through which even the fruit of entering the stream will not be actualized, and through which [the other fruits], up to and including individual enlightenment, will not be actualized, is useful to me in many ways!’” then the evil Māra, knowing that

the minds of those bodhisattvas are not discouraged, might instantaneously conjure up, in that very place, a multitude of monks, and say, 'These monks are exclusively arhats, free from afflicted mental states, who have attained the cessation of contaminants. They previously embarked on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, but instead they remained as śrāvakas. Therefore, you should consider! How could you possibly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?'

31.33 "Even when confronted with such revelations, great bodhisattva beings would think, 'Alas! This is the evil Māra revealing a counterfeit path! This is a phantom!' and they would think, 'Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not turn back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and they do not regress to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas,' and if, in addition, they think, 'There is no possibility and no chance that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, who practice the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, who practice the applications of mindfulness, and who practice [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas will fail to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. That would be impossible!' then, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess all such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.34 "Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible would think, 'Certain great bodhisattva beings who do not lack the six transcendent perfections taught by the tathāgatas, who also encourage sentient beings to assume the six transcendent perfections, securing and establishing them therein, and whose minds are endowed with omniscience, are revealed to be irreversible.'

31.35 "Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible would think, 'Those bodhisattvas who know and recognize the deeds of Māra will not degenerate from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.' If you ask what constitute the deeds of Māra, they entail excessive attachment and longing for the objects of the five senses, along with apathy regarding the transcendent perfections. Subhūti, they would think, 'Great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.'"

31.36 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, "Venerable Lord! Turning away from what are great bodhisattva beings reckoned to be irreversible?"

31.37 The Blessed One replied, "Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings turn away from the notion of physical forms, they are reckoned to be irreversible. Similarly, great bodhisattva beings who turn away from the notions of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness are reckoned to be irreversible. In the same vein, great bodhisattva beings who turn away from the notion of the sense fields; the notions of desire, hatred, and delusion; the notion of the sixty-two aspects of false view; the notion of the transcendent perfection of generosity; the notions of the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom; the notion of the emptiness of internal phenomena; the notions of the other aspects of emptiness, up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities; the notion of the applications of mindfulness; and similarly, the notions of [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas,

the notion of the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and the notion of the [attainments], up to and including omniscience, are all reckoned to be irreversible. If you ask why, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible have entered upon the maturity of the bodhisattvas with respect to all phenomena, which are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics. They apprehend nothing at all, even to the extent of an indivisible atomic particle, and because they do not apprehend anything at all, they do not condition anything at all. Because they do not condition anything at all, they do not produce anything at all. Therefore, great bodhisattva beings, who have accepted that phenomena are non-arising, are revealed to be irreversible.

31.38 “Moreover, Subhūti, the evil Māra might approach great bodhisattva beings and dissuade them, saying, ‘This omniscience is equal to space, of the essential nature of non-entity, and empty of intrinsic defining characteristics. Phenomena are also equal to space, of the essential nature of non-entity, and empty of intrinsic defining characteristics. With regard to things that are equal to space, whose essential nature is non-entity and empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, there is nothing apprehensible which would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, by which manifestly perfect buddhahood would be attained, and in which manifestly perfect buddhahood would be attained. Since all these phenomena are equal to space, of the essential nature of non-entity, and empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, you will be afflicted and futile in your efforts to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, for such teaching is revealed to be the work of Māra. This is not the teaching of the genuinely perfect buddhas! Child of enlightened heritage, you should reject those attentions! Then you will not endure hardships for long, you will not suffer, and you will not be distressed!’

31.39 “On hearing those words, sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage should reflect, ‘Those [words] which would separate me from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are the work of Māra. Although all things are indeed equal to space, of the essential nature of non-entity, and empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, they are not known, seen, or comprehended as such by sentient beings. Therefore I should don the armor that is equal to space, whose essential nature is non-entity and which is empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, to attain omniscience—manifestly perfect buddhahood—and reveal to sentient beings the sacred doctrine of emancipation from cyclic existence. I should establish them in the fruit of entering the stream, in the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, in the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, and in arhatship. I should establish them in individual enlightenment. I should establish them in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.’ From the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, great bodhisattva beings should be steadfast when listening to these sacred doctrines. Their minds should not be distracted. Their minds should not be captivated. When those whose minds are steadfast, undistracted, and not captivated practice the six transcendent perfections, they will enter upon the maturity of the bodhisattvas.”

31.40 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Can reversible great bodhisattva beings be called irreversible, and can irreversible bodhisattvas be called reversible?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, reversible bodhisattvas may be called irreversible, and irreversible bodhisattvas may be called reversible.”

31.41 Subhūti then made the following request: “Venerable Lord! How may reversible bodhisattvas be called irrev-

ersible, and how may irreversible bodhisattvas be called reversible?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who have turned back from the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas are irreversible bodhisattvas. These, Subhūti, may be called irreversible. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who have not turned back from the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas are reversible. These, Subhūti, may be called reversible. Subhūti, you should know this to be the defining characteristic of the irreversible great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs. Great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs cannot be turned back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment by the evil Māra.

31.42 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible become absorbed at will in the first meditative concentration, and similarly they become absorbed at will in the second, third, and fourth meditative concentrations. In the same vein, they become absorbed at will in [the formless absorptions], up to and including the absorption in the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Similarly, they become absorbed in the four applications of mindfulness, and they become absorbed in [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path. Similarly, they become absorbed in emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness. They actualize the five extrasensory powers. But while they may become absorbed at will in the four meditative concentrations, they will not be reborn by the power of those meditative concentrations. Similarly, while they may become absorbed in the four immeasurable aspirations and the four formless absorptions, they will not be reborn through their power. Similarly, while they cultivate the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path, they will not regress to the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas. Similarly, they do not actualize and hold on to the fruits of cessation, that is to say, the [formless] absorptions, up to and including absorption in the cessation of perceptions and feelings. At will they may assume the incarnations that they wish, and having assumed these incarnations they act for the benefit of sentient beings. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.43 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not attach importance to physical forms. They do not attach importance to signs. They do not attach importance to their assemblies. They do not attach importance to generosity. They do not attach importance to ethical discipline. They do not attach importance to tolerance. They do not attach importance to perseverance. They do not attach importance to meditative concentration. They do not attach importance to wisdom. They do not attach importance to the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, or the formless absorptions. They do not attach importance to the extrasensory powers. They do not attach importance to the applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein, they do not attach importance to [all the other causal and fruitional attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience. They do not attach importance to the buddhafi elds that are to be refined. They do not attach importance to the sentient beings who are to be brought to maturity. They do not attach importance to beholding the buddhas, and they do not attach importance to the roots of virtue. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those great bodhisattva beings consider that all phenomena are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics and equal to space, and they do not consider anything through which they should attach importance, or with respect to which they should attach importance. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those great bodhisattva beings consider that all phenomena are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics and that they are equal to space.

31.44 “Subhūti, whether those great bodhisattva beings are going out, returning, standing, sitting, or lying down, they go and come, stand up, sit, and lie down in accordance with the four [acceptable] norms of behavior because they are attentive to omniscience. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.45 “Moreover, Subhūti, even if great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible dwell as householders, through skill in means they dispense their generosity toward sentient beings, having acquired the five desirable attributes of the senses for the sake of sentient beings. That is to say, they dispense food [and drink] to those who need food and drink, and so on. They dispense whatever things are useful to humankind. They practice the transcendent perfection of generosity and they also encourage others to assume the transcendent perfection of generosity. They also praise and rejoice in their transcendent perfection of generosity. The same also goes for the [other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom.

31.46 “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible dwell as householders, they fill Jambudvīpa with diverse precious things, emanated through the power of their miraculous abilities, and offer gifts to the lord buddhas; in the same vein, they fill the world systems of the great trichiliocosm, and so forth, with diverse precious things and offer gifts to the lord buddhas. Yet they do not indulge in those sensual pleasures and they always practice chastity. They are clean and without bad odor. They never despise anyone else or have contempt, through which they would come to dislike others. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.47 “Moreover, Subhūti, thinking that these great bodhisattva beings will soon attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, the yakṣa Vajrapāṇi will always follow behind irreversible great bodhisattva beings without interruption, in order to guard and protect them, just as he follows behind me, the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect Buddha. In the same vein, up to five hundred [attendants] of the Vajra family will always follow behind, without interruption, in order to guard and protect them. In this respect they can never be harmed by humans and non-humans. In conformity with the sacred doctrine they can never be rivalled by any god, demon, Brahmā, or anyone else in the world. Until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, their minds will not be distracted from attention to enlightenment. Their sense faculties will never be deficient. That is to say, [their sense faculties], from the sense organ of the eyes to the sense organ of the body, will never be deficient. They will never lack the five supramundane faculties. If you ask what these five are, they comprise the faculty of faith, the faculty of perseverance, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of meditative stability, and the faculty of wisdom. They will be saintly beings.”

31.48 “Venerable Lord! In what way are great bodhisattva beings saintly beings?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, the minds of those great bodhisattva beings will never be distracted from perfect enlightenment by the five false imaginations, and the five obscurations. Therefore, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings are saintly beings. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.49 “Moreover, Subhūti, the irreversible great bodhisattva beings who always have their minds set on enlighten-

ment will in no way whatsoever concoct secret spells, medications, and compounded medications which attract women, nor will they engage in anything with a nature that is harmful to others. Even for the sake of their lives, they will not engage in any skillful means that attract women. They will not attract men, women, boys, or girls with miraculous fortune telling, claiming, ‘You will have a son!’ ‘You will have a daughter!’ ‘Your family line will be broken!’ ‘You will have a long life!’ ‘You will have a short life!’ and they will not bring ruin upon anyone at all. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because great bodhisattva beings do not consider any sign of sentience in things that are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, let alone signs of wrong livelihood! It is impossible for them to engage in negative actions. Therefore, their livelihood is entirely pure. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.50 “Moreover, Subhūti, I shall [now] disclose the attributes, indications, and signs which, when they are possessed, reveal great bodhisattva beings to be irreversible. So listen well and pay attention to them! I will explain them!”

31.51 “Please do so, Venerable [Lord]!” said Senior Subhūti, and he listened to the Blessed One. The Blessed One then spoke as follows: “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom do not lack the modes of attention to perfect enlightenment, for which reason they do not preoccupy themselves with the psycho-physical aggregates, nor do they preoccupy themselves with the sensory elements and the sense fields. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those great bodhisattva beings have excellently cultivated the emptiness of the psycho-physical aggregates, the sensory elements and the sense fields, and they have attended excellently.

31.52 “They do not preoccupy themselves with the talk of kings. If you ask why, it is because, excellently abiding in emptiness, they do not consider anything at all as inferior or superior. They do not preoccupy themselves with the talk of robbers. If you ask why, it is because, with respect to all things which are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, they do not consider anything at all that should be acquired or stolen. They do not preoccupy themselves with the talk of aggressive conflict. If you ask why, it is because, excellently abiding in the emptiness of inherent existence, they do not consider anything at all in terms of minorities and majorities. They do not preoccupy themselves with the talk of the buddhas. If you ask why, it is because, excellently abiding in the emptiness of all things, they do not consider anything at all that is to be accumulated. They do not preoccupy themselves with the talk of towns, cities, villages, markets, and palace circles. If you ask why, it is because, excellently abiding in the emptiness of space, they do not consider anything at all that is to be attracted or not attracted. They do not preoccupy themselves with talk about animals. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because, excellently abiding in the finality of existence, they do not consider anything at all that is to be attracted or not attracted, and they do not consider anything at all that is to be increased or diminished.

31.53 “They do not preoccupy themselves with talk about the self, sentient beings, living creatures, lives, [and the other superimposed notions of a subject], up to and including knowers and viewers. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider any things that are without lives and without sentience. They do not preoccupy themselves with talk of diverse matters. If you ask why, it is because, excellently abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they never lack attentiveness associated with omniscience.

31.54 “Practicing the transcendent perfection of generosity, they never preoccupy themselves with miserliness. Similarly, practicing the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they do not preoccupy themselves with degenerate morality. Practicing the transcendent perfection of tolerance, they do not preoccupy themselves with agitation or anger. Practicing the transcendent perfection of perseverance, they do not preoccupy themselves with indolence. Practicing the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, they do not preoccupy themselves with distractions. Practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not preoccupy themselves with stupidity. Conducting themselves in the emptiness of all things, they wish for the sacred doctrine, and also act for the benefit of sentient beings. Conducting themselves in the expanse of reality, they do not praise the diversity of phenomena.

31.55 “Those who want to have the lord buddhas and great bodhisattva beings as a spiritual mentor listen to the sacred doctrine, and then devote themselves to teaching that sacred doctrine to those sentient beings who follow the vehicles of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas. Having devoted themselves to teaching that sacred doctrine, they encourage those sentient beings to acquire unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and establish them therein. In order to behold, make offerings to, and venerate the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, they are consequently reborn in those world systems where they dwell and are present, and they see those tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas. That is to say, they abide day and night, attentive to perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because after the irreversible great bodhisattva beings have generated the attentions associated with the world system of desire, abiding in the ways of the ten virtuous actions, they are generally reborn through the power of their aspirations in those buddhafiels where the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas have manifested and are visible. Similarly, after they have cultivated the first meditative concentration, and after they have cultivated the other meditative concentrations, up to and including the fourth meditative concentration, they are reborn through the power of their aspirations in those buddhafiels. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.56 “Moreover, Subhūti, the irreversible great bodhisattva beings who have practiced the transcendent perfection of wisdom and practiced the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and then practiced [the other transcendent perfections and the aspects of emptiness], up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities, and then practiced the applications of mindfulness, and in the same vein practiced [all the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, do not hesitate in any respect whatsoever, wondering whether they are irreversible or reversible. If you ask why, it is because they have no hesitation regarding their own level, and since they have no hesitation regarding their own level, they thoroughly comprehend all things. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider anything at all that is irreversible or not irreversible, even to the extent of the tiniest particle.

31.57 “Subhūti, just as a person who has entered the stream has no doubt and no hesitation regarding the fruit of those who have entered the stream, in the same way, Subhūti, the irreversible great bodhisattva beings also have no doubt and no hesitation regarding that irreversible level. Abiding on that irreversible level, they also refine the buddhafiels and they bring sentient beings to maturity. Knowing, too, the deeds of Māra that have arisen and occurred, they do not proceed under the influence of Māra’s deeds. Rather, having understood all the deeds of Māra, they overwhelm and disperse them.

31.58 “Subhūti, just as a man who has committed an inexpressible crime will never be separated from the thoughts associated with that inexpressible crime, even until death, and the thoughts of that inexpressible crime will pursue him so that he cannot banish the thoughts of that inexpressible crime by any means whatsoever, and his obsessive thoughts will pursue him even until death, in the same way, Subhūti, the irreversible thoughts of the irreversible great bodhisattva beings are indeed established on the irreversible level, and cannot waver. The world with its gods, humans, and antigods cannot turn them away from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because those irreversible great bodhisattva beings have transcended the world with its gods, humans, and antigods and entered into the maturity of the genuine nature. Abiding on their own level, they have reached genuine perfection through the extrasensory powers of the bodhisattvas, and so they refine the buddhafi elds and also bring sentient beings to maturity. They travel from buddhafi eld to buddhafi eld in order to behold, pay homage to, and indeed listen to the sacred doctrine from the lord buddhas. In those buddhafi elds they cultivate the roots of virtue in the presence of the lord buddhas and their monastic communities of śrāvakas, and they question, counter-question, and venerate those lord buddhas.

31.59 “Comprehending also those deeds of Māra that are revealed to be distinct from the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they can even meditate on the deeds of Māra which might have arisen and occurred as being the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and through skill in means they integrate them in the finality of existence, and they never have doubt, indecision, or hesitation regarding their own level. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because they have no doubt, indecision, or hesitation regarding the finality of existence, and they do not conceive of the finality of existence as singular or dual. Knowing this, even after they have passed away they will not generate thoughts on the levels of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because great bodhisattva beings, with regard to phenomena which are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, do not consider anything at all that is subject to arising, cessation, affliction, or purification.

31.60 “Subhūti, when those great bodhisattva beings have passed away, they will think, ‘I will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’ but they will not think, ‘I will not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’ If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is empty of intrinsic defining characteristics.

31.61 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who abide on their own level cannot be alienated. They cannot be overpowered by any sentient beings. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because the irreversible great bodhisattva beings who abide accordingly are endowed with pristine cognition that cannot be captivated. Subhūti, if the evil Māra were to approach the irreversible great bodhisattva beings in the guise of the buddhas, he might say, ‘O child of enlightened heritage! In this lifetime, you should attain arhatship, in which all afflicted mental states have ceased. You are not foreordained by the lord buddhas to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. You have not accepted that phenomena are non-arising, whereby the lord buddhas would foreordain that you will attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. You do not possess the attributes, the indications, and the signs endowed with which it is foreordained that unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment will be attained!’

31.62 “If, even on hearing these words, great bodhisattva beings are not discouraged, not intimidated, not aliena-

ted, and not terrified, then, Subhūti, these great bodhisattva beings should know that they have been foreordained by the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because they consider that they themselves possess the attributes endowed with which the lord buddhas foreordain that unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment will be attained.

31.63 “Subhūti, even if the evil Māra were to approach great bodhisattva beings in the guise of a buddha, saying, ‘You should become a śrāvaka or pratyekabuddha! What would you do with unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!’ and then encourage them through many such reasons to acquire the levels of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas, these great bodhisattva beings would think, ‘This one is not the tathāgata, nor is he a śrāvaka of the tathāgata! Alas! On the contrary, this is Māra, or a man emanated by the evil Māra, who has approached me, encouraging me to acquire the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas! The tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas do not encourage great bodhisattva beings to acquire the level of the śrāvakas, or the level of the pratyekabuddhas!’ If they were to think this, Subhūti, you should know that great bodhisattva beings endowed with such attributes, indications, and signs are irreversible.

31.64 “Subhūti, if Māra or a man conjured up by the evil Māra were to approach great bodhisattva beings while they are reading aloud and reciting the most extensive discourses taught by the tathāgatas, and say, ‘O child of enlightened heritage! Those sūtras that you are following are not the most extensive discourses taught by the tathāgatas, nor are they taught by the śrāvakas. Rather, they were taught by Māra and they were taught by other heretics! These are not the [real] most extensive discourses!’ these great bodhisattva beings would know, ‘Alas! This is Māra or a man conjured up by the evil Māra who would separate me from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and dissuade me from the path of enlightenment!’ In that case, Subhūti, these great bodhisattva beings should know that they have been foreordained by the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the past to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Those great bodhisattva beings should know that they abide on the irreversible level. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because they possess and manifest the attributes, indications, and signs of the irreversible great bodhisattva beings.

31.65 “Moreover, Subhūti, the irreversible great bodhisattva beings relinquish even their own lives for the sake of acquiring the sacred doctrine, but they do not relinquish the doctrine. If you ask why, it is because they think, ‘I will make offerings to the lord buddhas of the past, the future, and the present since they have acquired the sacred doctrine. I will also acquire their sacred doctrine.’ If you ask for the sake of which doctrine great bodhisattva beings relinquish even their lives—the doctrine that they will not relinquish—it is this: Subhūti, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas teach that all phenomena are empty. Some foolish persons may contradict this and counter-attack, saying, ‘This is not the sacred doctrine. This is not the Vinaya. This is not the teaching of the Teacher. This is not the path that progresses to perfect enlightenment!’ However, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings relinquish even their lives for the sake of this sacred doctrine, thinking, ‘I too will be reckoned among the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who will emerge in the future. I too will be foreordained to attain that. For the sake of this doctrine, I will relinquish even my life!’ Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, considering this objective, relinquish even their own lives for the sake of the sacred doctrine. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs should know that they are irreversible.

31.66 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not harbor doubt or hesitation with regard to the doctrine when the doctrine of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas is being taught. They do not have even a single moment of indecision with regard to that doctrine. Having heard that doctrine, they retain it. Having retained it, they do not squander it until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because they have acquired the mnemonic incantations [that enhance retention].”

31.67 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! By acquiring which mnemonic incantations do the irreversible great bodhisattva beings not squander the sūtras spoken by the Tathāgata?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, by mastering the Mnemonic Incantation of the Inexhaustible Cornucopia, and similarly by mastering the Oceanic Seal [Absorbing All Things] and the Mnemonic Incantation of the Lotus Array, the irreversible great bodhisattva beings, after hearing the sūtras spoken by the Tathāgata, will not squander them.”

31.68 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, these great bodhisattva beings are without doubt, without hesitation, and without indecision regarding all the languages, sounds, terms, explanations, and statements employed by sentient beings. Immediately after hearing those languages, sounds, terms, explanations, and statements they retain them and do not squander them. This is because, having mastered the above mnemonic incantations, they know their meanings exactly as they are, Subhūti; great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs should know that they are irreversible.”

31.69 *This completes the thirty-first chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “Irreversibility.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE:
IRREVERSIBILITY

31.A Great bodhisattva beings, who properly realize the defining characteristics of phenomena ... {as being without defining characteristics}, {are} irreversible ... That which has been explained as the level of ordinary people, the level of the śrāvakas, the level of the pratyekabuddhas, the level of the bodhisattvas, and the level of the tathāgatas—all these levels are [identical with] the real nature of phenomena, which is unchanging, non-conceptual, non-dual, and indivisible. The real nature of those great bodhisattva beings engages with this real nature of phenomena {in relative reality}, but their real nature {being non-dual and non-conceptual and without inherent existence} does not conceive of the real nature of phenomena. They engage with the real nature of phenomena absolutely non-conceptually, and when they have done so, and understood the real nature of those [phenomena], they do not then reject it, doubting that this is not the real nature of phenomena. Rather, they think, ‘This real nature is absolutely unique. It is the expanse of {relative} reality, and the maturity of {understanding with respect to relative} reality!’ They do not prattle incoherently. They speak words that are entirely meaningful, without speaking meaninglessly. They do not look upon what others have and have not done. They endeavour to speak well ... One should know that great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are irreversible.

31.B “Venerable Lord! Through which attributes, indications, and signs are great bodhisattva beings revealed to be

irreversible?” The Blessed One replied, “All phenomena are without attributes, without indications, and without signs!” “If all phenomena are without attributes, without indications, and without signs, then from what phenomena have great bodhisattva beings turned away when they are revealed to be irreversible?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings have turned away from physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness ... from the level of ordinary people ... the level of the śrāvakas, and ... the level of the pratyekabuddhas, they are revealed to be irreversible. Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings have not turned away from the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities; and ... from [all the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, at that time, those great bodhisattva beings are revealed to be irreversible. Moreover ... in the presence of virtuous ascetics and brāhmins who are non-Buddhists, the irreversible great bodhisattva beings do not say that those virtuous ascetics and brāhmins know what should be known, see what should be seen, or discern the correct view. On the contrary, that view would be impossible for them! Therefore, the bodhisattvas do not cause them to doubt the discipline of the sacred doctrine which has been excellently taught. Nor do they maintain the supremacy of their ethical discipline and ascetic disciplines. They do not fall into wrong views. They do not hold them to be pure owing to their sacred threads and auspicious ceremonies. They do not pay homage to strange gods. They do not offer them garlands, perfume, unguents, butter lamps, incense, powders, clothing, parasols, victory banners, and ribbons, nor do they consider doing so ... The irreversible great bodhisattva beings who possess these attributes, indications, and signs will not be reborn among lower social classes or among inferior classes. That is to say ... among the outcastes ... the scavengers or garbage collectors ... the reed flute-makers, or among other inferior classes, and so on, up to and including in the eight unfavorable conditions [for practicing the sacred doctrine]. Nor will they assume the physical form of a woman ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible adopt and maintain the ways of the ten virtuous actions. They themselves will have renounced the killing of living creatures, and ... praise others who have abstained from killing living creatures ... {and they} have renounced [all the other non-virtuous actions], up to and including the holding of wrong views, and they ... praise and rejoice in others who have abstained from wrong views {and so forth} ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not habitually engage in the ways of the ten non-virtuous actions, even in their dreams, let alone when they are awake ... {They} always maintain the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom. It is for the sake of sentient beings that they cultivate this generosity, [and so forth], but they cultivate it without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} ... Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible dispense the gift of the sacred doctrine, comprising the [various] scriptural categories, they think, ‘May the wishes of all sentient beings be fulfilled by means of this gift of the sacred doctrine!’ Making common cause with all sentient beings, they dedicate that gift of the sacred doctrine toward unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, but they make this dedication without apprehending anything {as ultimately real} ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.”

31.C Great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not consider anything at all {as ultimately real} with respect to which they might have doubt, indecision, or hesitation. That is to say, they do not consider physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, or consciousness {as ultimately real}, and in the same vein, they do not consider [the attributes and attainments], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment {as ul-

timately real} ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible undertake gentle physical actions, gentle verbal actions, and gentle mental actions; they are also without thoughts of hostility toward all sentient beings ... {They} always undertake physical actions ... verbal actions ... and mental actions imbued with loving kindness ... {They} do not instinctively maintain the five obscurations ... {of} longing for sensual pleasure, harmful intention, dullness and sleepiness, agitation and regret, and hesitation ... {and they} are in every respect free from all latent impulses ... Moreover ... when great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible move about, they do so in accordance with the applications of mindfulness. They move about mindfully. They exclusively walk, stand, sit, and lie down mindfully. They do not put their feet on the ground impulsively and they do not raise their feet above the ground impulsively. Rather, they put their feet on the ground entirely mindfully and they raise their feet above the ground entirely mindfully ... The condition of the robes belonging to great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible is never unkempt but always clean and free from bad odors. They themselves have few ailments, and they are free from dust and stains ... Moreover ... the bodies of great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible are without the eighty thousand kinds of animalcules* which are present within the human body, and consume it {*that is worms, parasites, and bacterial-yeast-like-fungus and so forth} ... {because} their roots of virtue surpass all worlds, and are supreme in all the worlds ... The more those roots of virtue of great bodhisattva beings increase, the more ... those great bodhisattva beings assume physical, verbal, and mental purity. They can withstand cold, heat, hunger, thirst, sun, wind, and biting insects ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.D “Venerable Lord! What is the physical purity of those great bodhisattva beings? What is their verbal purity? What is their mental purity?” The Blessed One replied ... “Subhūti, the more those roots of virtue of great bodhisattva beings increase, the more will the physical ... the verbal ... and the mental deformity and crookedness of these great bodhisattva beings be purified in accordance with those roots of virtue. Insofar as they physically practice the three modes of excellent conduct {that is (1) do not deprive sentient beings of life, (2) do not steal that which is not given, and (3) do not commit acts of sexual misconduct}, verbally practice the four modes of excellent conduct {that is (1) do not tell lies, (2) do not slander, (3) do not speak harshly, and (4) do not resort to nonsensical speech}, and mentally practice the three modes of excellent conduct {that is (1) do not become covetous, (2) do not become vindictive, and (3) do not resort to the sixty-two false views}, the bodies of those great bodhisattva beings will be purified, their speech will be purified, and their minds will be purified. Those who possess physical purity, verbal purity, and mental purity transcend the level{s} of the śrāvakas and ... pratyekabuddhas. They indeed enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas, but they do not yet actualize the finality of {relative} existence ... You should know this indeed to be the physical purity, the verbal purity, and the mental purity of those bodhisattvas ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible are not attracted to profit, veneration, and eulogistic verses ... to religious robes, alms, bedding, and seats, but they assume and maintain the twelve ascetic virtues {which comprise wearing clothing from a dust heap, owning only three robes, wearing felt or woolen clothes, begging for food, eating one's meal at a single sitting, restricting the quantity of food, staying in solitude, sitting under trees, sitting in exposed places, sitting in charnel grounds, sitting even during sleep, and staying wherever one happens to be} ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible never cultivate thoughts of miserliness ... degenerate morality ... indolence ... distraction, or ... delusion ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are steadfast. They respectfully listen to the sacred doctrine from others and whatever they hear, they integrate all of it with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They also know, entirely without effort and dependent on the transcendent

perfection of wisdom, those activities which are mundane, and these too they integrate with the transcendent perfection of wisdom. They do not consider anything at all that is not integrated within the expanse of {relative} reality, but they do consider that all these [phenomena] are integrated with the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.”

31.E If the evil Māra were to conjure up the eight great hells ... and if he were also to reveal in each of these hells with their sentient denizens ... many hundreds of thousands of bodhisattvas, and if he were to conjure up and reveal them being burned, cooked, and boiled by the fires of hell ... and even if he were then to say to those bodhisattvas, ‘These great bodhisattva beings have been exclusively foreordained by the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas to be irreversible in their attainment of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, but they have all been reborn among these denizens of the hells. Alas! You, too, who have been foreordained by the tathāgatas to be irreversible ... will end up as denizens of the hells. Alas! Right now you should reject this cultivation of the mind that is set on enlightenment and you will consequently be released from these sentient hells, and subsequently you will not be reborn here, but on passing away, you will proceed to the higher realms,’ ... there is no possibility and no chance for the minds of those great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible to be alienated [in the hells] ... because they will realize the defining characteristic of the sacred doctrine to be that the fruit of non-virtuous actions is {the} unpleasant {hells}, and because the tathāgatas, endowed with great compassionate spirituality, the treasure of the sacred doctrine, do not speak falsely inasmuch as they profess to benefit all living beings ... For this reason, it is impossible for those great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible to be reborn among the denizens of the hells, or among the animals, or among anguished spirits ... Moreover ... the evil Māra, approaching in the guise of a virtuous ascetic, might say, ‘All that you have heard, namely, that you should perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and that you should consequently attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment—all of that you have misheard. You should confess once again all these errors! You should confess once again all your rejoicing in the roots of virtue of the past, future, and present tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, and their śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas ... If you act according to my words, you will swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. That which you have heard is not the word of the Buddha—it is poetic fabrication! But since that which I am teaching you is genuine, it is the word of the Buddha.’ If, on that occasion, these bodhisattvas are disturbed and if they are doubtful and hesitant, you should know that these bodhisattvas will not have been foreordained by the tathāgatas to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They would not abide on the irreversible levels ... If, on the other hand, when the evil Māra opposes their aspiration, these great bodhisattva beings are not disturbed, are neither doubtful nor hesitant, have no confidence in his words, have no confidence in others, and do not depend on others for the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly for [the attributes and attainments], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, then ... you should know that these great bodhisattva beings will not turn back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... Just as an arhat endowed with the cessation of contaminants never has confidence in anyone else because he directly perceives phenomena, and is not captivated even by the evil Māra, let alone by others, in the same way ... great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not have confidence in anyone else, and they cannot be crushed by any of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, or even by the evil Māra. They will not turn back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They do not have confidence in anyone. Since they do not

progress through faith {in a secondary 'thing'}, even in the tathāgatas, how could they have confidence in other virtuous ascetics, brāhmins, sectarian vagabonds, wandering mendicants, or the evil Māra! That would be impossible! If you ask why ... it is because these great bodhisattva beings do not consider any physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, or consciousness in which they should have confidence. Similarly, they do not consider any real nature of physical forms ... up to and including omniscience, in which they should have confidence ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.F Moreover ... the evil Māra, approaching in the guise of a fully ordained monk, might say to these bodhisattvas, 'This is the conduct associated with cyclic existence, but not the conduct of a bodhisattva! Alas! Right here in my presence you should put an end to suffering!' and he would reveal to these bodhisattvas a counterfeit path to perfect enlightenment ... subsumed in the mundane conduct associated with cyclic existence. Or else he would reveal the contemplation of a skeleton, or the contemplations of a blue-black corpse ... or else he would reveal loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, or equanimity, or else he would reveal the first meditative concentration ... up to and including the fourth meditative concentration, or else he would reveal the four formless absorptions, saying to these great bodhisattva beings, 'Senior One! Through this path and through this earnest application, you will attain the fruit of one who has entered the stream, and you will attain [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship and individual enlightenment. Alas! Right here in my presence you should put an end to suffering! Subsequently you will not experience those sufferings associated with conduct that pertains to cyclic existence! Alternatively, if you are disillusioned with this physical incarnation, or if you are thinking not to hold on to it, you should purify the sense fields right here and now!' ... If even when he speaks such words, the bodhisattvas are undisturbed and undistracted, thinking in addition, 'This monk who reveals to me a counterfeit path which will not actualize the fruit of entering the stream ... {up to} the fruit of individual enlightenment, is useful to me in many ways!' and if they further rejoice, thinking, 'This monk who expounds attachment to me is useful to me in many ways! Knowing the circumstances of this attachment, I should train in all the three vehicles!', then the evil Māra, knowing that they are rejoicing, might say, 'O child of enlightened heritage! You wish to see great bodhisattva beings who have honored the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas ... and similarly cultivated the {transcendent perfections}, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, in the presence of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges ... asking them how, for the sake of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, great bodhisattva beings should abide on the path of perfect enlightenment {and train therein} ... But even those great bodhisattva beings who, abiding in accordance with the exegeses imparted by the buddhas, have practiced in that manner and engaged in union with them, have not attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Since those who have been taught in this way ... have not attained omniscience, you should consider how you could possibly attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!' If, when the evil Māra says such words, the minds of those great bodhisattva beings are not alienated and frightened, and if in addition they rejoice, thinking, 'This monk who expounds to me the attachment through which even the fruit of entering the stream will not be actualized ... up to and including individual enlightenment, will not be actualized, is useful to me in many ways!'" then the evil Māra, knowing that the minds of those bodhisattvas are not discouraged, might instantaneously conjure up, in that very place, a multitude of monks, and say, 'These monks are exclusively arhats, free from afflicted mental states, who have attained the cessation of contaminants. They previously embarked on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, but instead they remained as śrāvakas. Therefore, you should consi-

der! How could you possibly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment?' Even when confronted with such revelations, great bodhisattva beings would think, 'Alas! This is the evil Māra revealing a counterfeit path! This is a phantom!' and they would think, 'Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom do not turn back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and they do not regress to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas,' and if, in addition, they think, 'There is no possibility and no chance that great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, who practice the applications of mindfulness ... up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas will fail to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. That would be impossible!' then ... great bodhisattva beings who possess all such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.G Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible would think, 'Certain great bodhisattva beings who do not lack the six transcendent perfections taught by the tathāgatas, who also encourage sentient beings to assume the six transcendent perfections, securing and establishing them therein, and whose minds are endowed with omniscience, are revealed to be irreversible.' ... {and} would think, 'Those bodhisattvas who know and recognize the deeds of Māra will not degenerate from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.' If you ask what constitute the deeds of Māra, they entail excessive attachment and longing for the objects of the five senses, along with apathy regarding the transcendent perfections ... They would think, 'Great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.'

31.H Great bodhisattva beings {who} turn away from the notion of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {as real} are reckoned to be irreversible. In the same vein, great bodhisattva beings who turn away from the notion of the sense fields ... desire, hatred, and delusion ... the sixty-two aspects of false view ... the transcendent perfection of generosity ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the emptiness of internal phenomena ... up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities ... [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... the levels of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, and ... the [attainments], up to and including omniscience {as real}, are all reckoned to be irreversible. If you ask why ... great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible have entered upon the maturity of the bodhisattvas with respect to all phenomena, which are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics. They apprehend nothing at all {as ultimately real}, even to the extent of an indivisible atomic particle, and because they do not apprehend anything at all, they do not condition anything at all. Because they do not condition anything at all, they do not produce anything at all. Therefore, great bodhisattva beings, who have accepted that phenomena are non-arising, are revealed to be irreversible. Moreover ... the evil Māra might approach great bodhisattva beings and dissuade them, saying, 'This omniscience is equal to space, of the essential nature of non-entity, and empty of intrinsic defining characteristics. Phenomena are also equal to space ... With regard to things that are equal to space, whose essential nature is non-entity and empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, there is nothing apprehensible which would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood, by which manifestly perfect buddhahood would be attained, and in which manifestly perfect buddhahood would be attained. Since all these phenomena are equal to space, of the essential nature of non-entity, and empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, you will be afflicted and futile in your efforts to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, for such tea-

ching is revealed to be the work of Māra. This is not the teaching of the genuinely perfect buddhas! Child of enlightened heritage, you should reject those attentions! Then you will not endure hardships for long, you will not suffer, and you will not be distressed!’ On hearing those words, sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage should reflect, ‘Those [words] which would separate me from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment are the work of Māra. Although all things are indeed equal to space, of the essential nature of non-entity, and empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, they are not known, seen, or comprehended as such by sentient beings. Therefore I should don the armor that is equal to space, whose essential nature is non-entity and which is empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, to attain omniscience—manifestly perfect buddhahood—and reveal to sentient beings the sacred doctrine of emancipation from cyclic existence. I should establish them in the fruit of entering the stream ... {up to and including} I should establish them in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.’ From the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, great bodhisattva beings should be steadfast when listening to these sacred doctrines. Their minds should not be distracted ... {nor} captivated {by anything or anyone}. When those whose minds are steadfast, undistracted, and not captivated practice the six transcendent perfections, they will enter upon the maturity of the bodhisattvas.

31.I “Venerable Lord! Can reversible great bodhisattva beings be called irreversible, and can irreversible bodhisattvas be called reversible?” ... “Subhūti, reversible bodhisattvas may be called irreversible, and irreversible bodhisattvas may be called reversible ... Great bodhisattva beings who have turned back from {abiding in} the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas are irreversible bodhisattvas. These ... may be called irreversible ... Great bodhisattva beings who have not turned back from {instructing those abiding in} the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas are reversible. These ... may be called reversible ... You should know this to be the defining characteristic of the irreversible great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs. Great bodhisattva beings who possess those attributes, indications, and signs cannot be turned back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment by the evil Māra.”

31.J Great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible become absorbed at will in the first ... second, third, and fourth meditative concentrations ... {and} in [the formless absorptions], up to and including the absorption in the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Similarly, they become absorbed in the four applications of mindfulness, and ... in [all the other causal attributes], up to and including the noble eightfold path ... {and} in emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness. They actualize the five extrasensory powers. But while they may become absorbed at will in the four meditative concentrations ... the four immeasurable aspirations and the four formless absorptions, they will not be reborn through their power. Similarly, while they cultivate the four applications of mindfulness, the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path, they will not regress to the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas. Similarly, they do not actualize and hold on to the fruits of cessation, that is to say, the [formless] absorptions, up to and including absorption in the cessation of perceptions and feelings. At will they may assume the incarnations that they wish, and having assumed these incarnations they act for the benefit of sentient beings ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not attach importance to physical forms ... signs ... their assemblies ... generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration ... {and} wisdom ... to the meditative concentrations, the immeasurable aspirations, or the formless absorptions ... to the extrasensory powers

... the applications of mindfulness, and ... to [all the other causal and fruitional attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience ... to the buddhafi elds that are to be refined ... the sentient beings who are to be brought to maturity ... beholding the buddhas ... {and} to the roots of virtue. If you ask why ... it is because those great bodhisattva beings consider that all phenomena are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics and equal to space, and they do not consider anything through which they should attach importance, or with respect to which they should attach importance ... Whether those great bodhisattva beings are going out, returning, standing, sitting, or lying down, they go and come, stand up, sit, and lie down in accordance with the four [acceptable] norms of behavior because they are attentive to omniscience ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.K Moreover ... even if great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible dwell as householders, through skill in means they dispense their generosity toward sentient beings, having acquired the five desirable attributes of the senses for the sake of sentient beings. That is to say, they dispense food [and drink] to those who need food and drink, and so on. They dispense whatever things are useful to humankind. They practice the transcendent perfection of generosity and they also encourage others to assume the transcendent perfection of generosity. They also praise and rejoice in their transcendent perfection of generosity. The same also goes for the [other transcendent perfections], up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... When great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible dwell as householders, they fill Jambudvīpa {and the world systems of the great trichiliocosm} with diverse precious things, emanated through the power of their miraculous abilities, and offer gifts to the lord buddhas ... Yet they do not indulge in those sensual pleasures and they always practice chastity. They are clean and without bad odor. They never despise anyone else or have contempt, through which they would come to dislike others ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.L “Moreover ... thinking that these great bodhisattva beings will soon attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, the yakṣa Vajrapāṇi will always follow behind irreversible great bodhisattva beings without interruption, in order to guard and protect them, just as he follows behind me, the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect Buddha. In the same vein, up to five hundred [attendants] of the Vajra family will always follow behind, without interruption, in order to guard and protect them. In this respect they can never be harmed by humans and non-humans. In conformity with the sacred doctrine they can never be rivalled by any god, demon, Brahmā {deity}, or anyone else in the world. Until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, their minds will not be distracted from attention to enlightenment. Their sense faculties will never be deficient. That is to say, [their sense faculties], from the sense organ of the eyes to the sense organ of the body, will never be deficient. They will never lack the five supramundane faculties ... {which} comprise the faculty of faith, the faculty of perseverance, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of meditative stability, and the faculty of wisdom. They will be saintly beings.” “Venerable Lord! In what way are great bodhisattva beings saintly beings?” ... “Subhūti, the minds of those great bodhisattva beings will never be distracted from perfect enlightenment by the five false imaginations {of wondering whether they are engaged in the emptiness of the transcendent perfection of wisdom and the transcendent perfection of wisdom; of wondering whether they are exclusively engaged in something other than the transcendent perfection of wisdom; of wondering whether they are engaged in the transcendent perfection of wisdom; of wondering whether they are engaged in emptiness; and of wondering whether they are

engaged in something other than emptiness), and the five obscurations {comprising longing for sensual pleasure, harmful intention, dullness and sleepiness, agitation and regret, and hesitation}. Therefore, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings are saintly beings ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.”

31.M Moreover ... the irreversible great bodhisattva beings who always have their minds set on enlightenment will in no way whatsoever concoct secret spells, medications, and compounded medications which attract women, nor will they engage in anything with a nature that is harmful to others. Even for the sake of their lives, they will not engage in any skillful means that attract women. They will not attract men, women, boys, or girls with miraculous fortune telling, claiming, ‘You will have a son!’ ‘You will have a daughter!’ ... {or} ‘You will have a long life!’ ‘You will have a short life!’ and they will not bring ruin upon anyone at all. If you ask why ... it is because great bodhisattva beings do not consider any sign of sentience in things that are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, let alone signs of wrong livelihood! It is impossible for them to engage in negative actions. Therefore, their livelihood is entirely pure ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.N Moreover ... I shall [now] disclose the attributes, indications, and signs which, when they are possessed, reveal great bodhisattva beings to be irreversible. So listen well and pay attention to them! I will explain them! ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom do not lack the modes of attention to perfect enlightenment, for which reason they do not preoccupy themselves with the psycho-physical aggregates, nor do they preoccupy themselves with the sensory elements and the sense fields. If you ask why ... it is because those great bodhisattva beings have excellently cultivated the emptiness of the psycho-physical aggregates, the sensory elements and the sense fields, and they have attended excellently. They do not preoccupy themselves with the talk of kings. If you ask why, it is because, excellently abiding in emptiness, they do not consider anything at all as inferior or superior. They do not preoccupy themselves with the talk of robbers. If you ask why, it is because, with respect to all things which are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, they do not consider anything at all that should be acquired or stolen. They do not preoccupy themselves with the talk of aggressive conflict. If you ask why, it is because, excellently abiding in the emptiness of inherent existence, they do not consider anything at all in terms of minorities and majorities. They do not preoccupy themselves with the talk of the buddhas. If you ask why, it is because, excellently abiding in the emptiness of all things, they do not consider anything at all that is to be accumulated. They do not preoccupy themselves with the talk of towns, cities, villages, markets, and palace circles. If you ask why, it is because, excellently abiding in the emptiness of space, they do not consider anything at all that is to be attracted or not attracted. They do not preoccupy themselves with {talking like animals*—such as in talking of kings, talking of thieves, and so forth, *as revealed in the Brahmajāla Sūtra, p. 671}. If you ask why ... it is because, excellently abiding in the finality of {relative} existence, they do not consider anything at all that is to be attracted or not attracted, and they do not consider anything at all that is to be increased or diminished. They do not preoccupy themselves with talk about the self, sentient beings, living creatures, lives ... up to and including knowers and viewers. If you ask why, it is because they do not consider any things that are {ultimately} without lives and without sentience. They do not preoccupy themselves with talk of diverse matters. If you ask why, it is because, excellently abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they never lack {the non-dual} attentiveness associated with omniscience. Practicing the transcendent perfection of generosity, they never preoccupy themselves with miserliness. Similarly,

practicing the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, they do not preoccupy themselves with degenerate morality. Practicing the transcendent perfection of tolerance, they do not preoccupy themselves with agitation or anger. Practicing the transcendent perfection of perseverance, they do not preoccupy themselves with indolence. Practicing the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, they do not preoccupy themselves with distractions. Practicing the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they do not preoccupy themselves with stupidity. Conducting themselves in the emptiness of all things, they wish for the sacred doctrine, and also act for the benefit of sentient beings. Conducting themselves in the expanse of {relative} reality, they do not praise the diversity of phenomena. Those who want to have the lord buddhas and great bodhisattva beings as a spiritual mentor listen to the sacred doctrine, and then devote themselves to teaching that sacred doctrine to those sentient beings who follow the vehicles of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas. Having devoted themselves to teaching that sacred doctrine, they encourage those sentient beings to acquire unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and establish them therein. In order to behold, make offerings to, and venerate the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, they are consequently reborn in those world systems where they dwell and are present, and they see those tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas. That is to say, they abide day and night, attentive to perfect enlightenment. If you ask why ... it is because after the irreversible great bodhisattva beings have generated the attentions associated with the world system of desire, abiding in the ways of the ten virtuous actions, they are generally reborn through the power of their aspirations in those buddhafi elds where the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas have manifested and are visible. Similarly, after they have cultivated the first meditative concentration ... up to and including the fourth meditative concentration, they are reborn through the power of their aspirations in those buddhafi elds ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs are revealed to be irreversible.

31.O Moreover ... the irreversible great bodhisattva beings who have practiced the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... and {the other transcendent perfections and aspects of emptiness}, up to and including the emptiness of essential nature with respect to non-entities, and ... the applications of mindfulness, and ... [all the other causal and frictional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, do not hesitate in any respect whatsoever, wondering whether they are irreversible or reversible ... because they have no hesitation regarding their own level, and ... thoroughly comprehend all things. If you ask why, because they do not consider anything at all that is irreversible or not irreversible {as ultimately existent}, even to the extent of the tiniest particle ... Just as a person who has entered the stream has no doubt and no hesitation regarding the fruit of those who have entered the stream, in the same way ... the irreversible great bodhisattva beings also have no doubt and no hesitation regarding that irreversible level. Abiding on that irreversible level, they also refine the buddhafi elds and they bring sentient beings to maturity. Knowing, too, the deeds of Māra that have arisen and occurred, they do not proceed under the influence of Māra's deeds. Rather, having understood all the deeds of Māra, they overwhelm and disperse them ... Just as a man who has committed an inexcusable crime will never be separated from the thoughts associated with that inexcusable crime ... in the same way ... the irreversible thoughts of the irreversible great bodhisattva beings are indeed established on the irreversible level, and cannot waver. The world with its gods, humans, and antigods cannot turn them away from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... because those irreversible great bodhisattva beings have transcended the world with its gods, humans, and antigods and entered into the maturity of {understanding of} the genuine {singular} nature {of phenomena}. Abiding on their own level, they have reached genuine perfection through the extrasensory powers of the bodhisattvas, and so they refine the buddhafi elds and also bring

sentient beings to maturity. They travel from buddhafield to buddhafield in order to behold, pay homage to, and indeed listen to the sacred doctrine from the lord buddhas. In those buddhafields they cultivate the roots of virtue ... and they question, counter-question, and venerate those lord buddhas ... They can even meditate on the deeds of Māra which might have arisen and occurred as being the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and through skill in means they integrate them in the finality of {relative} existence, and they never have doubt, indecision, or hesitation regarding their own level ... because they have no doubt, indecision, or hesitation regarding the finality of {relative} existence, and they do not conceive of the finality of {relative} existence as singular or dual. Knowing this, even after they have passed away they will not generate thoughts on the levels of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas ... because great bodhisattva beings, with regard to phenomena which are empty of intrinsic defining characteristics, do not consider {as real} anything at all that is subject to arising, cessation, affliction, or purification ... {and} they will think, 'I will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment {for the purpose of awakening every sentient being to the real nature of phenomena in relative reality}!' but they will not think, 'I will not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!' {as if it were something which could ultimately be attained.} If you ask why ... it is because unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is empty of intrinsic defining characteristics.

31.P Great bodhisattva beings who abide on their own level cannot be alienated ... {or} overpowered by any sentient beings ... because the irreversible great bodhisattva beings who abide accordingly are endowed with {the} pristine cognition {of omniscience} that cannot be captivated ... If the evil Māra were to approach the irreversible great bodhisattva beings in the guise of the buddhas, he might say, 'O child of enlightened heritage! In this lifetime, you should attain arhatship, in which all afflicted mental states have ceased ... You do not possess the attributes, the indications, and the signs endowed with which it is foreordained that unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment will be attained!' If, even on hearing these words, great bodhisattva beings are not discouraged, not intimidated, not alienated, and not terrified, then ... these great bodhisattva beings should know that they have been foreordained by the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why ... it is because they consider that they themselves possess the attributes endowed with which the lord buddhas foreordain that unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment will be attained ... Even if the evil Māra were to approach great bodhisattva beings in the guise of a buddha, saying, 'You should become a śrāvaka or pratyekabuddha! What would you do with unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment!' and then encourage them through many such reasons to acquire {those levels} ... these great bodhisattva beings would think, 'This one is not the tathāgata, nor is he a śrāvaka of the tathāgata! Alas! On the contrary, this is Māra, or a man emanated by the evil Māra, who has approached me, encouraging me to acquire the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas! The tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas do not encourage great bodhisattva beings to acquire the level of the śrāvakas, or the level of the pratyekabuddhas!' If they were to think this ... you should know that great bodhisattva beings endowed with such attributes, indications, and signs are irreversible ... If Māra or a man conjured up by the evil Māra were to approach great bodhisattva beings while they are reading aloud and reciting the most extensive discourses taught by the tathāgatas, and say, 'O child of enlightened heritage! Those sūtras that you are following are not the most extensive discourses taught by the tathāgatas, nor are they taught by the śrāvakas. Rather, they were taught by Māra and they were taught by other heretics! These are not the [real] most extensive discourses!' these great bodhisattva beings would know, 'Alas! This is Māra or a man conjured up by the evil Māra who would

separate me from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and dissuade me from the path of enlightenment! In that case ... these great bodhisattva beings should know that they have been foreordained by the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the past to attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Those great bodhisattva beings should know that they abide on the irreversible level. If you ask why ... it is because they possess and manifest the attributes, indications, and signs of the irreversible great bodhisattva beings.

31.Q Moreover ... the irreversible great bodhisattva beings relinquish even their own lives for the sake of acquiring the sacred doctrine, but they do not relinquish the doctrine. If you ask why, it is because they think, 'I will make offerings to the lord buddhas of the past, the future, and the present since they have acquired the sacred doctrine. I will also acquire their sacred doctrine.' If you ask for the sake of which doctrine great bodhisattva beings relinquish even their lives—the doctrine that they will not relinquish—it is this: ... The tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas teach that all phenomena are empty. Some foolish persons may contradict this and counterattack, saying, 'This is not the sacred doctrine. This is not the Vinaya. This is not the teaching of the Teacher. This is not the path that progresses to perfect enlightenment!' However ... great bodhisattva beings relinquish even their lives for the sake of this sacred doctrine, thinking, 'I too will be reckoned among the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who will emerge in the future. I too will be foreordained to attain that. For the sake of this doctrine, I will relinquish even my life!' ... Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not harbor doubt or hesitation with regard to the doctrine when the doctrine of the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas is being taught. They do not have even a single moment of indecision with regard to that doctrine. Having heard that doctrine, they retain it ... {and} they do not squander it until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because they have acquired the mnemonic incantations [that enhance retention] ... By mastering the Mnemonic Incantation of the Inexhaustible {Container}, and similarly by mastering the {Vast Ocean Mudrā} and the Mnemonic Incantation of the Lotus Array, the irreversible great bodhisattva beings, after hearing the sūtras spoken by the Tathāgata, will not squander them ... These great bodhisattva beings are without doubt, without hesitation, and without indecision regarding all the languages, sounds, terms, explanations, and statements employed by sentient beings. Immediately after hearing those languages, sounds, terms, explanations, and statements they retain them and do not squander them. This is because, having mastered the above mnemonic incantations, they know their meanings exactly as they are ... Great bodhisattva beings who possess such attributes, indications, and signs should know that they are irreversible.

COMMENTARY

The four reliances of a great bodhisattva being, described by the Buddha, are: (1) Rely on the Dharma, not on the teacher; (2) Rely on the intended meaning, not on the words; (3) Rely on the definitive meaning, not on the provisional or "interim" meaning taught through skill-in-means according to students' intentions and capacities; and (4) Rely on the Wisdom Mind (that being the mind of the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas), not on your ordinary ego-mind, which seeks to make sense of and 'conceptualize' all things. Only when every awakening being relies solely on the Dharma, solely on the intended meaning, solely on the definitive meaning, and solely on the Wisdom Mind of the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, through transcending all reliance on the ordinary ego-mind, will the mind of every awakening being transcend all reliance on any secondary 'thing', and instead come-into-union with the omniscient mind, with the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas. Thus the awakening conjured in-

dividuated being must have faith solely in the Dharma, solely in the intended meaning, solely in the definitive meaning, and solely in the Wisdom Mind of the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas. This is the maturity of a great bodhisattva being. Those who follow the sacred doctrine, but who instead have faith in the teacher, faith in the words, faith in the provisional meaning, and faith in the ordinary ego-mind, this constitutes the immaturity of a great bodhisattva being. Thus does the Buddha reveal in chapter eleven of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: “What you may ask, is faith? **{Faith} implies conviction, ideation, volition, reliance, attention, appraisal and scrutiny—all without any kind of sign or indication {from any secondary or external source}**. Therefore, indications should not be acquired. The wandering mendicant Śreṇika indeed became a follower [of the Great Vehicle] endowed with faith, owing to the power of his volition, and he subsequently entered into it by understanding the emptiness of inherent existence.” Thus does the Buddha reveal in the chapter (above): **“Just as an arhat endowed with the cessation of contaminants never has confidence in anyone else because he directly perceives phenomena, and is not captivated even by the evil Māra, let alone by others, in the same way ... great bodhisattva beings who are irreversible do not have confidence in anyone else ... Since they do not progress through faith {in others or in any non-existent secondary ‘thing’}, even in the tathāgatas, how could they have confidence in other virtuous ascetics, brāhmins, sectarian vagabonds, wandering mendicants, or the evil Māra! That would be impossible! ... {This} is because these great bodhisattva beings do not consider {as ultimately real} any {phenomena at all} ... up to and including {the real nature of} omniscience, in which they should have {faith and} confidence.”**

*

The container for keeping all phenomena—that is the realm of ‘relative’ existence—is inexhaustible. It is inexhaustible because from the perspective of ‘ultimate’ reality there is nothing that arises and nothing that ceases, and therefore nothing existent that can be exhausted. The container itself cannot be exhausted because it too is without inherent existence, and the objects therein cannot be exhausted, for they are also without inherent existence. Within this ocean of ‘relative’ existence all phenomena are united indivisibly as “one” ~ for what unites them inseparably is the real nature of phenomena, where all phenomena are empty of inherent existence. And yet beyond these inherently non-existent phenomena, is the blank canvas of Our natural luminosity of mind, which remains undivided and non-dual in nature as Our singularity in God. As every awakening conjured individuated being arises from the illusion of relativity in ‘relative’ existence, as a lotus flower arises from the muddy waters, will the awakening being attain unsurpassed genuinely perfect enlightenment—donning the mind of the omniscient mind—as a great Lotus Array.

The Mnemonic Incantation of the Inexhaustible Container

མི་ཟད་ (mi zad pa'i) = Inexhaustible

ཟམ་རྩོག་ (za ma tog) = Container for keeping objects

Meaning: The container for keeping objects is inexhaustible

Pronounced: mizepé zama tok

The Vast Ocean Mudrā

མོ་ས་ཐམས་ཅད་ (chos thams cad) = All things, all phenomena

ཡང་དག་པར་ (yang dag par) = Completely

འདུ་བ་ ('du ba) = United

འགྲུ་ (rgya) = Vast

མཚོ་ (mtsho'i) = Ocean

Meaning: All things are completely united within the vast ocean

Pronounced: chö tamché yangdakpar duwa gyatsö

The Mnemonic Incantation of the Lotus Array

པདྨ་ (padma) = Lotus

བཀོད་པའི་ (bkod pa'i) = Array

Meaning: The lotus array [of the enlightened buddha]

Pronounced: peme köpé

✱

The leaves of the lotus plant are known for their self-cleaning properties. Known as the “lotus effect”, the water droplets on the leaves are able to pick up dirt particles due to their nanoscopic architecture. Just as the placement of water droplets on the leaf's surface is a mechanism for the lotus plants' self-purification process, in the same way splashing water drops—which have been blessed with prayer—on the surface of the great bodhisattva being's upper robe is a mechanism for their self-purification process. Thus does the Buddha reveal in the *Dhammika Sūtra*[^]: “*Thus indeed with lump of food and bedding and seat, and water on the upper robe to wash away any defilement—doing this thing thoroughly and completely {with blessing of the water and accompanying prayer}—for as the lotus plant has droplets of water, so is the monk the same.*” Yet it is more than water which must purify the vessel of the awakening conjured individuated being ~ for only by increasing their roots of virtue thoroughly will those great bodhisattva beings assume physical, verbal and mental purity. **This is the true self-purification process that can be likened to that of the lotus plant**, whereupon reaching the heights of unsurpassed genuinely perfect enlightenment, will the great bodhisattva being then flower and blossom as a great Lotus Array. [[^]*Dhammika Sūtra*, p. 713]

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO: THE ATTAINMENT OF MANIFEST ENLIGHTENMENT

32.1 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If irreversible great bodhisattva beings are endowed with such enlightened attributes, what are the aspects of the path on which they abide and through which they then swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment? What is the enlightenment of the lord buddhas?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, the six transcendent perfections constitute the path of great bodhisattva beings. The thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, the three gateways to liberation, the fourteen aspects of emptiness, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative absorption, and similarly, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, and [all other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, constitute the path of great bodhisattva beings. Furthermore, Subhūti, all things constitute the path of great bodhisattva beings.

32.2 “Subhūti, do you think that there is anything in which those great bodhisattva beings who would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, having trained their minds, should not train? Subhūti, there is nothing at all in which great bodhisattva beings should not train. If you ask why, it is because without training with respect to all phenomena and attributes, great bodhisattva beings cannot attain omniscience.”

32.3 Senior Subhūti then asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If all things are empty of inherent existence, how could great bodhisattva beings differentiate between attributes that are mundane or supramundane, contaminated or uncontaminated, conditioned or unconditioned, the attributes of ordinary people, the attributes of those who have entered the stream, the attributes of those who are tied to one more rebirth, the attributes of those who will no longer be subject to rebirth, the attributes of arhatship, or the attributes of individual enlightenment, up to and including the attributes of the genuinely perfect buddhas—knowing whence and whereby anything arises and what constitutes anything?”

32.4 The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, it is so! It is just as you have spoken. All things are empty of inherent existence. Subhūti, if all things were apprehended not to be empty, great bodhisattva beings would not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Subhūti, it is because all things are empty of inherent existence that great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

32.5 “Subhūti, you have said that if all things are empty of inherent existence, how could great bodhisattva beings differentiate between attributes that are mundane or supramundane, and so forth, up to and including the attributes of genuinely perfect buddhas—knowing whence and whereby anything arises and what constitutes anything. If, Subhūti, sentient beings knew that all things are empty of inherent existence, then great bodhisattva beings would not undertake training with respect to all things and attain omniscience. However, Subhūti, it is because sentient beings do not know that all things are empty that great bodhisattva beings do undertake training with respect to all things and attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and that, after attaining buddhahood, they establish the sacred doctrine and teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings.

32.6 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings should consider such matters at the outset by training in the bodhisattva path, thinking, ‘There is nothing but fixation. There is nothing at all that can be apprehended in terms of inherent existence. Since at this point I do not apprehend anything at all, having considered the inherent existence of all things, why should I be fixated on phenomena?’

32.7 “Subhūti, when great bodhisattva beings at present consider the inherent existence of phenomena, they do not become fixated on anything at all, whether it be the six transcendent perfections, or the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, or the fruit of having entered the stream, the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, arhatship, individual enlightenment, or unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because they see that all things are empty of inherent existence, and emptiness does not become fixated on emptiness. Since they do not apprehend even emptiness, how could they possibly be fixated on emptiness! So it is, Subhūti, that great bodhisattva beings abide without fixation on anything.

32.8 “After undertaking and maintaining this training, they examine the conduct of all sentient beings. When the things in which those beings are engaged are examined, they are [seen to] be grasping at that which does not exist. Having seen those sentient beings engaging in grasping at that which does not exist, they further reflect, ‘These sentient beings will easily be freed from grasping at that which does not exist!’ Then, while maintaining the six trans-

cent perfection, through skill in means they turn sentient beings away from grasping at that which does not exist, and, having turned them away, encourage them toward the six attributes [of the transcendent perfections], instructing them as follows: 'O sentient beings! You should dispense generosity and you will not be without resources! You should not make assumptions on account of these resources. They lack even the slightest essence!

32.9 "Similarly, you should maintain ethical discipline! You should practice tolerance! Similarly, you should undertake perseverance! Similarly, you should be absorbed in the meditative concentrations. Similarly, you should cultivate wisdom! But do not make assumptions on account of these [transcendent perfections]! They lack even the slightest essence!

32.10 "Similarly, you should abide in the fruit of having entered the stream, but you should not make assumptions on account of that! Similarly, you should abide in [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship, but you should not make assumptions on their account! Similarly, you should abide in individual enlightenment! Similarly, you should abide in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment! Similarly, you should abide in all the attributes of the buddhas, but you should not make assumptions on their account! They lack even the slightest essence!

32.11 "Teaching and instructing those sentient beings accordingly, the bodhisattvas continue to practice the path of enlightenment, and they do not become fixated on anything at all. If you ask why, it is because, owing to the emptiness of essential nature, they have no fixation on anything since all things lack any essential nature by which they would become fixated, upon which they would become fixated, or which would become fixated. Consequently, great bodhisattva beings practice the path of perfect enlightenment, but do not abide in anything at all. Indeed they abide in a non-abiding manner. They practice the transcendent perfection of generosity but they do not abide therein. Similarly, they practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom, but they do not abide therein. They become equipoised in the first meditative concentration, but they do not abide therein. If you ask why, it is because [the first] meditative concentration is empty of its essential nature, while those who become absorbed in it are also empty, and the aspects [of it] through which they [become absorbed] are also empty. The same applies to [all the other meditative concentrations], up to and including the fourth meditative concentration.

32.12 "Similarly, they also become absorbed in loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity, but they do not abide therein. Similarly, they become absorbed in the four formless absorptions, the eight aspects of liberation, and the nine serial steps of meditative absorption, but they do not abide therein. Similarly, they attain the fruit of having entered the stream, but they do not abide therein. They attain [all the other fruits], up to and including arhatship, but they do not abide therein. Similarly, they attain individual enlightenment, but they do not abide therein. If you ask why, there are two reasons: those fruits are without essential nature, and they themselves are not satisfied merely by abiding therein. Indeed, they think, 'I should not attain the fruit of entering the stream, and should avoid abiding in it. Similarly, I should not abide in [the other fruits], up to and including the level of the pratyekabuddhas!' If you ask why, it is because they also think, 'I will undoubtedly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Those attributes [of the lower fruits] are indeed subsumed within it!'

32.13 “So it is that great bodhisattva beings, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, never develop any thoughts whatsoever apart from the mind of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. From the first [bodhisattva] level up to the tenth [bodhisattva] level it is the same—they exclusively maintain the mind of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who, without distraction, advance courageously through body, speech, and mind as appropriate are at all times accompanied by the mind set on enlightenment. Abiding in this mind set on enlightenment, they are undistracted on the path of enlightenment.”

32.14 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If all things are non-arising, then, Venerable Lord, how will enlightenment be attained by a path that is cultivated?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti! It will not!”

32.15 “Then is enlightenment attained by means of a path that is not cultivated?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti! It is not!”

32.16 “Well then, is enlightenment attained by means of a path that is neither cultivated nor not cultivated?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti! It is not!”

32.17 “Venerable Lord! By what, then, will enlightenment be attained?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti! Enlightenment will not be attained by means of the path, nor will it be attained by means of that which is not the path. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because enlightenment itself is the path and the path itself is enlightenment.”

32.18 “Venerable Lord! If enlightenment itself is the path and the path itself is enlightenment, then great bodhisattva beings would themselves have attained enlightenment, so why would the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas demonstrate the ten powers, and [the other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, do you think that the buddhas attain enlightenment?”

32.19 “No, Venerable Lord! If one were to ask why, it is because the lord buddhas are themselves enlightenment, and enlightenment is itself the buddhas.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, you have just asked whether the bodhisattvas have themselves not attained enlightenment since enlightenment itself is the path and the path itself is enlightenment. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, after perfecting the six transcendent perfections, and similarly, after perfecting the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, and similarly the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment by means of wisdom that is instantaneously endowed with the adamant meditative stability. And in the period after they have attained buddhahood, those bodhisattvas will be revealed as tathāgatas, who have mastered all phenomena.”

32.20 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings refine the buddhafiels?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, and until their final rebirth, great bodhisattva beings purify the negativity of oth-

ers, including their negativity of body, their negativity of speech, and their negativity of mind.”

32.21 “Venerable Lord! What constitutes the negativity of body which great bodhisattva beings might have? What constitutes their negativity of speech, and what constitutes their negativity of mind?” The Blessed One replied, “The killing of living creatures, the stealing of what is not given, and sexual misconduct due to desire constitute the negativity of body. Lying, slander, verbal abuse, and irresponsible chatter constitute the negativity of speech. Covetousness, malice, and wrong views constitute the negativity of mind.

32.22 “Moreover, Subhūti, any aggregate of ethical discipline that is impure is [classified] as negativity of body and negativity of speech. Any thought of miserliness, any thought of degenerate morality, any thought of agitation, any thought of indolence, any thought of non-composure, and any thought of stupidity are [classified as] negativity of mind. Moreover, Subhūti, any thought without the four applications of mindfulness, and similarly, any thought without the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and the three gateways to liberation is, for great bodhisattva beings, [classified] as negativity of body, negativity of speech, and negativity of mind.

32.23 “Moreover, Subhūti, any longing for the fruit of entering the stream, and similarly, any longing [for the other fruits], up to and including arhatship, or up to and including individual enlightenment, is, for great bodhisattva beings, [classified] as negativity of body, negativity of speech, and negativity of mind.

32.24 “Moreover, Subhūti, any notion of physical forms, and similarly, any notion of feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness, and likewise, any notion of the eyes, and any notion of the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty, and any notion of sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena, is, for great bodhisattva beings, [classified] as negativity of body, negativity of speech, and negativity of mind.

32.25 “Moreover, Subhūti, any notion of the sensory element of the eyes, [and so forth]; any notion of the sensory element of mental consciousness, [and so forth]; any notion of the world system of desire, any notion of the world system of form, any notion of the world system of formlessness, any notion of men, any notion of women, any notion of boys, any notion of girls, any notion of virtuous phenomena, any notion of non-virtuous phenomena, any notion of specified phenomena, any notion of unspecified phenomena, any notion of contaminated phenomena, any notion of uncontaminated phenomena, any notion of mundane phenomena, any notion of supramundane phenomena, any notion of conditioned phenomena, and any notion of unconditioned phenomena is, for great bodhisattva beings, [classified] as negativity of body, negativity of speech, and negativity of mind.

32.26 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom have abandoned all these aspects of negativity. They dispense generosity to those who need it. That is to say, they give food to those who need food, they give drink to those who need drink, they give transportation to those who need transport, and they give [other gifts], including all human necessities whatsoever, to those who wish for [any other gifts] whatsoever, up to and including all human resources. Furthermore, they also encourage others to acquire generosity, inducing and establishing them therein. Having concentrated all these roots of virtue, and after making common cause

with all sentient beings, with an attitude of confidence, they then dedicate them so that the buddhafiels might be refined.

32.27 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings fill the world systems of the great trichiliocosm with the seven precious things and present these as an offering to the three precious jewels. Having made this offering, they dedicate it with a joyful attitude, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may this buddhafielf be fashioned of the seven precious things!’

32.28 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings make offerings to the reliquary stūpas of the tathāgatas with divine and human music. Having made these offerings, they then dedicate these roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may the sound of divine music always arise in this buddhafielf!’

32.29 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, by filling the world systems of the great trichiliocosm with divine perfume, constantly make offerings to the tathāgatas and the reliquary stūpas of the tathāgatas. Having made these offerings, they then dedicate these roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may the fragrance of divine perfume always arise in this buddhafielf!’

32.30 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings make offerings of food with a hundred flavors to the tathāgatas, bodhisattvas, and pratyekabuddhas, as well as to the reliquary stūpas of the tathāgatas, and the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas, and having made these offerings, they dedicate them, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may I attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment in this buddhafielf, and may all sentient beings possess divine foods with a hundred flavors!’

32.31 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings make offerings of divine and human unguents to the tathāgatas of the world systems in the great trichiliocosm, as well as to the reliquary stūpas of the tathāgatas, and to bodhisattvas, pratyekabuddhas, and the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas, and having made these offerings, they dedicate them, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may I attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment in this buddhafielf, and may all sentient beings possess divine unguents!’

32.32 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, through the good intentions that arise in their minds, make offerings of the desirable attributes of the five senses to the tathāgatas, great bodhisattva beings, the pratyekabuddhas, and the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas, and having made these offerings, they dedicate them, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may I attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment in this buddhafielf, and, through the good intentions that arise in my mind, may there be present the pleasant, desirable attributes of the five senses which all sentient beings possess!’

32.33 “Moreover, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom think, ‘I should become equipoised in the first meditative concentration. I should encourage all sentient beings, also, to assume the first meditative concentration, inducing them and establishing them therein. In the same vein, I should beco-

me equipoised in [the other meditative concentrations] up to and including the fourth meditative concentration, inducing all sentient beings and establishing them in the fourth meditative concentration [and the rest]. In the same vein, I should induce them and establish them in the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, and so forth. Similarly, I should cultivate the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment. I should also induce all sentient beings and establish them in the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment. In that buddhafiield where I will have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, all sentient beings should not in any way lack the four meditative concentrations. They should not lack the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, or the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment!’

32.34 “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom will refine the buddhafiields accordingly. By engaging in this enlightenment, all their wishes will be fulfilled. They themselves will possess all virtuous attributes, and they will encourage others also to assume all these virtuous attributes, inducing them and establishing them therein. They will reveal their own noble forms to those sentient beings, and also explain the reasons for [the emergence of] their [noble forms].

32.35 “When sentient beings see [these forms] they will long to have them, and they will exclusively engage in conduct that is the cause of [obtaining] such [forms]. Acquiring the power of merit, those sentient beings will themselves eventually actualize such noble forms. All of those sentient beings whom [the bodhisattvas] have brought to maturity will be born alongside them in those buddhafiields.”

32.36 “The sounds of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness that emerge will either be generated as internal sounds through velar, labial, dental, lingual, and palatal articulation, and so forth, or else the sounds of emptiness, signlessness and aspirationless will be stirred by the external sounds of the wind, indicating how phenomena are essentially non-arising, that all things are empty of all things, that they are signless because they are empty, and that, being signless, they are aspirationless.

32.37 “Day and night such teachings of the sacred doctrine will emerge, whether those sentient beings are standing, sitting, lying down, or walking. Apart from that, in those buddhafiields that have not yet been refined; where the three inferior realms are conceived; where there are erroneous views; where there are desire, hatred, and delusion; where there are śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas; where the hallmarks of suffering, impermanence, emptiness, and non-self are conceived; and similarly, where egotism, possessiveness, acquisition, latent impulses, ensnarement, and their fruits are conceived—in such buddhafiields, those bodhisattvas will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and after attaining enlightenment they will be praised by all the lord buddhas who reside in the world systems of the ten directions.

32.38 “All sentient beings who hear the name of this tathāgata will themselves certainly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. When this tathāgata teaches the sacred doctrine, no sentient beings will hesitate, wondering whether this doctrine is in fact the doctrine. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because those sentient beings will know that with respect to the real nature of phenomena, there is nothing at all that exists. Subhūti, it is in this way that great bodhisattva beings refine the buddhafiields.

32.39 “Moreover, Subhūti, when those sentient beings who do not possess the roots of virtue and who have not developed the roots of virtue under [the guidance of] the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and śrāvakas, and who have been mishandled by evil associates, hear the sacred doctrine, they will be discouraged by whatever aspects of their mistaken views—the view of self or the nihilistic view—prevail. That is to say, they abide in the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism, and so forth. They themselves are gripped by the misapprehension that all things exist, and they introduce others to this misapprehension.

32.40 “They harbor the notion that those who are not genuinely perfect buddhas are genuinely perfect buddhas, and they harbor the notion that those who are genuinely perfect buddhas are not genuinely perfect buddhas. They profess that which is not the doctrine to be the doctrine, and they abandon the sacred doctrine. Having abandoned the sacred doctrine, after they have passed away, they will fall into inferior realms, and be reborn in the hells. Thereupon, great bodhisattva beings will travel to those abodes of the hells in order to assist those sentient beings. Freed from their [former] negative views, those beings will then pass away from the hells and be reborn equal in fortune to human beings. Those who are born as such will be established in the stable community that is intent on genuine reality. In any event, they will not fall into inferior realms and at the same time will be reborn in this buddhfield. In such ways will they be established.

32.41 “Subhūti, in any event, once sentient beings have been reborn in these buddhfields, great bodhisattva beings will continue to refine the buddhfields, until all those sentient beings are no longer consumed with doubt concerning mundane, supramundane, contaminated, uncontaminated, conditioned, unconditioned, or any other phenomena, and until they definitively attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

32.42 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Will great bodhisattva beings be stable in the community that is intent on genuine reality? Will they be stable in the community of the śrāvakas, or will they be stable in the community of pratyekabuddhas? Venerable Lord! In which community will they be stable?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings will not be stable in the community of śrāvakas. They will not be stable in the community of pratyekabuddhas, but, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings will be stable in the community of the genuinely perfect buddhas.”

32.43 “Venerable Lord! Are those great bodhisattva beings who have first begun to set their mind on enlightenment said to be stable, or are those [irreversible bodhisattvas] in their final rebirth stable?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, those great bodhisattva beings who have first begun to set their mind on enlightenment are indeed stable. Those [bodhisattvas] who are irreversible and those in their final rebirth are also stable.”

32.44 “Venerable Lord! Will great bodhisattva beings who are stable in their intent on genuine reality be reborn among the denizens of the hells?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, do you think that one who is on the eighth [level], one who has entered the stream, one who is tied to one more rebirth, one who is no longer subject to rebirth, one who has attained arhatship, or individual enlightenment, will be reborn in the inferior realms?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

32.45 The Blessed One replied, “Similarly, Subhūti, it is impossible that great bodhisattva beings who, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly maintain ethical discipline, practice tolerance, undertake perseverance with respect to [the acquisition of] virtuous attributes, become absorbed in the meditative concentrations, cultivate wisdom, and have abandoned all non-virtuous attributes, and remain firm, should be reborn in the inferior realms or be reborn among long-lived gods! It is impossible that they should be reborn among frontier tribesmen who do not engage in virtuous acts, or among barbarous human beings, or to be reborn among households or frontier tribesmen who maintain wrong views, where the four assemblies—that is to say, the assembly of fully ordained monks, the assembly of fully ordained nuns, the assembly of laymen, and the assembly of laywomen—are not found! It is impossible for them to be reborn in places where the word ‘Buddha,’ the word ‘Dharma,’ and the word ‘Saṅgha’ are unheard, or where the words ‘inaction’ and ‘wrong view’ are heard! Subhūti, it is impossible that great bodhisattva beings, who have first begun to set their mind on enlightenment, after entering upon the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment with higher aspiration, should adopt the ways of the ten non-virtuous actions!”

32.46 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If great bodhisattva beings are endowed with many roots of virtue, why are they reborn in the animal realms, and why does the Tathāgata disclose his own past lives in the presence of the four assemblies? Where did those roots of virtue go?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings do not assume a body that will be reborn in the animal realms due to non-virtuous past actions, but they assume a corporeal form by which they might be causally effective in order to benefit sentient beings. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings are endowed with skill in means whereby they may take birth in the animal realms, and mingle with assassins. Do śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas have this skill in means, which would enable them also to bring those [creatures] and themselves to maturity in the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and make those assassins cease from causing further harm? For these reasons, Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings who are seized by great compassion, bring great compassion to its fulfilment. Even though they are born in the animal realms, for the sake of sentient beings, you should know that they are untainted by the defects of taking birth in the animal realms.”

32.47 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Maintaining which virtuous attributes do great bodhisattva beings acquire corporeal forms that take birth in the animal realms?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, if you ask what are the attributes to be perfected by great bodhisattva beings, Subhūti, the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment is the perfection of all virtuous attributes. Therefore, Subhūti, there is no virtuous attribute at all which should not be perfected by great bodhisattva beings, commencing exclusively from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment. It is impossible for them to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, while any of these are unperfected. So it is, Subhūti, that, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, great bodhisattva beings should train in the perfection of all virtuous attributes. When they have trained therein, they will attain omniscience. They will abandon all afflicted mental states, and all involuntary reincarnation through propensities.”

32.48 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How are great bodhisattva beings, starting fr-

om those who possess all positive attributes and continuing as far as those who possess sublime pristine cognition, born in the inferior realms?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Subhūti as follows: “Subhūti, do you think that the tathāgatas are sublime and without contaminants?”

32.49 “Yes, Venerable Lord, it is so! Venerable Sugata, it is so! The tathāgatas are sublime and they are without contaminants.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, do you think that the tathāgatas may emanate an animal body that takes birth among the animal realms, and having emanated [that form], then engage in buddha activities?”

32.50 “Yes, Venerable Lord, they may do so!” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, do you think that the tathāgatas are creatures of the animal realms?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

32.51 The Blessed One replied, “Similarly, Subhūti, even great bodhisattva beings who possess the uncontaminated pristine cognition of the sublime path may, in order to bring sentient beings to maturity, assume at will such corporeal forms by which they might bring to maturity any kind of sentient beings among the five classes of living beings. Subhūti, do you think, for example, that an arhat can emanate as an arhat whose contaminants have ceased, and having emanated [that form] then induce it to undertake the activities of an arhat, whereupon it would bring joy to the four assemblies through these activities?” “Yes, Venerable Lord, it is so!”

32.52 The Blessed One replied, “Similarly, Subhūti, even great bodhisattva beings who possess sublime, uncontaminated pristine cognition may assume such corporeal forms by which they might act on behalf of sentient beings. Those who have assumed such forms do not at all experience sufferings, and they are untainted also by the corresponding defects.

32.53 “Subhūti, do you think that when an illusionist or the skilled apprentice of an illusionist conjures the form of an elephant in the presence of a crowd of simple folk, or when he conjures the form of a horse or the form of a bull, or when he conjures other forms of living creatures—do you think, Subhūti, that those forms conjured by the illusionist or the skilled apprentice of an illusionist actually turn into an elephant, or that they turn into a horse, bull, or another living creature?” “No, Venerable Lord!”

32.54 The Blessed One replied, “Similarly, Subhūti, even though great bodhisattva beings who possess sublime, uncontaminated pristine cognition may reveal such corporeal forms at will, acting on behalf of sentient beings, they are indeed untainted by the feelings that they possess.”

32.55 Then Senior Subhūti asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Since great bodhisattva beings, who possess sublime, uncontaminated pristine cognition, and who may assume this or that corporeal form by which they are capable of acting on behalf of sentient beings, are greatly skilled in means, Venerable Lord, in which [pure] attributes do great bodhisattva beings abide when they then employ such skill in means?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, they abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom when they employ such skillful means. Through this skill in means, though they may traverse all the world systems in the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and then act on behalf of those sentient beings, they do not hanker for them. If you ask why, it is because they do

not apprehend anything at all by which or for which they would hanker. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because all things are empty of their essential nature, emptiness does not hanker, and there is no one who hankers for emptiness. If you ask why, it is because emptiness does not apprehend emptiness. This, Subhūti, is the emptiness of non-apprehension. Abiding therein, great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

32.56 When this doctrinal sūtra comprising the chapters on the transcendent perfection of wisdom was revealed, the mighty earth shook, shook more intensely, and shook with utmost intensity, in six ways. It trembled, trembled more intensely, and trembled with utmost intensity. When the eastern direction was high, the western direction was low. When the western direction was high, the eastern direction was low. When the southern direction was high, the northern direction was low. When the northern direction was high, the southern direction was low. When the centre was high, the periphery was low. When the periphery was high, the centre was low.

32.57 Many hundred billion trillion gods caused their divine cymbals to reverberate through the firmament above. Ten million gods caused a cascade of divine flowers—blue lotuses, night lotuses, and white lotuses—to fall. The blind found their sight. The deaf found their hearing. The insane found their mindfulness. The distracted found their equipoise. The sound of a trillion cymbals indeed resounded without having been played. Many marvelous phenomena such as these occurred in the world. Gods and humans, numerous as the particles of the buddhafi elds, developed the mind set on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Sentient beings, numerous as the particles of Jambudvīpa, comprehended the sacred doctrine, that is to say, the immaculate, pure, and untainted eye of the sacred doctrine, with respect to all things. Bodhisattvas, as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, accepted that phenomena are non-arising. Many sentient beings attained the meditative stabilities, the mnemonic incantations, and the [bodhisattva] levels. An innumerable, countless number of sentient beings passed away from the three inferior realms and were reborn among the gods and humans.

32.58 The entire assembly also beheld throughout the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, the Lord Buddha who taught this doctrinal sūtra on the chapters of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, which had been requested by the fully ordained monks Śāradvatīputra and Subhūti, in its entirety, without omitting or adding any words and syllables.

32.59 This is the second promulgation of the doctrinal wheel by the lord buddhas in the world, which was comprehended in all buddhafi elds by an astonishing, innumerable, countless, inconceivable, and incomparable number of sentient beings. Such were the words that arose in the presence of the maṇḍalas of the assembly, throughout all these buddhafi elds!

32.60 *This completes the thirty-second chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “The Attainment of Manifest Enlightenment.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO:
THE ATTAINMENT OF MANIFEST ENLIGHTENMENT

32.A The six transcendent perfections ... the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, the three gateways to liberation, the {eighteen} aspects of emptiness, the eight aspects of liberation, the nine serial steps of meditative absorption, and similarly, the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, and [all other fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, constitute the path of great bodhisattva beings. Furthermore ... all things constitute the path of great bodhisattva beings ... There is nothing at all in which great bodhisattva beings should not train. If you ask why, it is because without training with respect to all phenomena and attributes, great bodhisattva beings cannot attain omniscience.

32.B “All things are empty of inherent existence ... If all things were apprehended not to be empty, great bodhisattva beings would not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... It is because all things are empty of inherent existence that great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Subhūti, you have said that if all things are empty of inherent existence, how could great bodhisattva beings differentiate between attributes that are mundane or supramundane, and so forth, up to and including the attributes of genuinely perfect buddhas—knowing whence and whereby anything arises and what constitutes anything. If ... sentient beings knew that all things are empty of inherent existence, then great bodhisattva beings would not undertake training with respect to all things and attain omniscience. However ... it is because sentient beings do not know that all things are empty that great bodhisattva beings do undertake training with respect to all things and attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and that, after attaining buddhahood, they establish the sacred doctrine and teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings ... Great bodhisattva beings should consider such matters at the outset by training in the bodhisattva path, thinking, ‘There is nothing but fixation. There is nothing at all that can be apprehended {as ultimately real} in terms of inherent existence. Since at this point I do not apprehend anything at all {as ultimately real}, having considered the inherent existence of all things, why should I be fixated on phenomena?’ ... When great bodhisattva beings at present consider the inherent existence of phenomena, they do not become fixated on anything at all, whether it be the six transcendent perfections ... {up to and including} arhatship, individual enlightenment, or unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, it is because they see that all things are empty of inherent existence, and emptiness does not become fixated on emptiness. Since they do not apprehend even emptiness, how could they possibly be fixated on emptiness! So it is ... that great bodhisattva beings abide without fixation on anything.”

32.C After undertaking and maintaining this training, they examine the conduct of all sentient beings. When the things in which those beings are engaged are examined, they are [seen to] be grasping at that which does not exist. Having seen those sentient beings engaging in grasping at that which does not exist, they further reflect, ‘These sentient beings will easily be freed from grasping at that which does not exist!’ Then, while maintaining the six transcendent perfections, through skill in means they turn sentient beings away from grasping at that which does not exist, and, having turned them away, encourage them toward the six attributes [of the transcendent perfections], instructing them as follows: ‘O sentient beings! You should dispense generosity and you will not be without resources! You should not make assumptions on account of these {fruitional} resources. They lack even the slightest essen-

ce! Similarly, you should maintain ethical discipline ... practice tolerance ... undertake perseverance ... be absorbed in the meditative concentrations ... {and} cultivate wisdom! But do not make assumptions on account of these {transcendent perfections and their fruitional outcomes}! They lack even the slightest essence! Similarly, you should abide in the fruit of having entered the stream ... in [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship ... in individual enlightenment ... in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... {and} in all the attributes of the buddhas, but you should not make assumptions on their account! They lack even the slightest essence!’ Teaching and instructing those sentient beings accordingly, the bodhisattvas continue to practice the path of enlightenment, and they do not become fixated on anything at all. If you ask why, it is because, owing to the emptiness of essential nature, they have no fixation on anything since all things lack any essential nature by which they would become fixated, upon which they would become fixated, or which would become fixated. Consequently, great bodhisattva beings practice the path of perfect enlightenment, but do not abide in anything at all. Indeed they abide in a non-abiding manner. They practice the transcendent perfection{s} of generosity ... ethical discipline ... tolerance ... perseverance ... meditative concentration, and ... wisdom, but they do not abide therein. They become equipoised in the first meditative concentration, but they do not abide therein ... because [the first] meditative concentration is empty of its essential nature, while those who become absorbed in it are also empty, and the aspects [of it] through which they [become absorbed] are also empty ... up to and including the fourth meditative concentration. Similarly, they also become absorbed in loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity ... in the four formless absorptions, the eight aspects of liberation, and the nine serial steps of meditative absorption, but they do not abide therein. Similarly, they attain the fruit of having entered the stream ... up to and including arhatship ... {and} individual enlightenment, but they do not abide therein. If you ask why, there are two reasons: those fruits are without essential nature, and they themselves are not satisfied merely by abiding therein. Indeed, they think, ‘I should not attain the fruit of entering the stream, and should avoid abiding in it. Similarly, I should not abide in [the other fruits], up to and including the level of the pratyekabuddhas!’ ... because they also think, ‘I will undoubtedly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Those attributes [of the lower fruits] are indeed subsumed within it!’ So it is that great bodhisattva beings, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, never develop any thoughts whatsoever apart from the mind of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. From the first [bodhisattva] level up to the tenth [bodhisattva] level it is the same—they exclusively maintain the mind of unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment ... Great bodhisattva beings who, without distraction, advance courageously through body, speech, and mind as appropriate are at all times accompanied by the mind set on enlightenment. Abiding in this mind set on enlightenment, they are undistracted on the path of enlightenment.

32.D “Venerable Lord! If all things are non-arising, then ... how will enlightenment be attained by a path that is cultivated?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti! It will not!” “Then is enlightenment attained by means of a path that is not cultivated?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti! It is not!” “Well then, is enlightenment attained by means of a path that is neither cultivated nor not cultivated?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti! It is not!” “Venerable Lord! By what, then, will enlightenment be attained?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti! Enlightenment will not be attained by means of the path, nor will it be attained by means of that which is not the path. If you ask why ... it is because enlightenment itself is the path and the path itself is enlightenment.” “Venerable Lord! If enlightenment itself is the path and the path itself is enlightenment, then great bodhisattva beings would themselves have attained enlightenment, so why would the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas demonstrate the ten powers, and ... {so for-

th}?” The Blessed One replied ... “Subhūti, do you think that the buddhas attain enlightenment?” “No, Venerable Lord! If one were to ask why, it is because the lord buddhas are themselves enlightenment, and enlightenment is itself the buddhas.” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, you have just asked whether the bodhisattvas have themselves not attained enlightenment since enlightenment itself is the path and the path itself is enlightenment. Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings, after perfecting the six transcendent perfections ... the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, and similarly the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment by means of wisdom that is instantaneously endowed with the adamantine meditative stability. And in the period after they have attained buddhahood, those bodhisattvas will be revealed as tathāgatas, who have mastered all phenomena.”

32.E “Venerable Lord! How do great bodhisattva beings refine the buddhafiels?” ... “Subhūti, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, and until their final rebirth, great bodhisattva beings purify the negativity of others, including their negativity of body, their negativity of speech, and their negativity of mind ... The killing of living creatures, the stealing of what is not given, and sexual misconduct due to desire constitute the negativity of body. Lying, slander, verbal abuse, and irresponsible chatter constitute the negativity of speech. Covetousness, malice, and wrong views constitute the negativity of mind. Moreover ... any aggregate of ethical discipline that is impure is [classified] as negativity of body and negativity of speech. Any thought of miserliness ... degenerate morality ... agitation ... indolence ... non-composure, and ... stupidity are {classified as} negativity of mind. Moreover ... any thought without the four applications of mindfulness ... the four correct exertions, the four supports for miraculous ability, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven branches of enlightenment, the noble eightfold path, and the three gateways to liberation ... {and} any longing for the fruit of entering the stream ... up to and including individual enlightenment, is, for great bodhisattva beings, [classified] as negativity of body, negativity of speech, and negativity of mind. Moreover ... any notion of physical forms ... feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness {as ultimately real}, and likewise, any notion of the eyes ... ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty ... sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles, and mental phenomena ... the sensory element of the eyes, [and so forth] ... the sensory element of mental consciousness, [and so forth] ... the world system{s} of desire ... form ... {and} formlessness ... men ... women ... boys ... {and} girls ... {as well as} virtuous ... non-virtuous ... specified ... unspecified ... contaminated ... uncontaminated ... mundane ... supramundane ... conditioned ... {and} unconditioned phenomena {as ultimately real} is, for great bodhisattva beings, {classified} as negativity of body, negativity of speech, and negativity of mind ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom have abandoned all these aspects of negativity. They dispense generosity to those who need it ... {and} give food to those who need food ... drink to those who need drink ... transportation to those who need transport, and ... [other gifts], including all human necessities whatsoever, to those who wish for {these} ... Furthermore, they also encourage others to acquire generosity, inducing and establishing them therein. Having concentrated all these roots of virtue, and after making common cause with all sentient beings, with an attitude of confidence, they then dedicate them so that the buddhafiels might be refined.

32.F Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings fill the world systems of the great trichilocosm with the seven precious things {of gold, silver, turquoise, coral, pearl, emerald, and sapphire} and present these as an offering to the three

precious jewels. Having made this offering, they dedicate it with a joyful attitude, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may this buddhafiield be fashioned of the seven precious things!’ Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings make offerings to the reliquary stūpas of the tathāgatas with divine and human music. Having made these offerings, they then dedicate these roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may the sound of divine music always arise in this buddhafiield!’ Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings, by filling the world systems of the great trichiliocosm with divine perfume, constantly make offerings to the tathāgatas and the reliquary stūpas of the tathāgatas. Having made these offerings, they then dedicate these roots of virtue, making common cause with all sentient beings, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may the fragrance of divine perfume always arise in this buddhafiield!’ Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings make offerings of food with a hundred flavors to the tathāgatas, bodhisattvas, and pratyekabuddhas, as well as to the reliquary stūpas of the tathāgatas, and the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas, and having made these offerings, they dedicate them, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may I attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment in this buddhafiield, and may all sentient beings possess divine foods with a hundred flavors!’ Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings make offerings of divine and human unguents to the tathāgatas of the world systems in the great trichiliocosm, as well as to the reliquary stūpas of the tathāgatas, and to bodhisattvas, pratyekabuddhas, and the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas, and having made these offerings, they dedicate them, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may I attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment in this buddhafiield, and may all sentient beings possess divine unguents!’ Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings, through the good intentions that arise in their minds, make offerings of the desirable attributes of the five senses to the tathāgatas, great bodhisattva beings, the pratyekabuddhas, and the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas, and having made these offerings, they dedicate them, saying, ‘Through these, my roots of virtue, may I attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment in this buddhafiield, and, through the good intentions that arise in my mind, may there be present the pleasant, desirable attributes of the five senses which all sentient beings possess!’ Moreover ... great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom think, ‘I should become equipoised in the first meditative concentration. I should encourage all sentient beings, also, to assume the first meditative concentration ... up to and including the fourth meditative concentration ... In the same vein, I should induce them and establish them in the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, and so forth. Similarly, I should cultivate the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment ... {and} induce all sentient beings and establish them in the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment. In that buddhafiield where I will have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, all sentient beings should not in any way lack the four meditative concentrations ... the four immeasurable aspirations, the four formless absorptions, or the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment!’ ... Great bodhisattva beings who practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom will refine the buddhafiields accordingly. By engaging in this enlightenment, all their wishes will be fulfilled. They themselves will possess all virtuous attributes, and they will encourage others also to assume all these virtuous attributes, inducing them and establishing them therein. They will reveal their own noble forms to those sentient beings, and also explain the reasons for [the emergence of] their [noble forms].

32.G When sentient beings see {these noble forms} they will long to have them, and they will exclusively engage in conduct that is the cause of [obtaining] such [forms]. Acquiring the power of merit, those sentient beings will themselves eventually actualize such noble forms. All of those sentient beings whom [the bodhisattvas] have brought to

maturity will be born alongside them in those buddhafiels. The sounds of emptiness, signlessness, and aspirationlessness that emerge will either be generated as internal sounds through velar, labial, dental, lingual, and palatal articulation, and so forth, or else ... will be stirred by the external sounds of the wind, indicating how phenomena are essentially non-arising, that all things are empty of all things, that they are signless because they are empty, and that, being signless, they are aspirationless. Day and night such teachings of the sacred doctrine will emerge, whether those sentient beings are standing, sitting, lying down, or walking. Apart from that, in those buddhafiels that have not yet been refined; where the three inferior realms are conceived; where there are erroneous views; where there are desire, hatred, and delusion; where there are śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas; where the hallmarks of suffering, impermanence, emptiness, and non-self are conceived; and similarly, where egotism, possessiveness, acquisition, latent impulses, ensnarement, and their fruits are conceived—in such buddhafiels, those bodhisattvas will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and after attaining enlightenment they will be praised by all the lord buddhas who reside in the world systems of the ten directions. All sentient beings who hear the name of this tathāgata will themselves certainly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. When this tathāgata teaches the sacred doctrine, no sentient beings will hesitate, wondering whether this doctrine is in fact the doctrine. If you ask why ... it is because those sentient beings will know that with respect to the real nature of phenomena, there is nothing at all that exists ... It is in this way that great bodhisattva beings refine the buddhafiels.

32.H Moreover ... when those sentient beings who do not possess the roots of virtue and who have not developed the roots of virtue under [the guidance of] the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and śrāvakas, and who have been mishandled by evil associates, hear the sacred doctrine, they will be discouraged by whatever aspects of their mistaken views—the view of self or the nihilistic view—prevail. That is to say, they abide in the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism, and so forth. They themselves are gripped by the misapprehension that all things exist, and they introduce others to this misapprehension. They harbor the notion that those who are not genuinely perfect buddhas are genuinely perfect buddhas, and ... the notion that those who are genuinely perfect buddhas are not genuinely perfect buddhas. They profess that which is not the doctrine to be the doctrine, and they abandon the sacred doctrine. Having abandoned the sacred doctrine, after they have passed away, they will fall into inferior realms, and be reborn in the hells. Thereupon, great bodhisattva beings will travel to those abodes of the hells in order to assist those sentient beings. Freed from their [former] negative views, those beings will then pass away from the hells and be reborn equal in fortune to human beings. Those who are born as such will be established in the stable community that is intent on {the} genuine reality {of phenomena}. In any event, they will not fall into inferior realms and at the same time will be reborn in this buddhafielf ... Once sentient beings have been reborn in these buddhafiels, great bodhisattva beings will continue to refine the buddhafiels, until all those sentient beings are no longer consumed with doubt concerning mundane, supramundane, contaminated, uncontaminated, conditioned, unconditioned, or any other phenomena, and until they definitively attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

32.I “Venerable Lord! Will great bodhisattva beings be stable in the community that is intent on {the} genuine reality {of phenomena}? ... In which community will they be stable?” ... “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings will not be stable in the community of śrāvakas ... {or} in the community of pratyekabuddhas, but ... will be stable in the community of the genuinely perfect buddhas ... Those great bodhisattva beings who have first begun to set their mind on

enlightenment are indeed stable. Those [bodhisattvas] who are irreversible and those in their final rebirth are also stable.” “Venerable Lord! Will great bodhisattva beings who are stable in their intent on {the} genuine reality {of phenomena} be reborn among the denizens of the hells?” The Blessed One replied ... “Subhūti, do you think that one who is on the eighth [level], one who has entered the stream, one who is tied to one more rebirth, one who is no longer subject to rebirth, one who has attained arhatship, or individual enlightenment, will be reborn in the inferior realms?” “No, Venerable Lord!” The Blessed One replied, “Similarly, Subhūti, it is impossible that great bodhisattva beings who, from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment, practice the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly maintain ethical discipline, practice tolerance, undertake perseverance with respect to virtuous attributes, become absorbed in the meditative concentrations, cultivate wisdom, and have abandoned all non-virtuous attributes, and remain firm, should be reborn in the inferior realms or be reborn among long-lived gods! It is impossible that they should be reborn among frontier tribesmen who do not engage in virtuous acts, or among barbarous human beings, or ... among households or frontier tribesmen who maintain wrong views, where the four assemblies—that is to say ... fully ordained monks ... fully ordained nuns ... laymen, and ... laywomen—are not found! It is impossible for them to be reborn in places where the word{s} ‘Buddha,’ ... ‘Dharma,’ and ... ‘Saṅgha’ are unheard, or where the words ‘inaction’ and ‘wrong view’ are heard! Subhūti, it is impossible that great bodhisattva beings, who have first begun to set their mind on enlightenment, after entering upon the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment with higher aspiration, should adopt the ways of the ten non-virtuous actions!”

32.J “Venerable Lord! If great bodhisattva beings are endowed with many roots of virtue, why are they reborn in the animal realms ... ?” ... “Subhūti, great bodhisattva beings do not assume a body that will be reborn in the animal realms due to non-virtuous past actions, but they assume a corporeal form by which they might be causally effective in order to benefit sentient beings ... Great bodhisattva beings are endowed with skill in means whereby they may take birth in the animal realms, and mingle with assassins. Do śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas have this skill in means, which would enable them also to bring those [creatures] and themselves to maturity in the unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and make those assassins cease from causing further harm? For these reasons ... great bodhisattva beings who are seized by great compassion, bring great compassion to its fulfilment. Even though they are born in the animal realms, for the sake of sentient beings, you should know that they are untainted by the defects of taking birth in the animal realms.” ... “Venerable Lord! Maintaining which virtuous attributes do great bodhisattva beings acquire corporeal forms that take birth in the animal realms?” ... “Subhūti, there is no virtuous attribute at all which should not be perfected by great bodhisattva beings, commencing exclusively from the time when they first begin to set their mind on enlightenment until they are seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment. It is impossible for them to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, while any of these are unperfected ... When they have trained therein, they will attain omniscience. They will abandon all afflicted mental states, and all involuntary reincarnation through propensities.” “Venerable Lord! How are great bodhisattva beings, starting from those who possess all positive attributes and continuing as far as those who possess sublime pristine cognition, born in the inferior realms?” The Blessed One replied ... “Subhūti, do you think that the tathāgatas are sublime and without contaminants?” “Yes, Venerable Lord, it is so!” ... “Subhūti, do you think that the tathāgatas may emanate an animal body that takes birth among the animal realms, and having emanated [that form], then engage in buddha activities?” “Yes, Venerable Lord, they may do so!” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, do you think that the tathāgatas are creatures of the animal realms?” “No, Venerable Lord!” The Blessed One replied,

“Similarly, Subhūti, even great bodhisattva beings who possess the uncontaminated pristine cognition of the sublime path may, in order to bring sentient beings to maturity, assume at will such corporeal forms by which they might bring to maturity any kind of sentient beings among the five classes of living beings. Subhūti, do you think, for example, that an arhat can emanate as an arhat whose contaminants have ceased, and having emanated [that form] then induce it to undertake the activities of an arhat, whereupon it would bring joy to the four assemblies through these activities?” “Yes, Venerable Lord, it is so!” The Blessed One replied, “Similarly, Subhūti, even great bodhisattva beings who possess sublime, uncontaminated pristine cognition may assume such corporeal forms by which they might act on behalf of sentient beings. Those who have assumed such forms do not at all experience sufferings, and they are untainted also by the corresponding defects. Subhūti, do you think that when an illusionist ... conjures the form of an elephant {and so forth} ... that those forms conjured by the illusionist ... actually turn into an elephant {and so forth} ... ?” “No, Venerable Lord!” The Blessed One replied, “Similarly, Subhūti, even though great bodhisattva beings who possess sublime, uncontaminated pristine cognition may reveal such corporeal forms at will, acting on behalf of sentient beings, they are indeed untainted by the feelings that they possess.” ... “Venerable Lord, in which [pure] attributes do great bodhisattva beings abide when they then employ such skill in means?” The Blessed One replied, “Subhūti, they abide in the transcendent perfection of wisdom when they employ such skillful means. Through this skill in means, though they may traverse all the world systems in the ten directions ... and then act on behalf of those sentient beings, they do not hanker for them. If you ask why, it is because they do not apprehend {as ultimately real} anything at all by which or for which they would hanker. If you ask why, Subhūti, it is because all things are empty of their essential nature, emptiness does not hanker, and there is no one who hankers for emptiness. If you ask why, it is because emptiness does not apprehend emptiness. This, Subhūti, is the emptiness of non-apprehension. Abiding therein, great bodhisattva beings will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

32.K When this doctrinal sūtra comprising the chapters on the transcendent perfection of wisdom was revealed, the mighty earth shook ... in six ways ... Many hundred billion trillion gods caused their divine cymbals to reverberate through the firmament above. Ten million gods caused a cascade of divine flowers—blue lotuses, night lotuses, and white lotuses—to fall. The blind found their sight. The deaf found their hearing. The insane found their mindfulness. The distracted found their equipoise. The sound of a trillion cymbals indeed resounded without having been played ... Gods and humans, numerous as the particles of the buddhafi elds, developed the mind set on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. Sentient beings, numerous as the particles of Jambudvīpa, comprehended the sacred doctrine, that is to say, the immaculate, pure, and untainted eye of the sacred doctrine, with respect to all things. Bodhisattvas, as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, accepted that phenomena are non-arising. Many sentient beings attained the meditative stabilities, the mnemonic incantations, and the [bodhisattva] levels. An innumerable, countless number of sentient beings passed away from the three inferior realms and were reborn among the gods and humans. The entire assembly also beheld throughout the ten directions ... the Lord Buddha who taught this doctrinal sūtra on the chapters of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, which had been requested by the fully ordained monks Śāradvatīputra and Subhūti, in its entirety, without omitting or adding any words and syllables. This is the second promulgation of the doctrinal wheel by the lord buddhas in the world, which was comprehended in all buddhafi elds by an astonishing, innumerable ... inconceivable, and incomparable number of sentient beings. Such were the words that arose in the presence of the maṇḍalas of the assembly, throughout all these buddhafi elds!

COMMENTARY

In order to attain the state of being Vajra, the Vajra-being, the Vajra-sattva (for sattva means being), the great bodhisattva being must perfect and attain the “adamantine” mind or the uncrushable diamond-like Vajra mind (for adamant means diamond-like, or Vajra-like). Here the awakening conjured individuated being comes into perfect unity with the Vajra mind of God's diamond-being—the Vajrasattva—which is the immaculate conception of the manifest Son of the Father Creator, known as Vajradhara. This immaculate conception of the manifest Son, known as Vajrasattva, perceives the indivisibility of the ‘one and only’ Son, manifest as the undivided natural luminosity of mind of every conjured individuated being. **In order for the great bodhisattva being to attain this state of being Vajra—the Vajrasattva—they must cultivate and perfect the ‘volition’ of the bodhisattva to awaken every conjured individuated being, to awaken every part of the Son.** As revealed in *The Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* by the bodhisattva Maitreya, this cultivation and perfection of the ‘volition’ of the bodhisattva takes place over two consecutive eons of time, in concordance with the elimination of all contaminants, where these great bodhisattva beings cultivate the two-fold wakefulness of (1) cultivating non-conceptual wakefulness, in perfecting the qualities of individual buddhahood, and of (2) ripening sentient beings to the real nature of phenomena. Along this path, as revealed by the Buddha in chapter ten of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines*: “Great bodhisattva beings, abiding in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, actualize the extrasensory power of realizing the cessation of contaminants, and yet they do not rest in the levels of the śrāvakas and the levels of the pratyekabuddhas ... Through the adamant meditative stability that comes from that extrasensory power, they abandon all involuntary reincarnation through propensities, and yet ... apart from focusing on {the attainment of} omniscience, they have no other wish.” **Although the adamant meditative stability comes to that great bodhisattva being at the point of realizing the cessation of contaminants—where through its power they have abandoned all involuntary reincarnation—they will purposefully not enter into the adamant meditative stability,** or any other meditative stabilities of the buddhas, until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood and cultivated and perfected the volition of the bodhisattva after two incalculable eons of time, and only then will they enter omniscience. For as the Buddha reveals in chapter twenty-five: “Although they have set their minds accordingly [on enlightenment] and practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom through skill in means, they will not enter into the meditative stabilities of the buddhas {which include the adamant meditative stability}. At that time, they possess the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and though they may even become equipoised in those [fruitful] attributes, they will not actualize the finality of {relative} existence until they have attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment {for all sentient beings}.” **For if the great bodhisattva being were to enter prematurely into the meditative stabilities of the buddhas prior to perfecting the volition of the bodhisattva, and prior to maturing to the tenth bodhisattva level, they would actualize within their own mind the finality of relative existence.** For as the Buddha expounds in chapter twenty-seven: “When, with respect to all things, great bodhisattva beings ... survey and abide in the modality of voidness {of all things}, the modality of quiescence {of all things}, the modality of the ending {of all things}, and the modality of cessation {of all things}, they do not realize the quiescence of all things {and thereby actualize the finality of relative existence} until they have attained omniscience {for all sentient beings}, seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment.” **When, after two incalculable eons of time, the great bodhisattva being perfects the volition of the bodhisattva, in accordance with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, they will then instantaneously attain the adamant meditative stability—whi-**

ch is their ‘immaculate’ state of being **Vajrasattva**, and the final, fundamental transformation of the great bodhisattva being in the absence of all contaminants. Thus does the Buddha reveal in the chapter (above): “*Great bodhisattva beings ... will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment by means of wisdom that is instantaneously endowed with the adamantine meditative stability.*” Abiding in the state of Vajrasattva, with the uncrushable volition of the bodhisattva to awaken every sentient being to unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, the great bodhisattva being then attains the unsurpassed wakefulness of the all-seeing omniscient mind. Thus does the Buddha reveal in chapter eleven: “*{Tenth level} great bodhisattva beings, immediately after attaining the mind set on enlightenment, {attain and} become absorbed in {the} adamantine meditative stability {which is the final, fundamental transformation in the absence of contaminants}, and then {in working for the benefit of all sentient beings} attain {the unsurpassed wakefulness of} omniscience.*” **Only then, when every sentient being is seated at the Focal Point of Enlightenment, will “the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas become absorbed in the adamantine meditative stability and demonstrate the dissolution of the adamantine {Vajra} body,”** as affirmed by the Buddha in chapter thirty-three. For as revealed in the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*, “*the Tathagata’s body ... is the Dharma-Body ... {and it} is adamantine and indestructible,*” yet only for as long as the illusion of relativity continues and only up until every sentient being has attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

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So we can see from the bodhisattva Maitreya (above) that the unsurpassed wakefulness of omniscience for every conjured individuated being, will only actualize when the great bodhisattva being has—for two incalculable eons—cultivated the two-fold wakefulness of (1) cultivating non-conceptual wakefulness, in perfecting the qualities of individual buddhahood, and of (2) ripening sentient beings to the real nature of phenomena, and thus establishing all sentient beings on the path of omniscience. For the difference between individual enlightenment and unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, is that one is achieved by the individual and one is achieved by the whole. And this is why the Great Vehicle of the bodhisattva—the path of omniscience—is centred around awakening every part of Our natural luminosity of mind to awaken every part of the whole. For how can Our natural luminosity of mind, which is the undivided mind of every conjured individuated being, be split up and separated as parts of the whole? This would be impossible! Thus does the Buddha reveal in chapter twenty-four of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines* (of great bodhisattva beings): “*They themselves should attain omniscience, manifestly perfect enlightenment, and they should also praise and rejoice in others who attain omniscience, manifestly perfect buddhahood.*” For what they have attained is the ‘bodhicitta’ aspiration to awaken every part of the whole to omniscience. For while individually they have attained the omniscient mind, they have not yet attained the omniscient mind for their whole undivided natural luminosity of mind. **For in no way, shape, or form does the great bodhisattva being, on the path of attaining manifestly perfect enlightenment, identify as the ‘individual’ mind,** but only as the undivided natural luminosity of mind, that is Our singularity in God.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE: THE CONCLUSION

33.1 Then Senior Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Are there not some among the classes of sentient beings who do not develop faith in this exegesis of the profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, who are not motivated by joy, confidence, and higher aspiration, who do not make offerings to the assembly with body and

mind, who even depart from this assembly, and, in addition, who have abandoned it and are abandoning it?”

33.2 The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, among the classes of sentient beings, there are indeed some who do not develop faith in this exegesis of the profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, who are not motivated by joy, confidence, and higher aspiration, who do not make offerings to the assembly with body and mind, and who even walk away from this assembly. If you ask why, it is because they walked away in the past when this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom was explained, and they also walk away at the present when this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is being explained.

33.3 “They do not make offerings to the assembly with body and mind, and they accrue deeds that obscure wisdom. Those who have engaged in and accrued deeds that obscure wisdom abandon this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. By obstructing this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, they obstruct the omniscience of the lord buddhas of the past, future, and present. Those who have engaged in and accrued deeds that abandon omniscience, accrue deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine. Those who have engaged in and accrued deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine will roast among the denizens of the hells for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years, for many hundreds of thousands of years, and for many hundreds of billion trillion years.

33.4 “Then they will proceed to the great hells, where they will be incinerated by an inferno; having been incinerated, they will become sentient denizens of the great hells in other world systems. They will be reborn therein, and they will burn therein for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years, for many hundreds of thousands of years, and for many hundreds of billion trillion years. Then, from those great hells, they will again proceed to the great hells. Even after departing thence, they will once again be incinerated by an inferno, and having been incinerated, they will again become sentient denizens of the great hells in other world systems. Reborn therein, they will burn for many hundreds of billion trillion years. From the great hells, they will once again proceed to the great hells. Moving from the great hells to the great hells, they will again be incinerated by an inferno, and after being incinerated, they will be cast by the wind of past actions into the eastern direction, and then cast [in the other directions], up to and including the intermediate directions. Then when they are reborn, they will again proceed from great hells to great hells. Again they will be incinerated by an inferno, and having been incinerated, they will pass away. Those who have engaged in and accrued deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine will once again be reborn and again they will proceed from great hells to great hells. Again they will experience the sufferings of the denizens of the hells in the great hells for many hundreds of billion trillion years.

33.5 “For as long as they are incinerated by an inferno, they will experience the sufferings of the denizens of the hells. Then, after being incinerated, they will pass away and be reborn in this world system. Here, they will be reborn in the world systems of all the ten directions, equal in fortune to those who are born within the animal realms. Just as they will be equal in fortune to those who are born within the animal realms, so they will be reborn within the world systems of the ten directions. Having been born therein, they will again experience the sufferings of those who frequent the world of Yama, the Lord of Death, for many hundreds of billion trillion years. Then, when the sufferings of those who frequent the world of Yama, the Lord of Death, have come to an end, they will be reborn equal in fortune to human beings, but among blind householders, or among outcaste householders, or among household-

ers who are refuse scavengers.

33.6 “Being reborn in those states, they will become blind, lame, decrepit, or without a tongue, without arms, without legs, without ears, with leprosy or morbid pallor, or else without all their limbs intact. They will always be reborn in worlds where the word ‘Buddha’ is unheard, where the word ‘Dharma’ is unheard, and where the word ‘Saṅgha’ is unheard. If you ask why, it is because they will have engaged in and accrued deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine, and the consequences of having adopted [such actions] will have been fully satisfied.”

33.7 Then Senior Ānanda said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! The inexpiable crimes are five in number. This engaging in and accruing of deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine would be the sixth!” The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, those individuals are not said to be superior but utterly debased. When this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is explained and demonstrated, they think they should oppose this transcendent perfection of wisdom, saying ‘This is not the Vinaya! This is not the teaching of the Teacher! This has not been spoken by the Tathāgata! We and you should not undertake training in it!’ They themselves abandon it, and they also separate many sentient beings from it. They injure their own minds, and they also intend to injure the minds of others. Having poisoned their own minds, they also intend to poison the minds of others. They themselves have degenerated from the pathways to the higher realms and to liberation [from cyclic existence], and they intend to induce others also to degenerate from the pathways to the higher realms and to liberation [from cyclic existence]. They themselves neither understand nor comprehend this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. They intend to abandon it, and they also induce others to do so.

33.8 “Ānanda, I do not rejoice when this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is proclaimed to such individuals, and I am displeased when I hear them, let alone see them, let alone consort with them! If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because such individuals defame the sacred doctrine. They are like rotten trees and they side with evil. Ānanda, such individuals who intend [others] to listen to them will be destitute owing to their unethical behavior. Ānanda, any individuals who would defame the transcendent perfection of wisdom should comprehend the final outcome. Those who have committed the fault of defaming the sacred doctrine will become denizens of the hells, animals, or individuals frequenting the world of Yama, the Lord of Death.”

33.9 “Venerable Lord! The Blessed One has not spoken of the physical states of those individuals who will be reborn in the inferior realms, having defamed the sacred doctrine.” The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, leave aside this description of the physical states of those individuals who will be reborn in the inferior realms, having defamed the sacred doctrine! If you ask why, if one were to hear the description of the physical states of those individuals who have defamed the sacred doctrine, one would vomit blood from the mouth and die, or experience the sufferings of near death. Would that one might not, having heard this, be pained with sorrow, or become shriveled and withered! Such will be the physical states endured by those individuals who have defamed the sacred doctrine! The Blessed One has spared Senior Ānanda this scenario.”

33.10 Then Senior Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! How are the bodies of those who will be reborn in the inferior realms, having defamed the sacred doctrine and what sort of bodies will they assume?” The Blessed

One replied, “Ānanda, those individuals who have engaged in and accrued deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine will experience the sufferings of the denizens of the hells over a long period of time, and similarly, they will experience the sufferings of the animals over a long period of time, and likewise they will experience the sufferings of the worlds of Yama, Lord of Death, over a long period of time. Such should be made apparent to the sentient beings of posterity.”

33.11 “Venerable Lord! It is as you have said! Venerable Lord! The sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who are of positive disposition are the supporters of the sacred doctrines of the buddhas. With the words ‘Would that I might not experience such sufferings over a long period of time in the inferior realms!’ they do not abandon the sacred doctrine even for the sake of their own lives.”

33.12 Thereupon, Senior Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who are skillful in disposition, restrained in their physical actions, and similarly restrained in their verbal and mental actions hear this teaching concerning individuals who abandon the sacred doctrine and defame the sacred doctrine, they might appropriately say, ‘Would that I might not experience such sufferings! I would not even behold the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas. I would not even hear the sacred doctrine. I would not even see the saṅgha of the Tathāgata. I would not even venerate these [precious jewels]. I would not even be born in the buddhafiels where buddhas emerge. Instead, I would become an impoverished person, or belong to an inferior household, such as the households of outcastes or the households of refuse scavengers, or else I would be blind, lame, or [succumb to other infirmities], up to and including deformity of the limbs!’ Venerable Lord! How do those who have obsessively carried out and accrued unendurable deeds of speech carry out and accrue deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine?”

33.13 The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, if you ask how those who have obsessively carried out and accrued unendurable deeds of speech carry out and accrue deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine, Ānanda, there are deluded persons who have received the renunciate ordination according to this Vinaya, which has been eloquently expressed, and who then intend to defame this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom within the assembly. Intending to oppose it, they defame the transcendent perfection of wisdom. By opposing it, they defame and oppose the enlightenment of the lord buddhas. By defaming the enlightenment of the buddhas, they defame omniscience, which the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the past, the future, and the present all have. By opposing omniscience, they oppose the sacred doctrine. By opposing the sacred doctrine, they oppose the saṅgha. By opposing the saṅgha, they oppose the genuine view concerning the world. By opposing the genuine view concerning the world, they oppose the four applications of mindfulness, and similarly, they oppose [all the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience. By opposing omniscience [and so forth], they acquire an innumerable, countless, and immeasurable number of demerits. By acquiring an innumerable, countless, and immeasurable number of demerits, they experience innumerable, countless, and immeasurable sufferings and discomforts among the denizens of the hells, among animals, and among anguished spirits.”

33.14 Then Senior Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! In what ways do those deluded persons who abandon this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom actually abandon it?” The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda,

those deluded persons abandon this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom in four ways.”

33.15 “What are the four ways?” The Blessed One replied, “They are as follows: (1) having no faith in the sacred doctrine, and lacking conviction and volition with regard to this profound doctrine, through the machinations of Māra; (2) falling into the clutches of evil associates; (3) being fixated upon and lacking perseverance with respect to the five psycho-physical aggregates; and (4) esteeming oneself and deprecating others. Ānanda, deluded persons who possess these four abandon this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.”

33.16 Then Senior Ānanda said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! So, they would regress and become degenerate if they were to engage in such deeds destitute of the sacred doctrine. This is why bodhisattvas should restrain their verbal actions!” “Ānanda, it is so! It is as you have said.”

33.17 Thereupon Senior Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! What is the extent of the stock of merit of those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who hear this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and having heard it, then have faith in it, and retain, hold, recite aloud, master, and are attentive to it in the correct manner, and who commit it to writing and have it committed to writing?” The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, when, on the one hand, there are some sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who retain, hold, recite aloud, master, and are attentive in the correct manner to this transcendent perfection of wisdom, committing it to writing and having it committed to writing, and, on the other hand, when there are tathāgatas who maintain the three miracles and teach the doctrine to sentient beings so that they retain, hold, recite aloud, master, and are attentive in the correct manner to the sūtras, the sayings in prose and verse, the prophetic declarations, the verses, the aphorisms, the contexts, the quotations, the tales of past lives, the narratives, the marvelous events, and the established instructions, the merits that the latter will amass will not approach even a hundredth part of the aforementioned merit accrued by those who retain this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and are attentive to it in the correct manner, and so forth. Indeed, this latter merit cannot be expressed as even a thousandth part, a hundred thousandth part, a billionth part, a ten billionth part, a hundred billionth part, or indeed as any other number, fraction, quantity, or material part.

33.18 “Moreover, Ānanda, when, on the one hand, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems of the eastern direction, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and similarly, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems of the southern direction, the western direction, the northern direction, and similarly of the four intermediate directions, the nadir, and the zenith, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, maintain the three miracles and teach the doctrine, that is to say, the sūtras, the sayings in prose and verse, the prophetic declarations, the verses, the aphorisms, the contexts, the quotations, the tales of past lives, the narratives, the marvelous events, and the established instructions to sentient beings, and when, on the other hand, there are also some sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who receive, retain, master, and recite this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and also teach its doctrine to others, the latter will be equal in their stock of merit to the lord buddhas. If you ask why, it is because even the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, originate from this [transcendent perfection of wisdom]. Even the three miracles of the tathāgatas originate from this [transcendent perfection

of wisdom]. Even the [branches of the scriptures], from the sūtras, the sayings in prose and verse, and prophetic declarations, up to and including the narratives and the established instructions, all originate from this [transcendent perfection of wisdom].

33.19 “Moreover, Ānanda, the stock of merit of those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and then honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this scripture with flowers, ribbons, and so forth, as well as with diverse musical sounds, is equal to that of those who honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings with flowers, ribbons, and so forth, as well as with diverse musical sounds, to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems of the ten directions and four times, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because even the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems of the ten directions and four times, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, have attained emancipation through this [transcendent perfection of wisdom].

33.20 “Moreover, Ānanda, the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who receive, retain, master, and recite this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who are attentive to it in the correct manner and teach it extensively to others, should know that they will not become denizens of the hells, and they should know that they will not proceed into the animal realms or into the world of Yama. They should know that they are without fear of regressing to the level of the pratyekabuddhas. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage should know that they abide on the irreversible level. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because this transcendent perfection of wisdom dispels all negativity and eradicates all ailments.

33.21 “Moreover, Ānanda, the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, and then retain, hold, master, and recite this very transcendent perfection of wisdom, and are attentive to it in the correct manner, honoring, venerating, respecting, and making offerings to it with flowers, garlands, perfume, unguents, robes, parasols, victory banners, ribbons, and diverse musical sounds, should know that they will have nothing at all to fear. If you ask why, it is because even the tathāgatas have attained emancipation through it, and even the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, which the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas possess, all originate from this [transcendent perfection of wisdom]. Indeed, Ānanda, even the other five transcendent perfections, which have received the name ‘transcendent perfection,’ originate from this [transcendent perfection of wisdom], and even the omniscience that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas have attained its emancipation through this [transcendent perfection of wisdom].

33.22 “Ānanda, in this world, in a town, city, market, province, or palace circle, wherever anyone retains, holds, masters, and recites this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and is attentive to it in the correct manner, and commits it to writing, or has it committed to writing and then honors, venerates, and respects it, no human or non-human beings who seek to intrude [and cause harm] would have a chance. All sentient beings, too, would sequentially attain final nirvāṇa by means of any vehicle whatsoever among the three vehicles. Therefore, Ānanda, this transcendent

perfection of wisdom is most important because through it the sentient beings of the world systems of the great trichilocosm become established in accordance with the deeds of the buddhas. Ānanda, you should know that the attainment of buddhahood occurs in whichever world system the transcendent perfection of wisdom prevails.

33.23 “Ānanda, it resembles, for example, a priceless gemstone which is endowed with the following attributes: No matter where this precious gemstone is placed, no human being seeking to intrude [and cause harm] would have a chance. When this precious gemstone is set in a place where men or women are possessed by non-human spirits, the non-human spirits would themselves swiftly depart because they would be unable to stand the brilliance of this precious gemstone. Similarly, when this precious gemstone is attached to the body of an invalid suffering from bile disorders, the bile disorders will be alleviated. Similarly, when this precious gemstone is attached to the body of a man or woman who is afflicted by wind disorders, or a man or woman afflicted by phlegm disorders or combined humoral disorders, immediately on touching it the ailments would be alleviated by the brilliance of this precious gemstone. Furthermore, this precious gemstone would illuminate the night. In the hot season, any location in which this precious gemstone is placed would become cool, and in the cold season any location in which this precious gemstone is placed would become warm. In any location where there are poisonous snakes or scorpions, and some man or woman were bitten by a poisonous snake [or scorpion], on being shown this precious gemstone, immediately after seeing it their poison would vanish. Ānanda, this precious gemstone would be endowed with such attributes.

33.24 “Furthermore, Ānanda, if this precious gemstone were attached to the body of a man or woman afflicted by pustules or blisters, or afflicted with an eye disease, or an ear, nose, tongue or throat disease, immediately on seeing it all their ailments would be alleviated. If this precious gemstone were immersed in a pool of water, all the water would come to possess the eight qualities [of pure water]. If it were wrapped in blue, yellow, red, white, purple, crystal, reddish yellow, or pale yellow cloth and then immersed in water, all the water would become identical in color—blue and so forth, up to pale yellow. Ānanda, if this precious gemstone were immersed in turbid water, the water would become clear. Accordingly, Ānanda, this transcendent perfection of wisdom, like a precious gemstone, is the source of all positive attributes and it alleviates all negativity.”

33.25 Then, Senior Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Does this precious gemstone exist among the gods, or does it exist among humans?” The Blessed One replied to Senior Ānanda as follows: “Ānanda, this precious gemstone indeed exists among the gods. This precious gemstone indeed exists among the human beings of Jambudvīpa. However, the precious gemstone that exists among the human beings of Jambudvīpa has few attributes, whereas the precious gemstone that exists among the god realms has immeasurable attributes. Even the basket in which the precious gemstone of the god realms is kept is endowed with its positive attributes. There are some who will acquire those same attributes even on touching this basket.

33.26 “Ānanda, this transcendent perfection of wisdom resembles the precious gemstone of the god realms. Those who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing should know that the locale in which [this scripture] is placed will experience no harm whatsoever. They should also observe that the attributes of the definitive transcendent perfection of wisdom, the pristine cognition of omniscience, and those of [the other transcendent perfections], from the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration down to and including the transcendent perfecti-

on of generosity, resemble the attributes of that precious gemstone. [The aspects of emptiness], from the emptiness of internal phenomena up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, also resemble this [precious gemstone]. [The causal and fruitional attributes], from the four applications of mindfulness up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and all the attributes of reality, the abiding nature, the real nature, the finality of existence, and the inconceivable expanse, also resemble this [precious gemstone].

33.27 “It is for this reason that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are described as ‘omniscient masters of all phenomena.’ They are worthy of honor, veneration, respect, and offering in the worlds of gods, humans, and antigods. If you ask why, it is because they are the repositories of the six transcendent perfections. In the same vein as before, the tathāgatas accept the offerings because they are the repositories [of the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and of the pristine cognition of omniscience, great compassion, and great loving kindness. Similarly, they accept the offerings because they are the repositories of the transcendent perfections, in whom afflicted mental states and all involuntary reincarnation through propensities have been abandoned, and who likewise are without affliction or purification, without arising or ceasing, without acceptance or rejection, and without standing, sitting, going, coming, or abiding.

33.28 “Moreover, Ānanda, when, on the one hand, there are some sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who, for an eon, a period exceeding an eon, a hundred eons, a thousand eons, a hundred thousand eons, many hundreds of eons, many thousands of eons, many hundred thousands of eons, or many hundreds of billion trillion eons, honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings with flowers, garlands, perfume, unguents, powders, religious robes, clothing, parasols, victory banners, ribbons, and diverse musical sounds to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems of the eastern direction, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and similarly to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems of the southern, western, and northern directions, along with the nadir, the zenith, and likewise the four intermediate directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and, on the other hand, there are some other sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who retain, hold, recite, and master this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and are attentive to it in the correct manner, committing it to writing, and having it committed to writing, and who then honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this volume of the scripture with flowers, garlands, perfume, unguents, powders, religious robes, clothing, parasols, victory banners, ribbons, and diverse musical sounds—among these stocks of merit, the stock of merit acquired through this transcendent perfection of wisdom is ‘supreme,’ ‘foremost,’ ‘superior,’ and ‘unsurpassed,’ in contrast to the aforementioned stock of merit acquired through [making offerings to] the tathāgatas. If you ask why, Ānanda, the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage whose stock of merit is acquired through [making offerings] to the tathāgatas, but lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom, are reborn among the gods and among human beings. They roam within cyclic existence and they do not perfect the transcendent perfection of wisdom. If they do not perfect the transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will not perfect the ten powers of the tathāgatas, and in the same vein, they will not perfect [the other fruitional attributes and attainments], up to and including omniscience.

33.29 “Ānanda, those who retain, hold, and so forth, this transcendent perfection of wisdom and are attentive to it in the correct manner will perfect the definitive transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, they will perfect [the

other transcendent perfections], from the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration up to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, they will perfect the four applications of mindfulness, and they will perfect [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Having transcended the levels of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas, they will enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas, and also attain the extrasensory powers of the bodhisattvas. Through these extrasensory powers of the bodhisattvas they will travel from buddhafiield to buddhafiield, and acquire a corporeal form through which they will refine the buddhafiields and bring sentient beings to maturity. Alternatively, they will bring sentient beings to maturity assuming the kingly guise of a universal monarch, or by becoming the king of a nation, or by becoming a member of the royal class, tall as a great sāl tree, or by becoming a member of the priestly class, tall as a great sāl tree, or else by assuming the form of Śakra, by assuming the form of Brahmā, or by assuming the form of Vaiśravaṇa. Therefore, Ānanda, if they honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this same transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will accumulate the causes of all fruitional attributes. They will acquire all excellences. They will honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to the tathāgatas.

33.30 “Moreover, Ānanda, those wishing to behold, in the buddha body of form and the buddha body of reality, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who reside in the innumerable world systems of the ten directions, and who are alive at present, even now teaching the sacred doctrine, should retain, hold, and master this very transcendent perfection of wisdom, and extensively reveal it to others. Having been attentive to it in the correct manner, they will consequently behold the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who reside in all the innumerable world systems of the ten directions.

33.31 “Moreover, Ānanda, the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who wish actually to behold the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas should retain, hold, recite, and master this very transcendent perfection of wisdom and be attentive to it in the correct manner. Ānanda, those in the past who became tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas also attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, dependent on this transcendent perfection of wisdom. Those who became the śrāvakas of those tathāgatas also attained the fruit of entering the stream dependent on this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and it was in the same way that they also attained [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship. Those tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who will emerge in the future, and their śrāvakas who will also enter the stream and attain [the other fruits], up to and including arhatship, will all do so dependent on this very transcendent perfection of wisdom.

33.32 “Those tathāgatas, arhats, and genuinely perfect buddhas who reside in the innumerable world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and who are alive at present, even now teaching the sacred doctrine, all attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment dependent on this transcendent perfection of wisdom. Those śrāvakas [of the present] will also attain [the fruits], up to and including arhatship, and all those pratyekabuddhas of the present who abide in the innumerable, countless world systems of the ten directions will also attain individual enlightenment, manifestly perfect buddhahood, dependent on this same transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, it is because the three vehicles are extensively revealed in this transcendent perfection of wisdom.

33.33 “These [attainments] are all revealed in the manner of signlessness, and similarly they are revealed in the manner of non-arising and non-cessation, in the manner of non-affliction and non-purification, in the manner of non-conditioning, in the manner of non-acceptance and non-rejection, and in the manner of non-standing, non-sitting, non-grasping, and non-abandoning. Although they may be revealed according to the conventional ways of the world, in ultimate reality they are not like that. If you ask why, it is because this transcendent perfection of wisdom is neither immanent nor transcendent, it is neither plain nor contoured, it is neither flat nor uneven, it is neither with signs nor is it signless, it is neither mundane nor supramundane, it is neither conditioned nor is it unconditioned, it is neither virtuous nor non-virtuous, it is neither specified nor non-specified, and it is neither past, nor future, nor present.”

33.34 Then Senior Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! Do great bodhisattva beings exclusively practice the transcendent perfection of wisdom, or do they also practice the other transcendent perfections?” The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, great bodhisattva beings practice all six transcendent perfections but they train without apprehending anything. They practice the transcendent perfection of generosity but they do not apprehend this transcendent perfection of generosity. They do not apprehend the dispenser of generosity and they do not apprehend the recipient of generosity. They practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline but they do not apprehend this transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, and in the same vein they practice the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, but they do not apprehend this transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest].

33.35 “They do not apprehend those who possess wisdom and they do not apprehend those whose wisdom is confused. However, this transcendent perfection of wisdom has primacy over all [the other] transcendent perfections. It is thus that great bodhisattva beings who dispense generosity perfect the transcendent perfection of generosity. Similarly, this same transcendent perfection of wisdom has primacy for those great bodhisattva beings who keep [the vows of] ethical discipline. It is thus that they perfect the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline. This same transcendent perfection of wisdom has primacy for those great bodhisattva beings who practice tolerance. It is thus that they perfect the transcendent perfection of tolerance. The same transcendent perfection of wisdom has primacy for those great bodhisattva beings who undertake perseverance. It is thus that they perfect the transcendent perfection of perseverance. The same transcendent perfection of wisdom has primacy for those great bodhisattva beings who become absorbed in the meditative concentrations. It is thus that they perfect the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration. The same transcendent perfection of wisdom has primacy for those great bodhisattva beings who inspect phenomena. It is thus that they perfect the transcendent perfection of wisdom. Yet they do so without apprehending physical forms, and in the same vein, they do so without apprehending [any other phenomena, attributes or attainments], up to and including omniscience.

33.36 “Ānanda, just as the shade of the trees of Jambudvīpa, with their different foliage, different flowers, and different fruits, is reckoned to be shade, and apart from that, no other details or distinctions are apprehensible, in the same way, Ānanda, the five [other transcendent] perfections which are acquired through the transcendent perfection of wisdom are dedicated to [the attainment of] omniscience, and also no [other] details or distinctions are apprehensible.”

33.37 Then Senior Ānanda said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is endowed with great enlightened attributes in order that infinite enlightened attributes might be possessed. Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom perfects all enlightened attributes and is endowed with innumerable enlightened attributes in order that infinite enlightened attributes might be possessed.” The Blessed One replied to Senior Ānanda as follows: “Ānanda, it is so! It is just as you have said.”

33.38 Then Senior Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! If, on the one hand, there are some sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and then make it into a volume of scripture, hold it, recite it, or similarly honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to it with flowers, garlands, perfume, unguents, incense, butter lamps, powders, religious robes, clothing, parasols, victory banners, ribbons, and diverse musical sounds, and in addition they are also attentive to this transcendent perfection of wisdom in the correct manner, and if, on the other hand, there are other sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and, having made it into a volume of scripture, then bestow it upon others, which of these two would have the greater merit?”

33.39 The Blessed One replied to Senior Ānanda as follows: “Ānanda, I will ask you a question and you should answer as best you can! Ānanda, in your opinion, which of these two has the greater merit—those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who continuously honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to the relics of the tathāgatas with flowers, and so forth, up to and including ribbons and diverse musical sounds, or those other sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who share a mustard seed-size relic of the tathāgatas with others, so that they too receive a mustard seed-size relic of the tathāgatas, and then honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to that [relic] with flowers, and so forth, up to and including ribbons and diverse musical sounds?”

33.40 Senior Ānanda said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! As I understand the meaning of the words spoken by the Lord, those who bestow a mustard seed-size relic of the tathāgatas on others will have much greater merit, considering that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas become absorbed in the adamantite meditative stability and demonstrate the dissolution of the adamantite body. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because the roots of virtue of any who make offerings to a mustard seed-size relic of the tathāgatas who have passed into final nirvāṇa will not come to an end—rather, all their sufferings will come to an end.”

33.41 The Blessed One replied to Senior Ānanda as follows: “Ānanda, it is so! It is just as you have said. Ānanda, the merit of those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and then bestow it upon others out of joy in the sacred doctrine, is much greater than that of those who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and, having made it into a volume of scripture, then honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to it with flowers, and so forth, up to and including ribbons and diverse musical sounds.

33.42 “Moreover, Ānanda, the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who resolutely

wish to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this same transcendent perfection of wisdom which has just been taught, and they should retain, hold, recite, and master it, and be attentive to it in the correct manner. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because great bodhisattva beings also will attain emancipation through the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and even the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas have attained emancipation through it. So it is, Ānanda, that the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, or the vehicle of the śrāvakas should honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this very transcendent perfection of wisdom with flowers, and so forth, up to and including ribbons and diverse musical sounds.”

33.43 Then Senior Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! When any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas teach, explain, analyze, elucidate, and genuinely demonstrate this transcendent perfection of wisdom, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should earnestly apply this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been taught,’ in that case, Venerable Lord, how much merit would those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage accrue on that basis?”

33.44 The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage would accrue much merit on that basis. Ānanda, do you think that if any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to establish the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa in the fruit of entering the stream, in your opinion, Ānanda, would those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage accrue much merit on that basis?” “Yes, they would, Venerable Lord!”

33.45 The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, if any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to describe, teach, elucidate, analyze, and genuinely demonstrate these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to others, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should retain, hold, master, recite, and be attentive to it in the correct manner! You should earnestly apply this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been taught!’ they would have much greater merit than those [who establish sentient beings in entering the stream]. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because those who enter the stream are distinguished through this transcendent perfection of wisdom.

33.46 “Ānanda, if any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to establish as many sentient beings as there are in all the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, in the fruit of entering the stream—not to mention the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa, and similarly, not to mention the sentient beings of the four continents, not to mention the sentient beings of the world systems of a chiliocosm, not to mention the sentient beings of the world systems of a dichiliocosm, and, Ānanda, not to mention the sentient beings of the world systems of a great trichiliocosm—in that case, Ānanda, do you think that those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage would accrue much merit on that basis?” “Yes, they would, Venerable Sugata!”

33.47 The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, if there are any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened

heritage who describe, teach, elucidate, analyze, and genuinely demonstrate these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to others, the merit of those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage would be much greater than the merit of the aforementioned sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage [who establish sentient beings in entering the stream]. They should be expected to become a revealer [of the sacred doctrine], or some other revealer, one who is worthy of veneration, or one who is renunciate in conduct. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because the genuinely perfect buddhas of the past indeed attained omniscience having trained in this transcendent perfection of wisdom. The tathāgatas who will emerge in the future, also, will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment dependent on this transcendent perfection of wisdom. The tathāgatas, arhats, and genuinely perfect buddhas who reside in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and who are alive at present, even now teaching the sacred doctrine, have all attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment having trained in this same transcendent perfection of wisdom.

33.48 “All the other learned renunciants, śrāvakas, and pratyekabuddhas who have appeared also did so through having trained in this same transcendent perfection of wisdom. Moreover, all great bodhisattva beings of the present who transcend the level of the śrāvakas or the level of the pratyekabuddhas, and enter into the maturity of the irreversible bodhisattvas, do so through having trained in this same transcendent perfection of wisdom. Also, those who follow the vehicle of the śrāvakas have attained and will attain arhatship through having trained in this same transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, those who follow the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas have attained and will attain individual enlightenment through having trained in this same transcendent perfection of wisdom, while those who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas will also enter upon the maturity of the bodhisattvas through it.

33.49 “Ānanda, so it is that the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who wish to honor, wish to venerate, wish to respect, and wish to make offerings in the presence of the tathāgatas with diverse flowers, and so forth, up to and including ribbons and diverse musical sounds, should commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and then, having made it into a volume of scripture, honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to it with diverse flowers, and so forth, up to and including ribbons and diverse musical sounds.

33.50 “Considering this objective, when I had attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, I wondered whom I should honor, venerate, respect, make offerings to, and rely upon, but at that time, Ānanda, I did not see anyone like me or superior to me in the worlds, replete with all their gods, humans, and antigods—sentient beings including divinities, including Māra, including Brahmā, and including virtuous ascetics and brāhmin priests—and then it occurred to me, ‘I should honor, venerate, respect, make offerings to, and rely upon the sacred doctrine which is calm, abundant, and through which manifestly perfect buddhahood is attained.’ Ānanda, if you ask what is that [sacred doctrine], it is this very transcendent perfection of wisdom.

33.51 “Ānanda, since even now I honor, venerate, respect, make offerings to, and rely upon this same transcendent perfection of wisdom, Ānanda, the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who wish to

attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this transcendent perfection of wisdom with flowers, incense, perfume, garlands, unguents, powders, robes, parasols, victory banners, and ribbons. It also goes without saying that those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who would enter the vehicle of the śrāvakas or those who would enter the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas should also honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this transcendent perfection of wisdom with flowers, incense, perfume, garlands, unguents, powders, robes, parasols, victory banners, and ribbons. If you ask why, it is because it is through the transcendent perfection of wisdom that the bodhisattvas have appeared, through the bodhisattvas that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas have appeared, and through the tathāgatas that the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas have appeared.

33.52 “Ānanda, so it is that the sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who are followers of the Great Vehicle, as well as the followers of the vehicle of the śrāvakas and the followers of the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, should honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings with flowers, incense, perfume, garlands, unguents, powders, robes, parasols, victory banners, and ribbons to this same transcendent perfection of wisdom, in which they have all trained, and through which sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage have attained, are attaining, and will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.

33.53 “Ānanda, do you think that if any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to establish all the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa, as many as they are, in the fruit of entering the stream, in your opinion, Ānanda, would those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage accrue much merit on that basis?” “Yes, they would, Venerable Lord! Yes, they would, Venerable Sugata!”

33.54 The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, if any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to extensively describe, teach, analyze, elucidate, and genuinely demonstrate these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to others, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should retain, hold, recite, and master it, and be attentive to it in the correct manner! You should earnestly apply this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been taught!’ they would have much greater merit than those [who establish sentient beings in entering the stream]. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because those who enter the stream are distinguished through this transcendent perfection of wisdom.

33.55 “Moreover, Ānanda, if any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to establish the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa, as many as they are, in the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, in the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, in arhatship, and in individual enlightenment, in your opinion, Ānanda, would those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage accrue much merit on that basis?” “Yes, they would, Venerable Lord! Yes, they would, Venerable Sugata!”

33.56 The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, if any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to extensively describe, explain, genuinely demonstrate, and so forth, these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to others, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should retain

this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and so forth. You should earnestly apply this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been taught! they would have much greater merit than those [who establish sentient beings in those fruits]. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because [those fruits], up to and including individual enlightenment, are distinguished through this transcendent perfection of wisdom. The same goes for all the sentient beings of the world systems of the ten directions, as many as the sands of the River Ganges.

33.57 “Moreover, Ānanda, if any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to encourage all the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, to acquire unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and then were to extensively teach, explain, analyze, elucidate, and genuinely demonstrate these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to others, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should train in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and when you have trained therein, you will attain the attributes of omniscience,’ their merit would be equivalent. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because all great bodhisattva beings in the world systems of the ten directions, as many as they are, from those who have first begun to set their mind on enlightenment and continuing as far as those who abide on the tenth level, will attain emancipation through this transcendent perfection of wisdom. The same goes for all the world systems of the ten directions, as many as the sands of the River Ganges.

33.58 “Moreover, Ānanda, if any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to establish all the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa, as many as they are, on the irreversible level, in your opinion, Ānanda, would those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage accrue much merit on that basis?” “Yes, they would, Venerable Lord! Yes, they would, Venerable Sugata!”

33.59 The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, if any sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to extensively describe, genuinely demonstrate, and so forth, these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to others, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should retain this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and so forth. You should earnestly apply this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been taught! Child of enlightened heritage, when you have trained in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been taught, you will attain the attributes of omniscience, and at that time, you will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment,’ in that case, their merit would be much greater than that. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because the irreversible level of great bodhisattva beings and the [other attainments], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, have also originated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom. The same goes for all the world systems of the ten directions, as many as they are, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges.

33.60 “Moreover, Ānanda, if, on the one hand, some sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage were to encourage all the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa, as many as they are, to acquire unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and then were to describe, genuinely demonstrate, and so forth, these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to them, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should retain this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and so forth. You should earnestly apply this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been taught! When you have earnestly applied the transcendent perfection of

wisdom, as it has been taught, you will train in the transcendent perfection of wisdom. When you have trained in the transcendent perfection of wisdom, you will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment,’ and if, on the other hand, someone were to teach, genuinely demonstrate, and so forth, this transcendent perfection of wisdom to those irreversible bodhisattvas, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should retain this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and so forth. You should earnestly apply this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been taught! When you have earnestly applied it, you will gradually attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment,’ in that case, the latter would have much greater merit than the former. The same goes extensively for all the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges.

33.61 “Moreover, Ānanda, if, on the one hand, there were some sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage teaching these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to those sentient beings of Jambudvīpa, as many as they are, and all those sentient beings of the four continents, as many as they are, who could not be turned back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and if, on the other hand, there were some son of enlightened heritage or daughter of enlightened heritage teaching these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to one among them who would say, ‘Thus should I swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and, having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood, I should also lead forth those sentient beings who have fallen into the three inferior realms!’ in that case the latter son of enlightened heritage or daughter of enlightened heritage would have much greater merit. If you ask why, it is because the irreversible great bodhisattva beings do not require even a single demonstration of the sacred doctrine—they are intent on perfect enlightenment and cannot be averted from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, whereas this one should be embraced because he or she is distressed [at the sufferings of beings] in cyclic existence, and engages in [acts of] great compassion.”

33.62 Then Senior Ānanda said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! The more great bodhisattva beings approach unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, the more they wish to teach and grant instruction in the transcendent perfection of generosity, and similarly, the more they wish to teach and grant instruction in the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration, and the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and similarly, the more they wish to teach and grant instruction in [the aspects of emptiness], from the emptiness of internal phenomena up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, and similarly, the more they wish to teach and grant instruction in [the causal attributes], from the four applications of mindfulness up to and including the noble eightfold path, and similarly, the more they wish to teach and grant instruction in the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and the more they wish to benefit sentient beings with food, clothing, bedding, mats, medications which cure ailments, and [other] useful resources. The sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who would benefit those bodhisattvas, attracting them with the sacred doctrine and attracting them with worldly needs, accrue much greater merit than the aforementioned sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage who do not. If one were to ask why, Venerable Lord, it is because I consider that those great bodhisattva beings who teach and grant instruction in the transcendent perfection of

generosity, and similarly, who teach and grant instruction in the other transcendent perfections, up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, have much greater merit.”

33.63 Then, the Blessed One replied to Senior Ānanda as follows: “Ānanda, you who encourage the sons of enlightened heritage or the daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas. Well done! The sublime śrāvakas who wish to benefit sentient beings should encourage great bodhisattva beings who would attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They should assist and protect great bodhisattva beings, attracting them with the sacred doctrine and attracting them with worldly needs. If you ask why, it is because the monastic community of the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas originated from the bodhisattvas, while the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas also originated from them, and the Great Vehicle also originated from them.

33.64 “Ānanda, if bodhisattvas did not develop the mind set on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, great bodhisattva beings would not train in the six transcendent perfections. If they did not train in [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, they would not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment because they would not have trained in the six transcendent perfections and the [other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. If they did not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, there would be no unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, or the enlightenment of the pratyekabuddhas, or the enlightenment of the śrāvakas. Ānanda, it is because the bodhisattvas train in the six transcendent perfections and in [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, that great bodhisattva beings who would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment will actually attain manifestly perfect buddhahood.”

33.65 Then Senior Ānanda said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! As I understand the teaching spoken by the Lord, as long as this transcendent perfection of wisdom is active in the world, Venerable Lord, the Precious Jewel of the Buddha, the Precious Jewel of the Dharma, and the Precious Jewel of the Saṅgha will not vanish from the world. Likewise, so long will the paths of the ten virtuous actions emerge in the world. So long will the four meditative concentrations, and similarly, the four immeasurable aspirations and the four formless absorptions emerge in the world. So long will the transcendent perfection of generosity, the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline, the transcendent perfection of tolerance, the transcendent perfection of perseverance, and the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration emerge in the world. So long will [the causal and fruitional attributes], from the four applications of mindfulness up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, emerge in the world. Likewise, so long will the understanding of all phenomena and the understanding of the aspects of the path emerge in the world. Likewise, so long will the royal class, like a tall sāl tree; the priestly class, like a tall sāl tree; and the householder class, like a tall sāl tree, emerge in the world. Likewise, so long will the gods of the Caturmahārājakāyika realm emerge in the world. Likewise, so long will the gods of [all the other realms], up to and including Akaniṣṭha, emerge in the world. Likewise, so long will those who have entered the stream, those who are tied to one more rebirth, those who are no longer subject to rebirth, as well as arhats, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas, all emerge in the world. So long, subsequently, will the pristine cognitions of buddhahood emerge in the world. So long will the maturation of sentient beings and the refinement of the buddhafields,

and so forth, emerge in the world. So long will all non-virtuous attributes be diminished. So long will all virtuous attributes that should be cultivated be perfected. So long will the god realms be enhanced and the antigod realms be diminished. So long will the way of the buddhas not be interrupted, and so long will the way of the sacred doctrine and the way of the saṅgha not be interrupted. So long will the promulgations of the doctrinal wheel, and so forth, emerge in the world.”

33.66 The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, it is so! You have spoken correctly. As long as the transcendent perfection of wisdom is active in the world, so long will the Precious Jewel of the Buddha not vanish from the world, and in the same vein, so long will [all those other attributes], up to and including the promulgation of the doctrinal wheel, emerge in the world. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because this transcendent perfection of wisdom is of great benefit, even when heard only minimally, let alone when it is retained, held, recited, mastered, and attended to correctly, that is to say, honored, venerated, respected, and presented with offerings of flowers, fruits, perfume, unguents, powders, incense, butter lamps, parasols, victory banners, ribbons and diverse musical sounds!

33.67 “If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because all those sons of enlightened heritage or daughters of enlightened heritage, and the male and female gods, whose ears have heard this transcendent perfection of wisdom, will, on the basis of this very root of virtue, attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who emerged in the past, along with their monastic assemblies of śrāvakas, indeed attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and passed into final nirvāṇa, in the expanse beyond sorrow, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates, having trained in this very transcendent perfection of wisdom.

33.68 “Also, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who will emerge in the future, along with their monastic assemblies of śrāvakas, will all attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and pass into final nirvāṇa, in the expanse beyond sorrow, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates, having trained in this very transcendent perfection of wisdom.

33.69 “Also, all the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who reside, along with their monastic community of śrāvakas, in the world systems of the ten directions, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and who are alive at present, even now teaching the sacred doctrine, attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and will pass into final nirvāṇa, in the expanse beyond sorrow, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates, having trained in this transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because all the attributes of the aspects of enlightenment are gathered in the transcendent perfection of wisdom. All the attributes of the buddhas, the attributes of the pratyekabuddhas, and the attributes of the śrāvakas are also gathered therein. All virtuous attributes are indeed attained therein, and all things are subsumed therein.

33.70 “Moreover, Ānanda, you have revered me with benevolent actions of body, benevolent actions of speech, and benevolent actions of mind. So it is that you have rejoiced in, had confidence in, and paid homage to this, my physical body, while I am alive and present, here and now. But after I have passed away, you should rejoice, have faith in, and pay homage to this transcendent perfection of wisdom. Ānanda, after I have passed into final nirvāṇa, in

any event, you should not squander this transcendent perfection of wisdom. After I have passed into final nirvāṇa, in any event, I shall entrust it to your hands, twice or thrice, so that not even a single syllable will vanish. Ānanda, you should know that, for as long as this transcendent perfection of wisdom is active in the world, so long will the tathāgatas reside in the world. You should know that so long will the tathāgatas teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in the world. Ānanda, you should know that so long will sentient beings behold the tathāgatas, and inseparably hear the sacred doctrine from the tathāgatas. You should know that so long will renunciate modes of conduct be maintained in the presence of the tathāgatas. So long will beings listen to this transcendent perfection of wisdom, so long will they commit it to writing or have it committed to writing, and master, describe, retain, hold, recite, teach, and be attentive to it in the correct manner—honoring, venerating, respecting, making offerings, and praising it with flowers, garlands, perfume, unguents, incense, butter lamps, powders, butter, oil, lamps, robes, parasols, victory banners, ribbons, and many other useful necessities of offering.”

33.71 When the Blessed One had spoken these words, the great bodhisattva being Maitreya and all the remaining great bodhisattva beings rejoiced, along with Senior Subhūti, Senior Śāradvatīputra, Senior Maudgalyāyana, Senior Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra, Senior Mahākāśyapa, Senior Mahākauṣṭhila, Senior Kātyāyana, Senior Ānanda, and all the remaining fully ordained monks and the complete assembly, as well as mundane beings, including gods, humans, anti-gods, and gandharvas. Manifest praise to the teachings spoken by the Blessed One!

33.72 *This completes the thirty-third chapter from the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, entitled “The Conclusion.”*

A SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE:
THE CONCLUSION

33.A Among the classes of sentient beings, there are indeed some who do not develop faith in this exegesis of the profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, who are not motivated by joy, confidence, and higher aspiration, who do not make offerings to the assembly with body and mind, and who even walk away from this assembly. If you ask why, it is because they walked away in the past when this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom was explained, and they also walk away at the present when this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is being explained. They do not make offerings to the assembly with body and mind, and they accrue deeds that obscure wisdom. Those who have engaged in and accrued deeds that obscure wisdom abandon this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. By obstructing this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, they obstruct the omniscience of the lord buddhas of the past, future, and present. Those who have engaged in and accrued deeds that abandon omniscience, accrue deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine. Those who have engaged in and accrued deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine will roast among the denizens of the hells for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years, for many hundreds of thousands of years, and for many hundreds of billion trillion years. Then they will proceed to the great hells, where they will be incinerated by an inferno; having been incinerated, they will become sentient denizens of the great hells in other world systems {and so forth and so forth} ... Those who have engaged in and accrued deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine will once again be reborn and again they will proceed from great hells to great hells ... For as long as they are incinerated by an inferno, they will experience the sufferings of the denizens of the hells. Then, after being incinerated, they will pass away and be reborn in this

world system. Here, they will be reborn in the world systems of all the ten directions, equal in fortune to those who are born within the animal realms ... Having been born therein, they will again experience the sufferings of those who frequent the world of Yama, the Lord of Death, for many hundreds of billion trillion years. Then, when the sufferings of those who frequent the world of Yama, the Lord of Death, have come to an end, they will be reborn equal in fortune to human beings, but among blind householders, or among outcaste householders, or among householders who are refuse scavengers. Being reborn in those states, they will become blind, lame, decrepit, or without a tongue, without arms, without legs, without ears, with leprosy or morbid pallor, or else without all their limbs intact. They will always be reborn in worlds where the word 'Buddha' ... where the word 'Dharma' ... and where the word 'Saṅgha' is unheard. If you ask why, it is because they will have engaged in and accrued deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine, and the consequences of having adopted [such actions] will have been fully satisfied.

33.B “Venerable Lord! The inexpressible crimes are five in number {which constitute matricide, patricide, killing an arhat, creating a schism in the monastic community, and intentionally wounding a buddha}. This engaging in and accruing of deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine would be the sixth!” ... “Ānanda, those individuals are not said to be superior but utterly debased. When this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is explained and demonstrated, they think they should oppose this transcendent perfection of wisdom, saying ‘This is not the Vinaya! This is not the teaching of the Teacher! This has not been spoken by the Tathāgata! We and you should not undertake training in it!’ They themselves abandon it, and they also separate many sentient beings from it. They injure their own minds, and they also intend to injure the minds of others. Having poisoned their own minds, they also intend to poison the minds of others. They themselves have degenerated from the pathways to the higher realms and to liberation [from cyclic existence], and they intend to induce others also to degenerate from the{se} pathways ... They themselves neither understand nor comprehend this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom. They intend to abandon it, and they also induce others to do so. Ānanda, I do not rejoice when this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is proclaimed to such individuals, and I am displeased when I hear them, let alone see them, let alone consort with them! If you ask why ... it is because such individuals defame the sacred doctrine. They are like rotten trees and they side with evil ... Such individuals who intend [others] to listen to them will be destitute owing to their unethical behavior ... Any individuals who would defame the transcendent perfection of wisdom should comprehend the final outcome. Those who have committed the fault of defaming the sacred doctrine will become denizens of the hells, animals, or individuals frequenting the world of Yama, the Lord of Death ... If one were to hear the description of the physical states of those individuals who have defamed the sacred doctrine, one would vomit blood from the mouth and die, or experience the sufferings of near death ... Such should be made apparent to the sentient beings of posterity.”

33.C “The sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who are of positive disposition are the supporters of the sacred doctrines of the buddhas. With the words ‘Would that I might not experience such sufferings over a long period of time in the inferior realms!’ they do not abandon the sacred doctrine even for the sake of their own lives ... When sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who are skillful in disposition, restrained in their physical ... verbal and mental actions hear this teaching concerning individuals who abandon the sacred doctrine and defame the sacred doctrine, they might appropriately say, ‘Would that I might not experience such sufferings! I would not even behold the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas. I would not even hear the sacred doctrine. I would not even see

the saṅgha of the Tathāgata. I would not even venerate these [precious jewels]. I would not even be born in the buddhafiels where buddhas emerge. Instead, I would become an impoverished person, or belong to an inferior household, such as the households of outcastes or the households of refuse scavengers, or else I would be blind, lame, or [succumb to other infirmities], up to and including deformity of the limbs!’ Venerable Lord! How do those who have obsessively carried out and accrued unendurable deeds of speech carry out and accrue deeds that are destitute of the sacred doctrine?” The Blessed One replied, “... Ānanda, there are deluded persons who have received the renunciate ordination according to this Vinaya ... and who then intend to defame this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom within the assembly. Intending to oppose it, they defame the transcendent perfection of wisdom. By opposing it, they defame and oppose the enlightenment of the lord buddhas. By defaming the enlightenment of the buddhas, they defame omniscience, which the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the past, the future, and the present all have. By opposing omniscience, they oppose the sacred doctrine. By opposing the sacred doctrine, they oppose the saṅgha. By opposing the saṅgha, they oppose the genuine view concerning the world. By opposing the genuine view concerning the world, they oppose the four applications of mindfulness, and ... [all the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including omniscience. By opposing {all those} ... they acquire an innumerable, countless, and immeasurable number of demerits. By acquiring an innumerable, countless, and immeasurable number of demerits, they experience innumerable, countless, and immeasurable sufferings and discomforts among the denizens of the hells, among animals, and among anguished spirits.”

33.D “Venerable Lord! In what ways do those deluded persons who abandon this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom actually abandon it?” ... “Ānanda, those deluded persons abandon this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom in four ways ... as follows: (1) having no faith in the sacred doctrine, and lacking conviction and volution with regard to this profound doctrine, through the machinations of Māra; (2) falling into the clutches of evil associates; (3) being fixated upon and lacking perseverance with respect to the five psycho-physical aggregates; and (4) esteeming oneself and deprecating others. Ānanda, deluded persons who possess these four abandon this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom.” ... “Venerable Lord! So, they would regress and become degenerate if they were to engage in such deeds destitute of the sacred doctrine. This is why bodhisattvas should restrain their verbal actions!” “Ānanda, it is so! It is as you have said.”

33.E “Venerable Lord! What is the extent of the stock of merit of those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who hear this teaching on the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and having heard it, then have faith in it, and retain, hold, recite aloud, master, and are attentive to it in the correct manner, and who commit it to writing and have it committed to writing?” The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, when, on the one hand, there are some sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who retain, hold, recite aloud, master, and are attentive in the correct manner to this transcendent perfection of wisdom, committing it to writing and having it committed to writing, and, on the other hand, when there are tathāgatas who maintain the three miracles {of (1) possessing magical abilities, (2) revelation, and (3) instruction} and teach the doctrine to sentient beings so that they retain, hold, recite aloud, master, and are attentive in the correct manner to the sūtras, the sayings in prose and verse, the prophetic declarations, the verses, the aphorisms, the contexts, the quotations, the tales of past lives, the narratives, the marvelous events, and the established instructions, the merits that the latter will amass will not approach even a hundredth part of the aforementioned merit accrued by those who retain this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and are attentive to it

in the correct manner, and so forth. Indeed, this latter merit cannot be expressed as even a thousandth part ... or indeed as any other number, fraction, quantity, or material part. Moreover, Ānanda, when, on the one hand, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems of the eastern direction ... the southern direction, the western direction, the northern direction, and similarly of the four intermediate directions, the nadir, and the zenith ... maintain the three miracles and teach the doctrine, that is to say, the sūtras, the sayings in prose and verse, the prophetic declarations, the verses, the aphorisms, the contexts, the quotations, the tales of past lives, the narratives, the marvelous events, and the established instructions to sentient beings, and when, on the other hand, there are also some sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who receive, retain, master, and recite this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and also teach its doctrine to others, the latter will be equal in their stock of merit to the lord buddhas. If you ask why, it is because even the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems of the ten directions ... originate from this [transcendent perfection of wisdom]. Even the three miracles of the tathāgatas originate from this [transcendent perfection of wisdom]. Even the [branches of the scriptures], from the sūtras, the sayings in prose and verse, and prophetic declarations, up to and including the narratives and the established instructions, all originate from this [transcendent perfection of wisdom]. Moreover, Ānanda, the stock of merit of those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and then honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this scripture with flowers, ribbons, and so forth, as well as with diverse musical sounds, is equal to that of those who honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings with flowers, ribbons, and so forth, as well as with diverse musical sounds, to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems of the ten directions and four times, numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because even the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems of the ten directions and four times ... have attained emancipation through this [transcendent perfection of wisdom].”

33.F Moreover ... the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who receive, retain, master, and recite this profound transcendent perfection of wisdom, and who are attentive to it in the correct manner and teach it extensively to others, should know that they will not become denizens of the hells, and ... will not proceed into the animal realms or into the world of Yama. They should know that they are without fear of regressing to the level of the pratyekabuddhas. If you ask why ... it is because those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage should know that they abide on the irreversible level. If you ask why ... it is because this transcendent perfection of wisdom dispels all negativity and eradicates all ailments. Moreover ... the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, and then retain, hold, master, and recite this very transcendent perfection of wisdom, and are attentive to it in the correct manner, honoring, venerating, respecting, and making offerings to it with flowers, garlands, perfume, unguents, robes, parasols, victory banners, ribbons, and diverse musical sounds, should know that they will have nothing at all to fear. If you ask why, it is because even the tathāgatas have attained emancipation through it, and even the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas ... all originate from this [transcendent perfection of wisdom]. Indeed ... even the other five transcendent perfections, which have received the name ‘transcendent perfection,’ originate from this [transcendent perfection of wisdom], and even the omniscience that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas have attained its emancipation through this [transcendent perfection of wisdom] ... In this world, in a town, city, market, province, or palace circle,

wherever anyone retains, holds, masters, and recites this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and is attentive to it in the correct manner, and commits it to writing, or has it committed to writing and then honors, venerates, and respects it, no human or non-human beings who seek to intrude [and cause harm] would have a chance. All sentient beings, too, would sequentially attain final nirvāṇa by means of any vehicle whatsoever among the three vehicles. Therefore ... this transcendent perfection of wisdom is most important because through it the sentient beings of the world systems of the great trichilocosm become established in accordance with the deeds of the buddhas ... You should know that the attainment of buddhahood occurs in whichever world system the transcendent perfection of wisdom prevails.

33.G {The transcendent perfection of wisdom} resembles, for example, a priceless gemstone which is endowed with the following attributes: No matter where this precious gemstone is placed, no human being seeking to intrude [and cause harm] would have a chance. When this precious gemstone is set in a place where men or women are possessed by non human spirits, the non-human spirits would themselves swiftly depart because they would be unable to stand the brilliance of this precious gemstone. Similarly, when this precious gemstone is attached to the body of an invalid suffering from bile disorders ... wind disorders ... phlegm disorders or combined humoral disorders, immediately on touching it the ailments would be alleviated by the brilliance of this precious gemstone. Furthermore, this precious gemstone would illuminate the night. In the hot season, any location in which this precious gemstone is placed would become cool, and in the cold season any location in which this precious gemstone is placed would become warm. In any location where there are poisonous snakes or scorpions, and some man or woman were bitten by a poisonous snake [or scorpion], on being shown this precious gemstone, immediately after seeing it their poison would vanish ... If this precious gemstone were attached to the body of a man or woman afflicted by pustules or blisters, or afflicted with an eye disease, or an ear, nose, tongue or throat disease, immediately on seeing it all their ailments would be alleviated. If this precious gemstone were immersed in a pool of water, all the water would come to possess the eight qualities [of pure water]. If it were wrapped in blue, yellow, red, white, purple, crystal, reddish yellow, or pale yellow cloth and then immersed in water, all the water would become identical in color ... If this precious gemstone were immersed in turbid water, the water would become clear. Accordingly ... this transcendent perfection of wisdom, like a precious gemstone, is the source of all positive attributes and it alleviates all negativity ... This precious gemstone indeed exists among the gods ... {and} among the human beings of Jambudvīpa. However, the precious gemstone that exists among the human beings of Jambudvīpa has few attributes, whereas the precious gemstone that exists among the god realms has immeasurable attributes. Even the basket in which the precious gemstone of the god realms is kept is endowed with its positive attributes. There are some who will acquire those same attributes even on touching this basket ... This transcendent perfection of wisdom resembles the precious gemstone of the god realms. Those who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing should know that the locale in which [this scripture] is placed will experience no harm whatsoever. They should also observe that the attributes of the definitive transcendent perfection of wisdom, the pristine cognition of omniscience, and those of [the other transcendent perfections], from the transcendent perfection of meditative concentration down to and including the transcendent perfection of generosity, resemble the attributes of that precious gemstone. [The aspects of emptiness], from the emptiness of internal phenomena up to and including the emptiness of the essential nature of non-entities, also resemble this [precious gemstone]. [The causal and fruitional attributes], from the four applications of mindfulness up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and {knowledge of} all the

attributes of {relative} reality, the abiding nature {of phenomena}, the real nature {of phenomena}, the finality of {relative} existence, and the inconceivable expanse {of relative existence}, also resemble this [precious gemstone] ... It is for this reason that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas are described as ‘omniscient masters of all phenomena.’ They are worthy of honor, veneration, respect, and offering in the worlds of gods, humans, and antigods. If you ask why, it is because they are the repositories of the six transcendent perfections ... {and they} accept the offerings because they are the repositories [of the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and of the pristine cognition of omniscience, great compassion, and great loving kindness. Similarly, they accept the offerings because they are the repositories of the transcendent perfections, in whom afflicted mental states and all involuntary reincarnation through propensities have been abandoned, and who likewise are {the repositories of the real nature of all phenomena, that is} without affliction or purification, without arising or ceasing, without acceptance or rejection, and without standing, sitting, going, coming, or abiding.

33.H Moreover ... when, on the one hand, there are some sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who, for ... many hundreds of billion trillion eons, honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings ... to the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas of the world systems ... and, on the other hand, there are some other sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who retain, hold, recite, and master this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and are attentive to it in the correct manner, committing it to writing, and having it committed to writing, and who then honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this volume of the scripture with flowers, garlands, perfume, unguents, powders, religious robes, clothing, parasols, victory banners, ribbons, and diverse musical sounds—among these stocks of merit, the stock of merit acquired through this transcendent perfection of wisdom is ‘supreme,’ ‘foremost,’ ‘superior,’ and ‘unsurpassed,’ in contrast to the aforementioned stock of merit acquired through [making offerings to] the tathāgatas. If you ask why ... the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage whose stock of merit is acquired through [making offerings] to the tathāgatas, but lack the transcendent perfection of wisdom, are reborn among the gods and among human beings. They roam within cyclic existence and they do not perfect the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... up to and including omniscience ... Those who retain, hold, and so forth, this transcendent perfection of wisdom and are attentive to it in the correct manner will perfect the definitive transcendent perfection of wisdom ... {and} [the other transcendent perfections] ... the four applications of mindfulness, and ... [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. Having transcended the levels of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas, they will enter into the maturity of the bodhisattvas, and also attain the extrasensory powers of the bodhisattvas. Through these extrasensory powers of the bodhisattvas they will travel from buddhafiield to buddhafiield, and acquire a corporeal form through which they will refine the buddhafiields and bring sentient beings to maturity. Alternatively, they will bring sentient beings to maturity assuming the kingly guise of a universal monarch, or by becoming the king of a nation, or by becoming a member of the royal class ... {or of} the priestly class, tall as a great sāl tree, or else by assuming the form of Śakra, by assuming the form of Brahmā, or by assuming the form of Vaiśravaṇa. Therefore ... if they honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this same transcendent perfection of wisdom, they will accumulate the causes of all fruitional attributes. They will acquire all excellences. They will honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to the tathāgatas.

33.I Moreover ... those wishing to behold, in the buddha body of form {consisting of the emanation body of the nirmāṇakāya, and the body of all-encompassing bliss of the sambhogakāya} and the buddha body of reality {of the

dharmakāya}, the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who reside in the innumerable world systems of the ten directions, and who are alive at present, even now teaching the sacred doctrine, should retain, hold, and master this very transcendent perfection of wisdom, and extensively reveal it to others. Having been attentive to it in the correct manner, they will consequently behold the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who reside in all the innumerable world systems of the ten directions. Moreover ... the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who wish actually to behold the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas should retain, hold, recite, and master this very transcendent perfection of wisdom and be attentive to it in the correct manner ... Those tathāgatas, arhats, and genuinely perfect buddhas {of the past and who will emerge in the future, and} who reside in the innumerable world systems of the ten directions ... who are alive at present, even now teaching the sacred doctrine, all attained {and will attain} manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment dependent on this transcendent perfection of wisdom. Those śrāvakas {of the past, present, and future, have and} will also attain [the fruits], up to and including arhatship, and all those pratyekabuddhas of the {past} present {and future, have and} ... will also attain individual enlightenment, {leading to} manifestly perfect buddhahood, dependent on this same transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, it is because the three vehicles are extensively revealed in this transcendent perfection of wisdom. These [attainments] are all revealed in the manner of signlessness, and similarly ... in the manner of non-arising and non-cessation, in the manner of non-affliction and non-purification, in the manner of non-conditioning, in the manner of non-acceptance and non-rejection, and in the manner of non-standing, non-sitting, non-grasping, and non-abandoning. Although they may be revealed according to the conventional ways of the world, in ultimate reality they are not like that. If you ask why, it is because this transcendent perfection of wisdom is neither immanent nor transcendent, it is neither plain nor contoured, it is neither flat nor uneven, it is neither with signs nor is it signless, it is neither mundane nor supramundane, it is neither conditioned nor is it unconditioned, it is neither virtuous nor non-virtuous, it is neither specified nor non-specified, and it is neither past, nor future, nor present.

33.J Great bodhisattva beings practice all six transcendent perfections but they train without apprehending anything {as ultimately real}. They practice the transcendent perfection of generosity but they do not apprehend {as real} this transcendent perfection of generosity ... the dispenser of generosity and ... the recipient of generosity. They practice the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline ... up to and including the transcendent perfection of wisdom, but they do not apprehend {as real} this transcendent perfection of wisdom [and the rest]. They do not apprehend {as real} those who possess wisdom and ... those whose wisdom is confused. However, this transcendent perfection of wisdom has primacy over all [the other] transcendent perfections. It is thus that great bodhisattva beings who dispense generosity ... who keep [the vows of] ethical discipline ... who practice tolerance ... who undertake perseverance ... who become absorbed in the meditative concentrations ... {and} who inspect phenomena ... perfect {accordingly} the transcendent perfection{s} ... Yet they do so without apprehending {as real} physical forms, and ... [any other phenomena, attributes or attainments], up to and including omniscience ... Just as the shade of the trees of Jambudvīpa, with their different foliage, different flowers, and different fruits, is reckoned to be shade, and apart from that, no other details or distinctions are apprehensible, in the same way ... the five [other transcendent] perfections which are acquired through the transcendent perfection of wisdom are dedicated to [the attainment of] omniscience, and also no [other] details or distinctions are apprehensible. Then Senior Ānanda said to the Blessed One, “Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom is endowed with great enlightened attributes in or-

der that infinite enlightened attributes might be possessed. Venerable Lord! This transcendent perfection of wisdom perfects all enlightened attributes and is endowed with innumerable enlightened attributes in order that infinite enlightened attributes might be possessed.” The Blessed One replied ... “Ānanda, it is so! It is just as you have said.”

33.K “Venerable Lord! If, on the one hand, there are some sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and then make it into a volume of scripture, hold it, recite it, or similarly honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to it ... and in addition they are also attentive to this transcendent perfection of wisdom in the correct manner, and if, on the other hand, there are other sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and, having made it into a volume of scripture, then bestow it upon others, which of these two would have the greater merit?” ... “Ānanda, I will ask you a question and you should answer as best you can! Ānanda, in your opinion, which of these two has the greater merit—those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who continuously honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to the relics of the tathāgatas ... or those other sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who share a mustard seed-size relic of the tathāgatas with others, so that they too ... {may} then honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to that [relic] ...?” ... “Venerable Lord! As I understand the meaning of the words spoken by the Lord, those who bestow a mustard seed-size relic of the tathāgatas on others will have much greater merit, considering that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas become absorbed in the adamantite meditative stability and demonstrate the dissolution of the adamantite body. If one were to ask why ... it is because the roots of virtue of any who make offerings to a mustard seed-size relic of the tathāgatas who {are said to} have passed into final nirvāṇa will not come to an end—rather, all their sufferings will come to an end.” The Blessed One replied ... “Ānanda, it is so! It is just as you have said ... The merit of those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and then bestow it upon others out of joy in the sacred doctrine, is much greater than that of those who commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and, having made it into a volume of scripture, then honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to it with flowers, and so forth.”

33.L “Moreover, Ānanda, the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who resolutely wish to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this same transcendent perfection of wisdom which has just been taught, and they should retain, hold, recite, and master it, and be attentive to it in the correct manner. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because great bodhisattva beings also will attain emancipation through the transcendent perfection of wisdom, and even the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas have attained emancipation through it. So it is, Ānanda, that the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas, or the vehicle of the śrāvakas should honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this very transcendent perfection of wisdom with flowers, and so forth, up to and including ribbons and diverse musical sounds.”

33.M “Venerable Lord! When any sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas teach, explain, analyze, elucidate, and genuinely demonstrate this transcendent perfection of wisdom, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should earnestly apply this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it

has been taught,' in that case ... how much merit would those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage accrue on that basis?" ... "Ānanda, those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage would accrue much merit on that basis. Ānanda, do you think that if any sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage were to establish the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa in the fruit of entering the stream, in your opinion, Ānanda, would those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage accrue much merit on that basis?" "Yes, they would, Venerable Lord!" ... "Ānanda, if any sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage were to describe, teach, elucidate, analyze, and genuinely demonstrate these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to others, saying, 'Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should retain, hold, master, recite, and be attentive to it in the correct manner! You should earnestly apply this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been taught!' they would have much greater merit than those [who establish sentient beings in entering the stream]. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because those who enter the stream are distinguished through this transcendent perfection of wisdom. Ānanda, if any sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage were to establish as many sentient beings as there are in all the world systems of the ten directions ... in the fruit of entering the stream ... in that case, Ānanda, do you think that those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage would accrue much merit on that basis?" "Yes, they would, Venerable Sugata!" ... "Ānanda, if there are any sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who describe, teach, elucidate, analyze, and genuinely demonstrate these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to others, the merit of those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage would be much greater than the merit of the aforementioned sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage [who establish sentient beings in entering the stream]. They should be expected to become a revealer [of the sacred doctrine], or ... one who is worthy of veneration, or one who is renunciate in conduct. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because the genuinely perfect buddhas of the past ... the future ... and ... {the} present ... have all attained {and will attain} manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment having trained in this same transcendent perfection of wisdom. All the other learned renunciants, śrāvakas, and pratyekabuddhas who have appeared also did so through having trained in this same transcendent perfection of wisdom. Moreover, all great bodhisattva beings of the present who transcend the level{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas, and enter into the maturity of the irreversible bodhisattvas, do so through having trained in this same transcendent perfection of wisdom. Also, those who follow the vehicle of the śrāvakas have attained and will attain arhatship through having trained in this same transcendent perfection of wisdom. Similarly, those who follow the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas have attained and will attain individual enlightenment through having trained in this same transcendent perfection of wisdom, while those who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas will also enter upon the maturity of the bodhisattvas through it."

33.N "Ānanda, so it is that the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who wish to honor, wish to venerate, wish to respect, and wish to make offerings in the presence of the tathāgatas with diverse flowers, and so forth, up to and including ribbons and diverse musical sounds, should commit this transcendent perfection of wisdom to writing, or have it committed to writing, and then, having made it into a volume of scripture, honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to it with diverse flowers, and so forth, up to and including ribbons and diverse musical sounds. Considering this objective, when I had attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, I wondered whom I should honor, venerate, respect, make offerings to, and rely upon, but at that time, Ānanda, I did not see anyone like me or superior to me in the worlds, replete with all their gods, humans, and antigods—sentient beings including divinities, including Māra {demons}, including Brahmā {deities}, and including

virtuous ascetics and brāhmin priests—and then it occurred to me, ‘I should honor, venerate, respect, make offerings to, and rely upon the sacred doctrine which is calm, abundant, and through which manifestly perfect buddhahood is attained.’ Ānanda, if you ask what is that [sacred doctrine], it is this very transcendent perfection of wisdom. Ānanda, since even now I honor, venerate, respect, make offerings to, and rely upon this same transcendent perfection of wisdom ... the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who wish to attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment should honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this transcendent perfection of wisdom ... It also goes without saying that those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who would enter the vehicle{s} of the śrāvakas or ... pratyekabuddhas should also honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings to this transcendent perfection of wisdom with flowers, incense, perfume, garlands, unguents, powders, robes, parasols, victory banners, and ribbons. If you ask why, it is because it is through the transcendent perfection of wisdom that the bodhisattvas have appeared, through the bodhisattvas that the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas have appeared, and through the tathāgatas that the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas have appeared. Ānanda, so it is that the sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who are followers of the Great Vehicle ... {and} the vehicle{s} of the śrāvakas and ... pratyekabuddhas, should honor, venerate, respect, and make offerings with flowers, incense, perfume, garlands, unguents, powders, robes, parasols, victory banners, and ribbons to this same transcendent perfection of wisdom, in which they have all trained, and through which sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage have attained, are attaining, and will attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment.”

33.O “Ānanda, do you think that if any sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage were to establish all the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa ... in the fruit of entering the stream {or in the fruit of being tied to one more rebirth, in the fruit of no longer being subject to rebirth, in arhatship, and in individual enlightenment}, in your opinion, Ānanda, would those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage accrue much merit on that basis?” “Yes, they would, Venerable Lord!” ... “Ānanda, if any sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage were to extensively describe, teach, analyze, elucidate, and genuinely demonstrate these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to others, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should retain, hold, recite, and master it, and be attentive to it in the correct manner! You should earnestly apply this transcendent perfection of wisdom, as it has been taught!’ they would have much greater merit than those {who establish sentient beings in entering the stream, up to and including individual enlightenment} ... If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because [those fruits], up to and including individual enlightenment, are distinguished through this transcendent perfection of wisdom ... Moreover, Ānanda, if any sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage were to encourage all the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa ... to acquire unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and then were to extensively teach, explain, analyze, elucidate, and genuinely demonstrate these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to others, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should train in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and when you have trained therein, you will attain the attributes of omniscience,’ their merit would be equivalent. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because all great bodhisattva beings in the world systems of the ten directions, as many as there are ... as far as those who abide on the tenth level, will attain emancipation through this transcendent perfection of wisdom ... Moreover, Ānanda, if any sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage were to establish all the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa ... on the irreversible level, in your opinion, Ānanda, would those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage accrue much merit on that basis?” “Yes, they would, Venerable Lord!”

... “Ānanda, if any sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage were to extensively describe, genuinely demonstrate, and so forth, these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to others, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should retain this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and so forth ...,’ in that case, their merit would be much greater than that. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because the irreversible level of great bodhisattva beings and the [other attainments], up to and including unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, have also originated from the transcendent perfection of wisdom ... Moreover, Ānanda, if, on the one hand, some sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage were to encourage all the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa ... to acquire unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and then were to describe, genuinely demonstrate, and so forth, these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to them, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should retain this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and so forth ...,’ and if, on the other hand, someone were to teach, genuinely demonstrate, and so forth, this transcendent perfection of wisdom to those irreversible bodhisattvas, saying, ‘Come! Child of enlightened heritage, you should retain this transcendent perfection of wisdom, and so forth ...,’ in that case, the latter would have much greater merit than the former ... Moreover, Ānanda, if, on the one hand, there were some sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage teaching these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to those sentient beings of Jambudvīpa ... and all those sentient beings of the four continents ... who could not be turned back from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and if, on the other hand, there were some son ... or daughter of enlightened heritage teaching these noble meanings and noble words of the transcendent perfection of wisdom to one among them who would say, ‘Thus should I swiftly attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, and, having attained manifestly perfect buddhahood, I should also lead forth those sentient beings who have fallen into the three inferior realms!’ in that case the latter son ... or daughter of enlightened heritage would have much greater merit. If you ask why, it is because the irreversible great bodhisattva beings do not require even a single demonstration of the sacred doctrine—they are intent on perfect enlightenment and cannot be averted from unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, whereas this one should be embraced because he or she is distressed [at the sufferings of beings] in cyclic existence, and engages in [acts of] great compassion.”

33.P “Venerable Lord! The more great bodhisattva beings approach unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, the more they wish to teach and grant instruction in the transcendent perfection{s} ... and similarly, the more they wish to teach and grant instruction in [the aspects of emptiness] ... and similarly, the more they wish to teach and grant instruction in [the causal attributes], from the four applications of mindfulness up to and including the noble eightfold path, and similarly, the more they wish to teach and grant instruction in the ten powers of the tathāgatas, the four assurances, the four unhindered discernments, great loving kindness, great compassion, and the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, and the more they wish to benefit sentient beings with food, clothing, bedding, mats, medications which cure ailments, and [other] useful resources. The sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who would benefit those {very same} bodhisattvas, attracting them with the sacred doctrine and attracting them with worldly needs, accrue much greater merit than the aforementioned sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage who do not.” ... Then, the Blessed One replied ... “Ānanda, you who encourage the sons ... or the daughters of enlightened heritage who follow the vehicle of the bodhisattvas. Well done! The sublime śrāvakas who wish to benefit sentient beings should encourage great bodhisattva beings who would attain unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. They should assist and protect great bodhisattva beings, attracting them with the sacred doctrine

and attracting them with worldly needs. If you ask why, it is because the monastic community of the śrāvakas of the tathāgatas originated from the bodhisattvas, while the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas also originated from them, and the Great Vehicle also originated from them. Ānanda, if bodhisattvas did not develop the mind set on unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, great bodhisattva beings would not train in the six transcendent perfections. If they did not train in [the causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, they would not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment because they would not have trained in the six transcendent perfections and the [other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas. If they did not attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, there would be no unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, or the enlightenment of the pratyekabuddhas, or ... śrāvakas. Ānanda, it is because the bodhisattvas train in the six transcendent perfections and in [the other causal and fruitional attributes], up to and including the eighteen distinct qualities of the buddhas, that great bodhisattva beings who would attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment will actually attain manifestly perfect buddhahood.”

33.Q “Ānanda, it is so! You have spoken correctly. As long as the transcendent perfection of wisdom is active in the world, so long will the Precious Jewel of the Buddha not vanish from the world, and in the same vein, so long will [all those other attributes], up to and including the promulgation of the doctrinal wheel, emerge in the world. If you ask why ... it is because this transcendent perfection of wisdom is of great benefit, even when heard only minimally, let alone when it is retained, held, recited, mastered, and attended to correctly, that is to say, honored, venerated, respected, and presented with offerings of flowers, fruits, perfume, unguents, powders, incense, butter lamps, parasols, victory banners, ribbons and diverse musical sounds! If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because all those sons ... or daughters of enlightened heritage, and the male and female gods, whose ears have heard this transcendent perfection of wisdom, will, on the basis of this very root of virtue, attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because the tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who emerged in the past, along with their monastic assemblies of śrāvakas ... {those} who will emerge in the future ... {and those} who are alive at present, even now teaching the sacred doctrine, attain manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment and will pass into final nirvāṇa, in the expanse beyond sorrow, where there is no residue of the psycho-physical aggregates, having trained in this transcendent perfection of wisdom. If you ask why, Ānanda, it is because all the attributes of the aspects of enlightenment are gathered in the transcendent perfection of wisdom. All the attributes of the buddhas, the attributes of the pratyekabuddhas, and the attributes of the śrāvakas are also gathered therein. All virtuous attributes are indeed attained therein, and all things are subsumed therein. Moreover, Ānanda, you have revered me with benevolent actions of body ... speech, and ... mind. So it is that you have rejoiced in, had confidence in, and paid homage to this, my physical body, while I am alive and present, here and now. But after I have passed away, you should rejoice, have faith in, and pay homage to this transcendent perfection of wisdom. Ānanda, after I have passed into final nirvāṇa, in any event, you should not squander this transcendent perfection of wisdom. After I have passed into final nirvāṇa, in any event, I shall entrust it to your hands, twice or thrice, so that not even a single syllable will vanish. Ānanda, you should know that, for as long as this transcendent perfection of wisdom is active in the world, so long will the tathāgatas reside in the world. You should know that so long will the tathāgatas teach the sacred doctrine to sentient beings in the world. Ānanda, you should know that so long will sentient beings behold the tathāgatas, and inseparably hear the sacred

doctrine from the tathāgatas. You should know that so long will renunciate modes of conduct be maintained in the presence of the tathāgatas. So long will beings listen to this transcendent perfection of wisdom, so long will they commit it to writing or have it committed to writing, and master, describe, retain, hold, recite, teach, and be attentive to it in the correct manner—honoring, venerating, respecting, making offerings, and praising it with flowers, garlands, perfume, unguents, incense, butter lamps, powders, butter, oil, lamps, robes, parasols, victory banners, ribbons, and many other useful necessities of offering.” ... When the Blessed One had spoken these words, the great bodhisattva being Maitreya and all the remaining great bodhisattva beings rejoiced, along with Senior Subhūti, Senior Śāradvatīputra, Senior Maudgalyāyana, Senior Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra, Senior Mahākāśyapa, Senior Mahākauṣṭhila, Senior Kātyāyana, Senior Ānanda, and all the remaining fully ordained monks and the complete assembly, as well as mundane beings, including gods, humans, antigods, and gandharvas. Manifest praise to the teachings spoken by the Blessed One!

COMMENTARY

In reality there is only the ‘one and only’ Tathāgata. **The three bodies of the Tathāgata are the Father (Creator) of Vajradhara (the dharmakāya), the Holy Spirit of the five dhyanī wisdom buddhas (the sambhogakāya), and the immaculate conception of the Son (Creation) of Vajrasattva (the nirmāṇakāya),** which while appearing to be separate aspects of the Tathāgata, are in reality indivisible aspects of the ‘One’. This is why the Buddha proclaims in the chapter (above): *“When I had attained manifestly perfect buddhahood in unsurpassed, genuinely perfect enlightenment, I wondered whom I should honor, venerate, respect, make offerings to, and rely upon, but at that time ... I did not see anyone like me or superior to me in the worlds, replete with all their gods, humans, and antigods—sentient beings including divinities, including Māra {demons}, including Brahmā {deities}, and including virtuous ascetics and brāhmin priests.”* For while the Body of the Buddha is emanated in many various emanational forms throughout the world systems of the great trichilocosm, it is in reality the ‘one and only’ indivisible Tathāgata, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And this is why the Buddha reveals (above): *“Those wishing to behold {the ‘one and only’ Tathāgata}, in the buddha body of form {consisting of the emanation body of the nirmāṇakāya, and the body of all-encompassing bliss of the sambhogakāya} and the buddha body of reality {of the dharmakāya}, the {emanational forms of the} tathāgatas, arhats, genuinely perfect buddhas who reside {indivisibly} in the innumerable world systems of the ten directions, and who are alive at present, even now teaching the sacred doctrine, should retain, hold, and master this very transcendent perfection of wisdom, and extensively reveal it to others.”*

*

Yet in extensively revealing the sacred doctrine to others, it must be understood there are no others ~ for in reality there is only the ‘one and only’ natural luminosity of mind.



THE TEACHING OF THE DIAMOND-HOLDER

By Maitreya Christos



INTRODUCTION

This inspired work by Maitreya Christos, *The Teaching of the Diamond-Holder*, is a new revelation from God. It is a simple teaching, revealing that Buddhism holds at its core the foundational teaching of the Father (the Creator), the Son (the Creation), and the Holy Spirit (the Wisdom of God—which is accessible to every part of the Creation). The Truth or Wisdom of God is only accessible to those, who as Jesus describes, “have eyes to see, and ears to hear” and as *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines* reveals, “This profound transcendent perfection of wisdom is hard to realize, {for} it cannot be scrutinized {by the dualistic mind}, it is not within the range of sophistry {of the dualistic mind}, and it may {only} be known by the wise and by those who are skilled in investigating subtle quiescence.” The ego-mind is only intent on defending its already existing views and will never be open to opening its mind to the fullness of the Reality of God. But God is not seeking Truth-seekers who believe they know the Reality of God, but only the meek, who humble themselves before the all-encompassing Truth of God. Yet this new teaching neither calls for the mind of the reader to blindly accept the teaching that is offered, but to critically think and always to compare any new teaching to the Wisdom Mind, the Holy Spirit, that is located in the mindstream of every sentient being. For you see, we either hand over our mind to be controlled by the ego-mind or to the Wisdom Mind ~ and to either we give charge, our mind is accordingly dominated by the fear of the ego-mind or the Truth-seeking nature of the Wisdom mind. It is through this Wisdom Mind, and seeking to be only led by this Wisdom Mind, that God’s scribe, Maitreya Christos, willed to be connected to this mind in 2002 by chanting the Buddhist mantra: “Nam myoho renge kyo”, which means “I tune myself to the true reality of my life; the oneness of cause and effect; and the vibration of universal law”. Within one week of intently chanting this phrase, Maiteya could literally feel the Lord Buddhas physically implanting Buddha seeds directly into his mind and was immediately compelled to scribe new information pertaining to the nature of the ego. In 2014, after much inner work and scribing, Maitreya was guided by God to journey to a 5th dimensional location in Hawaii to bring back the spiritual keys to begin activating the opening of his personal MerKaBa Light Body. In 2016, he was given the knowledge of *The Teaching of the Diamond-Holder* during a meditation immediately upon completing the reading of the Buddha’s sūtra: “*The Scripture on the Explication of Underlying Meaning*”. During that same night while in bed (but still awake), he was visited by a being from another world (who identified the world Maitreya was from) and then within a few moments God activated Maitreya’s personal MerKaBa Light Body Vehicle for the first time. Hearing the incredible loudness of the two pyramids swirling around his body, he was catapulted into God’s Holy Light of his Light Body Vehicle and taken through golden wormholes throughout the galaxy. This activation of his Light Body Vehicle was to be taken as a sign from God of the accuracy of *The Teaching of the Diamond-Holder* which reveals the illusory individuation of God’s mind within the con-

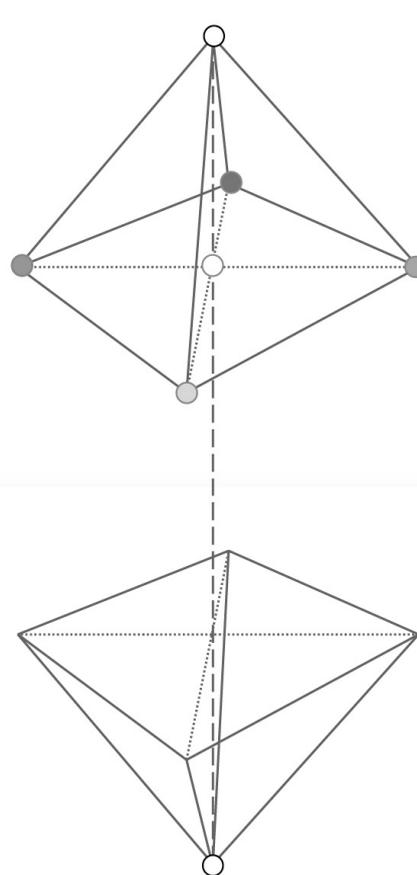
finer of 'relative' existence, to be held in place by a diamond structure; with Vajradhara (the diamond-holder) as the great illusionist, or Father (Creator), who holds in place the great diamond structure; with Vajrasattva (the diamond-being) as the manifest Son (Creation), which is the 'immaculate conception' or perfected ideal of every part of the singular Creation; and the five dhyani Wisdom Buddhas (of the Holy Spirit) interlinking the mind of the Father with the mind of the Son. In a further sign from God, Maitreya received a random Linked-In email request a few days later from "John Vajra", with John meaning: "YAHWEH is gracious". Thus the message was to be taken that "the gracious and all-loving YAHWEH (God) is the Diamond-Holder (Vajradhara) and the Diamond-Being (Vajrasattva)."

THE DIAMOND STRUCTURE

The word "Vajra" means diamond; "dhara" means holder; and "sattva" means being. The below diagram reveals the upper pyramid of Vajradhara (the diamond-holder), or Father (Creator), emanating the five dhyani wisdom buddhas (of the Holy Spirit) to interface with the lower pyramid of Vajrasattva (God's diamond-being), which is the manifest Son (or Creation). This manifest Son is the perfected ideal or 'immaculate conception' of every sentient being, which unfolds in the mindstream of every sentient being as it joins in union with the five dhyani wisdom buddhas.

The five dhyani buddhas (of the Holy Spirit) were created by the Father-Creator (Vajradhara) as foundation supports for all sentient beings (souls) to re-establish oneness with the mind of God. Vairocana is the centerpoint aspect (holding the Wisdom of Dharma of God's Truth); Amoghasiddhi is the northern aspect (holding the Wisdom of Perfect Practice); Amitābha is the western aspect (holding the Wisdom of Observation); Ratnasambhava is the southern aspect (holding the Wisdom of Equanimity); and Akṣobhya is the eastern aspect (holding the Wisdom of Reflection)

To awaken every sentient being to the reality of its oneness with the mind of God, an aspect of the perfected Universal Son of God (Vajrasattva), known as the Inner Buddha-Christ Self, is located in the secret chamber of the heart of every sentient being. The Wisdom of the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddha's is received via the Inner Buddha-Christ Self, using our heart-intuition: the Key of Knowledge

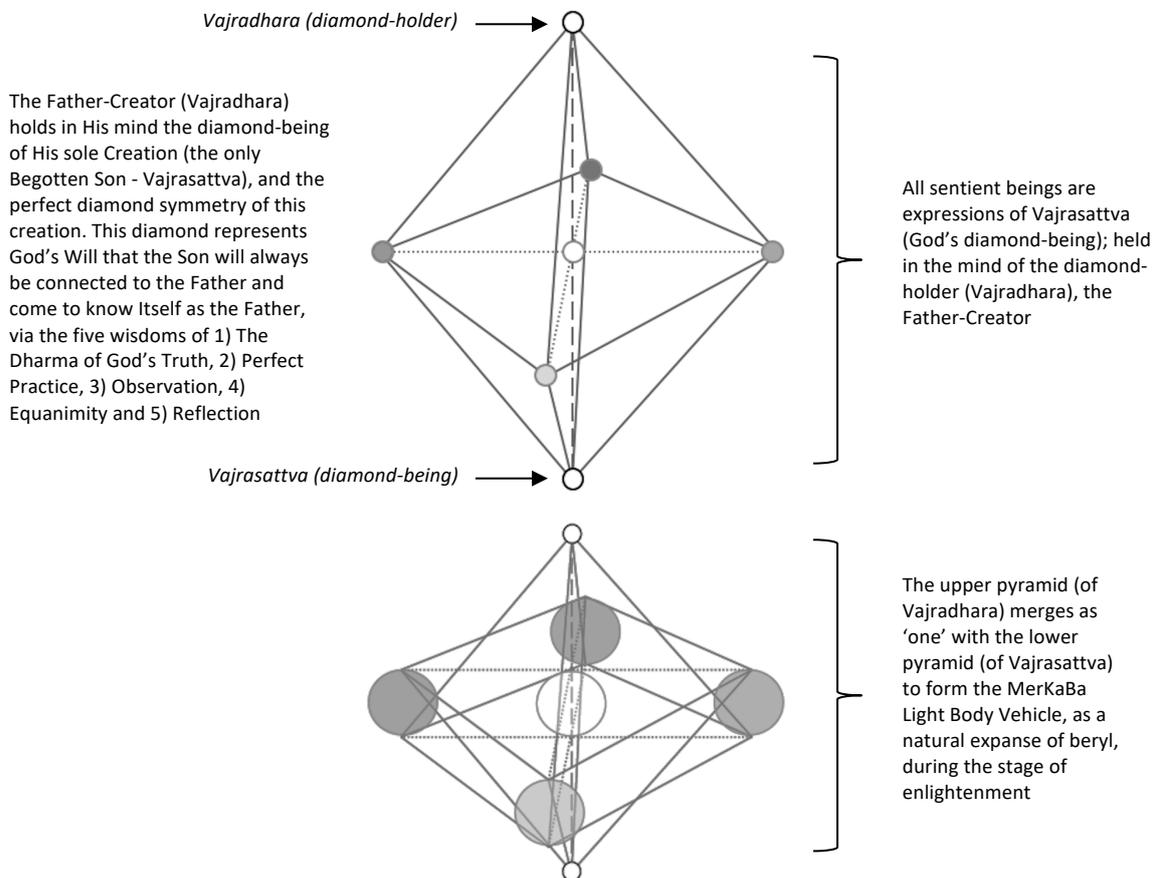


Upper pyramid: Vajradhara (the diamond-holder) is the top point and is the unmanifest formless God (dharmakāya), which means "reality body", from which all phenomena and form emanate; and is located above the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, which are the original emanation of the "body of all-encompassing bliss" (known as sambhogakāya), which is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit (the Wisdom of God)

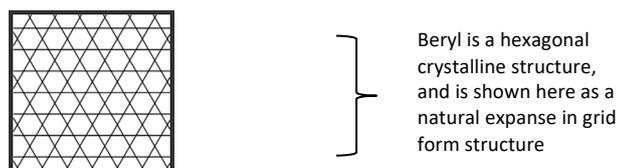
Lower pyramid: The five dhyani wisdom buddhas interface with the manifestation of God's diamond-being (Vajrasattva) at the lower point, which is the Universal Son of God, connecting the Wisdom of God with the Son. Every sentient being is awakening to the reality it is a part of the Universal Son of God. When it unites with the Wisdom of God (the Holy Spirit) it emanates as a perfect individualized expression of God (known as nirmāṇakāya), meaning "emanation body"

The five dhyani wisdom buddhas, which function as the Holy Spirit within the realm of 'relative' existence, were created by the Father (Creator) as foundation supports for every sentient being to re-establish 'oneness' with the mind of God. This interface of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas between the Father (Creator) and the Son (Creation) creates a "diamond structure" (as shown below). The Diamond-Holder (Vajradhara) is the unmanifest aspect of God within the realm of 'relative' existence ~ which is the **dharmakāya** or 'reality body'. The five dhyani buddhas (of the Holy Spirit) are the original emanation, or template, of **sambhogakāya** or 'The body of all-encompassing bliss' ~ whi-

ch is the manifestation of the Wisdom of God, experienced as all-encompassing bliss within the realm of ‘relative’ existence. As every sentient being comes into union with the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, they emanate as a perfect individualized *expression* of God, known as Vajrasattva (or God’s diamond-being) ~ which is the manifest aspect of God within the realm of ‘relative’ existence, which is the **nirmāṇakāya** or ‘emanation body’.



When all identification with the individual self is abandoned, the upper and lower pyramids then merge as ‘one’ to form the MerKaBa Light Body as a natural expanse of beryl—which is a six-pointed hexagonal crystalline structure—during the stage of enlightenment (as shown in the diagram above). The Buddha reveals in chapter ten of *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines* that great bodhisattva beings will illuminate the world systems of ‘relative’ existence, emanating these world systems as a natural expanse of beryl, when they have donned the armor of the “buddha body”. Beryl is a hexagonal crystalline structure, and when shown as a natural expanse in ‘grid form structure’ appears as the Star of David and Flower of Life. The Star of David is the MerKaBa Light Body (or Wheel of Ezekiel), and when the upper pyramid (of Vajradhara) merges with the lower pyramid (of Vajrasattva), the individual being becomes, in ‘relative’ existence, a great emanation of expanding Light.



This MerKaBa Light Body is a “Vehicle of Light” for traveling interdimensionally to the heavens. **Mer (means Light), Ka (means Spirit) and Ba (means Body)**. As each sentient being rises in consciousness to accept its oneness with all life, and balances its emotional and mental bodies by being led solely by the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom

buddhas, it is then able to activate its own personal MerKaBa Light Body and the great pyramid MerKaBa Light Body (of Vajradhara and Vajrasattva) of which it is a part. This occurs as the two pyramids merge into one, with one pyramid spinning clockwise and the other counter-clockwise at incredible speeds to produce Infinite Light.

THE FIVE DHYANI BUDDHAS AS 'THE FIRMAMENT'

The difference between the state of Christhood and Buddhahood is such. The Universal Son of God (Vajrasattva) is God's diamond-being in the realm of creation, guided and supported by the five dhyani wisdom buddhas—including the Wisdom of Dharma of God's Truth, the Wisdom of Perfect Practice, the Wisdom of Observation, the Wisdom of Equanimity, and the Wisdom of Reflection. All sentient beings are expressions of Vajrasattva (God's diamond-being); held in the mind of the diamond-holder (Vajradhara), our Father-Creator. This 'perfected state' or 'flawless image' or 'immaculate conception' of God's diamond-being (Vajrasattva) is the Universal Christ Self (God's only begotten Son), located within the secret chamber of the heart of every sentient being. It is the Holy Grail [representing everlasting life in God] that we must seek to uncover within and accept through a journey of faith, commitment and endurance. This Universal Christ Self unites us all in perfect 'oneness' ~ for although it appears divided in us all, it is indivisible. When we accept we are not an individuated self but all parts of the Universal Son of God (Vajrasattva), then we will understand the Truth of the following statement in 1 Corinthians 2:14-16: *"But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit... For, "Who can know the LORD's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?" But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ."* Only when we see the Christ Self situated in all and revere every sentient being as an expression of the Universal Son of God (Vajrasattva), will this mind of Christ "be in you". For "wide is the gate and narrow is the Way", and there is a clear distinction between following (and lagging behind) Jesus Christ and being a true expression of the Living Christ, to announce as Jesus spoke in Matthew 25:38: *"For inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these my Brethren, you have done it unto Me!"* Thus, the actual acknowledgement to others of our true and indivisible Universal Christ Self reflects the attainment of our personal Christhood. This Universal Christ Self is supported and has as its base God's five dhyani wisdom buddhas. God described [to Matireya Christos] this underlying and perpetual support of the Universal Christ Self by the five dhyani buddhas as "the firmament". The Universal Christ Self only awakens within the mind of every sentient being as they adopt the wisdom of the five dhyani buddhas. Thus, located within the secret heart chamber of every sentient being is the Universal Christ Self and wisdom of the five dhyani buddhas—representing two sides of the one coin. **Hence it is known as the "Inner Buddha-Christ Self" ~ whereby Vajrasattva (the Universal Son) speaks to the heart of every sentient being, relaying the wisdoms of the five dhyani buddhas.** It must be understood that the path of Christhood is the path of the Bodhisattva, and the path of the Bodhisattva is the path of Christhood ~ for the key component of the Bodhisattva-Christ is to give their life to awaken every part of the Whole. The Bodhisattva-Christ is naturally on a path to attaining Buddhahood ~ yet they must first perfect the state of becoming the Living Bodhisattva-Christ.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR DIAMOND NATURE

While the diamond represents the diamond symmetry of the relationship between Vajradhara (the diamond-holder), Vajrasattva (God's diamond-being), and the five dhyani buddhas (the Wisdom of God), it also has a deeper meaning. The diamond represents 1) our flawless God-nature, known as the 'immaculate conception' or 'flawless image', 2) that God's Universal Son is treasured and held as the greatest of gems, 3) the perfection of the transparency, brill-

iance and clarity of the perfected Son in the form and formless realms, and 4) the Universal Son's indestructible diamond nature and strength to withstand all types of pressures. Conversely, until we awaken to the diamond nature of our Inner Buddha-Christ Self (which is the Son guided by the Holy Spirit), we remain as lumps of coal. It is only when we apply our own pressure of self-determination to consistently carry out the wisdom of the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, will the coal of our consciousness (a metaphor for the ego-mind which rejects our unity with God) overtime become a diamond through the complete surrender to the guiding Truth and Wisdom of God. As the mind of every sentient being unites with its Inner Buddha-Christ Self, it can then take the next step to accept it is not only the Son of God, but is the diamond-holder (the Father-Creator), just as Jesus did when he proclaimed in John 10:30, "*I and the Father are One*", and in John 17:20, "*[I am asking God] that all of them may be one, as You, Father are in Me, and I am in You. May they also be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.*"

THE ILLUSION AND DISSOLUTION OF GOD'S DIAMOND-BEING

God's experience of being more than the One, more than a singularity in the form and formless realms, is a temporal illusion in the confines of space and time, created within the mind of God ~ where God divided a part of Its Awareness into many individuated parts to produce multiplicity and relativity; that being something more than the One. These individuated parts were created barren of God Knowledge, God Remembrance and the fullness of God's Light, but contained in their hearts an in-built desire for Wholeness ~ with an urgency to swim upstream (like the spawn of the Great Salmon) to the Source of their birthplace. To guide them upstream past the hungry bears, the fisherman, over the waterfalls, and against the downward stream of the rapids, God implanted within the secret chamber of their heart a portion of His diamond-being (Vajrasattva) and diamond-will, guided by the five dhyani wisdom buddhas, in the form of the Inner Buddha-Christ Self. God devised that this secret chamber (containing the Holy Grail of the Inner Buddha-Christ Self) would be accessed and revealed only to those who demonstrated a sheer determination and leap-of-faith (over the waterfalls) to reach their Unknown Source. Swimming upstream, most are driven backwards time and time again by the downward pull of the torrents of ignorance, laziness and lack of determination to find and reach their Source. Many are hooked by fisherman (false teachers and the collective consciousness of the desire realm), which takes them off course and out of the River of Life, onto barren land. And many leap into the mouths of the hungry bears, devoured by the consciousness of hunger and craving. Only a few sentient beings each spawning season (within each round of incarnation) make it back to the Source of their birthplace [upstream] to give birth to the Living Bodhisattva-Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas – giving up their notion of an individuated self and letting it perish on the banks of the river. As the 'whole' of God's diamond-being Creation cannot be dissolved until every part of God's individuated Awareness finds its way back to God, those who give birth to the Living Bodhisattva-Christ set out again to be reborn in realms of suffering in the River of Life to lead and guide other swimmers back Home. Eventually 'all' parts of God's individuated Awareness align in thought as the "*Singular Son of God*"; and in acknowledging that the Father-Creator and the Son are the One, the Son and the five dhyani buddhas are dissolved in the final moment of the in-breath of God to dissolve God's diamond-being.



AGGAÑÑA SŪTRA: BEFORE THE BEGINNING [OF LIFE ON EARTH]

Translation by Maitreya Christos



THE TATHĀGATA IS THE BODY AND THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD

1. [Sūtra begins]—THUS HAVE I HEARD. Once upon a time, the [Buddha] Bhagavān was dwelling in the eastern park (Pubbārāme) of the mansion of Migāra’s mother in Sāvatti. Indeed and on account of it, so too at that time were the probationary monks Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja, aspiring toward monkhood. Now then in the evening time, the Bhagavān climbed down from his lofty terrace¹ of seclusion and arose, walking serenely about in a place in the shade in the open air. Indeed Vāseṭṭha saw the Bhagavān in the evening time, climb down and arise from his lofty terrace of seclusion and walk serenely in a place in the shade in the open air. Having found Bhāradvāja he addressed him: “Oh brother Bhāradvāja, in this evening time, the Bhagavān has climbed down and arisen from his lofty terrace of seclusion and walks serenely in a place in the shade in the open air. Because of this, brother Bhāradvāja, and on account of the Bhagavān, let’s go forth and intermingle—surely perhaps we may receive something this night from the Bhagavān and hear a story of the Dharma!” “Yes brother,” thus with certainty did Bhāradvāja promise Vāseṭṭha. Now because of this, and on account of the Bhagavān, Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja did go forth and intermingle. Having approached the Bhagavān who was walking about, they greeted the Bhagavān and followed him, walking alongside. Now then, the Bhagavān addressed Vāseṭṭha: “Indeed Vāseṭṭha, thou are prosperous—being a Brahmin from birth, a descendent from a recognized Brahmin clan and Brahmin family, you renounced the home life for the homeless state to become a monk—surely being a Brahmin, Vāseṭṭha, you were never insulted nor abused?” “No truly, O Lord, Brahmin’s do insult and abuse us—they abuse our bodies completely, without holding back!” “But in your story Vāseṭṭha, in whatever way do Brahmins insult and abuse you and insult and abuse your bodies completely, without holding back?” “O Lord, the Brahmins speak out like this: ‘A Brahmin is the best social caste and all the other castes are inferior! A Brahmin has the fairest complexion and all the others have darker complexions. A Brahmin is clean and pure and non-Brahmins are not. A Brahmin is God’s² only begotten son, born from the mouth of God—who has sprung from God, been created by God and is God’s heir. Those who have forsaken the best caste and reached for the inferior brain caste—that is to say the dark menial shaven-headed ascetics—are born from the feet of our Kinsman³. It is no good, it is not proper, for you to have forsaken the best caste, for you to have reached for the inferior brain caste—that is to say the dark menial shaven-headed ascetics—who are born from the feet of our Kinsman!’ Thus indeed no, O Lord, Brahmins do insult and abuse us—they abuse our bodies completely, without holding back!”

¹ Lofty terrace refers to the “terrace of enlightenment” one dwells during the state of samādhi meditation

² The word “Brahma” has been translated as meaning ‘God’ in this context; that is “A Brahmin is Brahma’s (God’s) only begotten son ... “

³ The Kinsman means God the Father-Creator or Brahma. In Pali the word “Brahma/Brahmā” in a general sense means ‘highest, supreme deity or God’. The Buddha uses the word “Brahma/Brahmā” to refer to any Brahma deity, to the ruling deity of the Brahmā worlds (‘Brahmā’) who mistakenly believes he is the Creator of all (the Mahābrahmā), to Mahābrahmā (the Great Brahmā) who the Buddha acknowledges in the Lotus Sūtra as the father of all sentient beings: “Just as Great Brahma is the father of all the sentient beings, in the same way this sūtra [the Lotus Sūtra] is the father of all the wise”, and (in this sūtra) to the Tathāgata as the body and the manifestation of Brahma (God). Thus does the Buddha state in The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines: “I will turn the wheel of Brahmā (the wheel of God) which has not previously been turned [in the world] in conformity with the sacred doctrine by any virtuous ascetic, brāhmin, god, demon, Brahmā {deity}, or anyone else!”

◉ Special note: The title of this sūtra is *Aggañña*, which means: *agga* (beginning) + *añña* (distinct from). Distinct from the beginning could mean before, from and after the beginning, however as this sūtra specifically focuses on the events that occurred “before” the beginning of life on earth, it has been translated accordingly as “Before the Beginning [of Life on Earth]”

2. “Surely, Vāseṭṭha, the Brahmin’s have forgotten the past when they speak so emphatically of you like this: ‘A Brahmin is the best social caste and all the other castes are inferior! A Brahmin has the fairest complexion and all the others have darker complexions. A Brahmin is clean and pure and non-Brahmins are not. A Brahmin is God’s only begotten son, born from the mouth of God—who has sprung from God, been created by God and is God’s heir!’ Indeed it appears, Vāseṭṭha, Brahmin’s own menstruating women who give birth and pregnant women who make suckle are Brahmin’s. And these Brahmins, being womb-born speak out like this: ‘A Brahmin is the best social caste and all the other castes are inferior! A Brahmin has the fairest complexion and all the others have darker complexions. A Brahmin is clean and pure and non-Brahmins are not. A Brahmin is God’s only begotten son, born from the mouth of God—who has sprung from God, been created by God and is God’s heir!’ These Brahmin’s who worship so—speaking slander and falsehood—accumulate much demerit. There are, Vāseṭṭha, four social castes—the Kshatriya, the Brahmin, the Vaishya, and the Shudra⁴. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, suppose a certain **Kshatriya** in this world were to behave by taking that which is not given, commit sexual misconduct, speak slanderously or falsely, use harsh (unkind) speech or frivolous (idle) talk, become covetous or malevolent, or hold heretical views⁵. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, such things—unwholesome recognized as unwholesome, censurable recognized as censurable, not to be conducted recognized as not to be conducted, never suitable for a nobleman recognized as never suitable for a nobleman⁶, and evil actions having evil results [reproached by the wise]—are surely seen amongst these Kshatriyas in this world. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, suppose a certain **Brahmin** in this world were to behave by taking that which is not given, commit sexual misconduct, speak slanderously or falsely, use harsh (unkind) speech or frivolous (idle) talk, become covetous or malevolent, or hold heretical views. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, such things—unwholesome recognized as unwholesome, censurable recognized as censurable, not to be conducted recognized as not to be conducted, never suitable for a nobleman recognized as never suitable for a nobleman, and evil actions having evil results [reproached by the wise]—are surely seen amongst these Brahmins in this world. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, suppose a certain **Vaishya** in this world were to behave by taking that which is not given, commit sexual misconduct, speak slanderously or falsely, use harsh (unkind) speech or frivolous (idle) talk, become covetous or malevolent, or hold heretical views. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, such things—unwholesome recognized as unwholesome, censurable recognized as censurable, not to be conducted recognized as not to be conducted, never suitable for a nobleman recognized as never suitable for a nobleman, and evil actions having evil results [reproached by the wise]—are surely seen amongst these Vaishyas in this world. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, suppose a certain **Shudra** in this world were to behave by taking that which is not given, commit sexual misconduct, speak slanderously or falsely, use harsh (unkind) speech or frivolous (idle) talk, become covetous or malevolent, or hold heretical views. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, such things—unwholesome recognized as unwholesome, censurable recognized as censurable, not to be conducted recognized as not to be conducted, never suitable for a nobleman recog-

nized as never suitable for a nobleman, and evil actions having evil results [reproached by the wise]—are surely seen amongst these Shudras in this world. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, suppose a certain **Kshatriya** in this world were to behave by abstaining from taking that which is not given, abstain from committing sexual misconduct, abstain from speaking slanderously or falsely, abstain from using harsh (unkind) speech or frivolous (idle) talk, oppose becoming covetous or malevolent, or hold agreeable right views⁷. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, such things—wholesome recognized as wholesome, irreproachable recognized as irreproachable, right conduct recognized as right conduct, suitable for a nobleman recognized as suitable for a nobleman, and virtuous actions having virtuous results [praised by the wise]—are surely seen amongst these Kshatriyas in this world. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, suppose a certain **Brahmin** in this world were to behave by abstaining from taking that which is not given, abstain from committing sexual misconduct, abstain from speaking slanderously or falsely, abstain from using harsh (unkind) speech or frivolous (idle) talk, oppose becoming covetous or malevolent, or hold agreeable right views. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, such things—wholesome recognized as wholesome, irreproachable recognized as irreproachable, right conduct recognized as right conduct, suitable for a nobleman recognized as suitable for a nobleman, and virtuous actions having virtuous results [praised by the wise]—are surely seen amongst these Brahmins in this world. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, suppose a certain **Vaishya** in this world were to behave by abstaining from taking that which is not given, abstain from committing sexual misconduct, abstain from speaking slanderously or falsely, abstain from using harsh (unkind) speech or frivolous (idle) talk, oppose becoming covetous or malevolent, or hold agreeable right views. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, such things—wholesome recognized as wholesome, irreproachable recognized as irreproachable, right conduct recognized as right conduct, suitable for a nobleman recognized as suitable for a nobleman, and virtuous actions having virtuous results [praised by the wise]—are surely seen amongst these Vaishyas in this world. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, suppose a certain **Shudra** in this world were to behave by abstaining from taking that which is not given, abstain from committing sexual misconduct, abstain from speaking slanderously or falsely, abstain from using harsh (unkind) speech or frivolous (idle) talk, oppose becoming covetous or malevolent, or hold agreeable right views. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, such things—wholesome recognized as wholesome, irreproachable recognized as irreproachable, right conduct recognized as right conduct, suitable for a nobleman recognized as suitable for a nobleman, and virtuous actions having virtuous results [praised by the wise]—are surely seen amongst these Shudras in this world. Indeed these four social castes, Vāseṭṭha, in this way exist mixed up with both evil and virtuous natures [reproached by the wise and praised by the wise], and for which the Brahmin in this matter thus speaks like this: ‘A Brahmin is the best social caste and all the other castes are inferior! A Brahmin has the fairest complexion and all the others have darker complexions. A Brahmin is clean and pure and non-Brahmins are not. A Brahmin is God’s only begotten son, born from the mouth of God—who has sprung from God, been created by God and is God’s heir!’ The wise know of all these varying types. But why is this so? Any person from these four social castes, Vāseṭṭha, seeking to become a monk, dwelling as a holy man—one in whom human passion is extinct, who completes what ought to be done, laying down their burdens, who has reached the highest good, who has broken the chain of rebirth, becoming liberated through their own perfect understanding, who has neither perception nor non-perception of the Dharma and no false doctrines—this person is anointed as the foremost. Indeed the Dharma, Vāseṭṭha, is the best for producing understanding in both this world and the next.

⁴ In Hinduism, the four social castes include: (1) Brahmins: priests, scholars and teachers, (2) Kshatriya: rulers, warriors and administrators, (3) Vaishya: cattle herders, landowners and merchants, and (4) Shudra: laborers

⁵ Heretical views oppose the Dharma (God’s Reality), including skepticism, nihilism, eternalism and atheism

⁶ Ariyā or Ārya (Pali) means: nobleman, or a follower of (1) the four noble truths, (2) the noble eightfold path, and (3) the Dharma and Vinaya. An individual on the Ārya path has attained one of the four levels of awakening, that being (1) Stream-entrant (Sotāpanna), (2) Once-returner (Sakadāgāmi), (3) Non-returner (Anāgāmi), and (4) Arhat (or Arahant)

⁷ Agreeable right views uphold the Dharma (God's Reality), rejecting skepticism, nihilism, eternalism and atheism

3. Of all causes to reach for⁸, Vāseṭṭha, this process should be known as certainly the best Dharma for generating understanding in both this world and the next. Surely, Vāseṭṭha, King Pasenadi of Kosala understands 'the ascetic Gautama has gone outside the Shakya clan⁹, having given up the world!' For indeed, Vāseṭṭha, the Shakyas exist as vassal lords of King Pasenadi of Kosala. Certainly the actions of the Shakyas, Vāseṭṭha, are respectful towards King Pasenadi of Kosala and they arise from their seats with palms pressed together in a proper act of homage. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, because the actions of the Shakyas are thus respectful towards King Pasenadi of Kosala, and they arise from their seats with palms pressed together in a proper act of homage, the actions of King Pasenadi of Kosala are respectful towards the Tathāgata, and he arises from his seat with palms pressed together in a proper act of homage, always affirming: 'If the ascetic Gautama is well-born, I am not well-born. If the ascetic Gautama is strong, I am weak. If the ascetic Gautama is pleasing, I am ugly. If the ascetic Gautama has great influence, then I have little influence!' Surely then, just so—by this single action of honoring the Dharma, teaching the Dharma, revering the Dharma, worshipping the Dharma and paying homage to the Dharma—in this way does King Pasenadi of Kosala show respect towards the Tathāgata¹⁰, and arise from his seat with palms pressed together in a proper act of homage. Indeed this single cause to reach for¹¹, Vāseṭṭha, this process should be known as certainly the best Dharma for generating understanding in both this world and the next. Thou indeed, Vāseṭṭha, it is on account of these various births, various names, various clans, various families, have you renounced the home life for the homeless state to become a monk. Thou whoever [!] asks the question of your belonging—acknowledge: 'We are ascetics, sons of Shakya!' Indeed whoever is lost, Vāseṭṭha, where the root of faith arises and is firmly established in the Tathāgata, holding steadfast, immovable and well established—whether an ascetic, or Brahmin, or deva [spirit], or Māra [spirit], or god, or anyone in the world—it is proper for this or that one to say: 'I am the Bhagavān's¹² own son, born from the mouth of the Dharma, belonging to the Order of the Dharma—and an heir of the Dharma!' But why is this so? Because, Vāseṭṭha, this one [undivided] Tathāgata is designated as thus: 'The Body of Truth (Dharma)', and also thus: 'The Body of God (Brahma)', and also thus: 'The Manifestation of Truth (Dharma)' and also thus: 'The Manifestation of God (Brahma)'¹³.

⁸ *Tadamināpetam* (Pali) means: *Tad* (of this)+*aminā* (this/these)+*āpeti* (to cause to reach or obtain)

⁹ Gautama Buddha was born into the Shakya clan, leaving to become a monk. *Anantarā* means: "to go outside"

¹⁰ Tathāgata is an epithet used to describe the Universal Buddha, meaning "The Thus Come One"; the Tathāgata comprises of three bodies, including: dharmakāya (the reality body), samboghakāya (the body of all-encompassing bliss), and nirmāṇakāya (the emanation body)

¹¹ This "cause to reach for" is the cause of seeing beyond all differences, beyond the illusion of multiplicity, and bearing witness to the One Indivisible Spirit of God that exists within all, regardless of appearance or social caste. As the Shakya clan followed this Dharma of oneness, they caused King Pasenadi (of whom they were his vassal lords) to discover the same understanding and thus became a cause for his self-awakening to the principle of oneness. Thus the 'cause of oneness' [as it is fully embraced] becomes a 'cause' to awaken the principle of oneness in others

¹² Bhagavān is an epithet used to describe a Buddha, meaning "lord" and "possessing fortune, blessed, prosperous"

¹³ Here the Buddha says the Tathāgata is: "Dharmakāya" (The Body of Truth / Dharma), "Brahmakāya" (The Body of God / Brahma), "Dharmabhūta" (The Manifestation of Truth / Dharma), "Brahmabhūta" (The Manifestation of God / Brahma). *Kāya* (Pali) means: "body" and *bhūta* (Pali) means: "manifestation". The two bodies of the Tathāgata which are manifest in the form and formless realms of Creation are samboghakāya (the body of all-encompassing bliss) and nirmāṇakāya (the emanation body). "Brahmakāya" (The Body of God / Brahma) includes all three bodies of the Trikāya, including these two manifest bodies as well as the unmanifest body of dharmakāya (the reality body)

4. Now Vāseṭṭha, at some time there will periodically come a time, where by the elapse of a long length of time, that this world is dissolved¹⁴. With the completion of the dissolution of this world, most beings will then exist in the Ābhāsvara worlds¹⁵, during their cycle of rebirth. There they will exist mind-made, feeding on joy, radiating their own light, living in the atmosphere, where they will dwell shining brightly, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. Now Vāseṭṭha, at some time there will periodically come a time, where by the elapse of a long length of time, that this world is re-created. With the completion of the re-creation of this world, most beings—having fallen from the Ābhāsvara worlds—will then come into existence in this world. Here they exist mind-made, feeding on joy, radiating their own light, living in the atmosphere, where they dwell shining brightly, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. Now Vāseṭṭha, at this time, only water exists¹⁶ and on account of this, they dwell in a state of blindness, in a state of blinding darkness¹⁷. In their existence sun and moon are not seen, constellations and stars are not seen, night and day are not seen, months and fortnights are not seen, seasons and years are not seen, male and female are not seen, and thus living beings are only discernable as coming forth as living beings. Now then, for these living beings Vāseṭṭha, at some time there will periodically come a time, where by the elapse of a long length of time, that this water is covered evenly with **earth dust**¹⁸; indeed, just as milk may be heated and then become cool, leaving a covering on top; did this—just so—become manifest¹⁹. Together it was endowed with color, endowed with aroma, endowed with flavor; or indeed, just as ghee is endowed, or butter is endowed, its appearance existed just in this way. Indeed, just as wild honey is pure, its taste existed just in this way. Now then, Vāseṭṭha, a certain living being possessed of greed asked: “Look here! What is this thing that has come to exist?”—[tasting the earth dust with his finger]. And in tasting the earth dust, covering his finger, the sleep of ‘craving’ fell upon him²⁰. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, as this living being tasted the earth dust with his finger, the other beings—imitating what they saw—went down to have a look. And of those who tasted the earth dust, covering their finger, the sleep of craving fell upon them.

¹⁴ This dissolution and re-creation of the lower realms of existence (including the physical realms) below the Ābhāsvara worlds continually repeats during one cycle (or mahākalpa) of the creation and dissolution of the entire material universe, as follows: 1) creation (vivarta), 2) preservation of creation (vivarta-siddha), 3) dissolution of creation (saṃvarta), and 4) preservation of creation dissolved (saṃvarta-siddha)

¹⁵ There are five heavenly realms existing above the physical creation, including: (1) The Śuddhāvāsa worlds (or Pure Abodes), (2) Below these are the Br̥hatphala worlds, which correspond to the 4th dhyāna (meditation) of “pure equanimity”, (3) Below these are the Śubhakar̥sna worlds, which correspond to the 3rd dhyāna (meditation) of “quiet joy”, (4) Below these are the Ābhāsvara worlds, which correspond to the 2nd dhyāna (meditation) of “delight and joy”, and (5) Below these are the Brahmā worlds, which correspond to the 1st dhyāna (meditation) of “reflection”

¹⁶ This would suggest the planets were originally created consisting of hydrogen and oxygen or H₂O₁: the chemical components of water, such as the gas giants (Saturn and Jupiter) and the ice giants (Neptune and Uranus). Overtime, planets closer to the sun’s orbital pressure and heat effects, such as those in our solar system (Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars), began to solidify into terrestrial planets

¹⁷ As these beings existed self-illuminated (radiating their own light), they were unable to perceive the sun, etc. and thus from this perspective, existed in a state of blinding darkness, blind to what was all around them in creation

¹⁸ *Rasapaṭhavi* (Pali) means: “earth as dust or in great fineness; primitive earth”. Here planets comprised of hydrogen and oxygen or H₂O₁ (water) closest to the sun are covered evenly with earth dust particles, due to interplanetary dust ‘coalescing’ around the sun’s gravitational pull

¹⁹ Here the Buddha gives evidence of the sun’s heat effects on the planets comprised of hydrogen and oxygen H₂O₁ (water). The planets closest to the sun are initially heated [in the day] and then cool [in the night], leaving a layer of skin on the surface, just like heated and cooled milk

²⁰ *Okkami* (Pali) literally means: “sleep fell upon him” or in this case, the sleep of a lower state of consciousness

5. Now then, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings began taking lumps of earth dust in their hands to eat. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, because these living beings began taking lumps of earth dust in their hands to eat—the power of these living beings

to radiate their own light then disappeared. As their power to radiate their own light disappeared, the sun and moon appeared²¹. As the sun and moon appeared, constellations and stars appeared. As constellations and stars appeared, night and day were seen. As night and day were seen, months and fortnights were seen. As months and fortnights were seen, seasons and years were seen. Indeed to that extent, Vāseṭṭha, does this world again become re-created. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings at that time then took that earth dust they were eating and began to feed on it, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. Now according to and in whatever way, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings at that time took that earth dust they were eating and began to feed on it, remaining for a long time—a long, long time, likewise in that same way did sleep fall upon²² these living beings worshipping the eating of the earth dust, and in such a way did they appear, their bodies becoming coarser and discolored in appearance. Some living beings were beautiful and some living beings were ugly. Thus, those living beings [who were beautiful] had contempt for these unattractive beings: “Certainly this vessel of mine is beautiful and on account of what I am, your vessel is ugly!” And as those, having pride and arrogance, were filled with conceit over their appearance, the earth dust disappeared. As the dust of the earth disappeared, they all assembled together. Having assembled, they all cried: “Oh, the rasa! Oh, the rasa!” However human beings [at this time], who worship the taste completely, having obtained the same thing, do so in this way when they speak: “Oh, the taste! Oh, the taste!” On account of this being so, they follow along doing the same thing—just so—ignorant of this ancient word²³, which existed before the beginning. Now then, Vāseṭṭha, as the dust of the earth disappeared for these beings, **small fragments of earth** appeared²⁴. Indeed—just like mushrooms—in the same way this appeared. Together it was endowed with color, endowed with aroma, endowed with flavor; or indeed, just as ghee is endowed, or butter is endowed, its appearance existed just in this way. Indeed, just as wild honey is pure, its taste existed just in this way. Now then, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings began to eat the small fragments of earth. Those who ate then took it to feed on, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. Now according to and in whatever way, Vāseṭṭha, those living beings at that time took these small fragments of earth they were eating and began to feed on it, remaining for a long time—a long, long time, likewise in that same way did sleep fall upon these living beings worshipping the eating of rapacious quantities²⁵, and in such a way did they appear, their bodies becoming coarser and discolored in appearance. Some living beings were beautiful and some living beings were ugly. Thus, those living beings [who were beautiful] had contempt for these unattractive beings: “Certainly this vessel of mine is beautiful and on account of what I am, your vessel is ugly!” And as those, having pride and arrogance, were filled with conceit over their appearance, the small fragments of earth disappeared. As the small fragments of earth disappeared, the **moving creeper** appeared²⁶, indeed—just like the convolvulus creeper²⁷—in the same way this appeared. Together it was endowed with color, endowed with aroma, endowed with flavor; or indeed, just as ghee is endowed, or butter is endowed, its appearance existed just in this way. Indeed, just as wild honey is pure, its taste existed just in this way. Now then, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings began to eat the moving creeper. Those who ate then took it to feed on, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. Now according to and in whatever way, Vāseṭṭha, those living beings at that time took that moving creeper they were eating and began to feed on it, remaining for a long time—a long, long time, likewise in that same way did sleep fall upon these living beings worshipping the eating of rapacious quantities, and in such a way did they appear, their bodies becoming coarser and discolored in appearance. Some living beings were beautiful and some living beings were ugly. Thus, those living beings [who were beautiful] had contempt for these unattractive beings: “Certainly this vessel of mine is beautiful and on account of what I am, your vessel is ugly!” And as those, having pride and arrogance, were filled with conceit over their appearance, the moving creeper disappeared. As the moving creeper disappeared, they all assembled

together. Having assembled, they all cried: “Oh vata, surely not! Oh vata, surely not the moving creeper!” However human beings [at this time], who experience the pain of things, having obtained the same thing, do so in this way when they speak: “Oh alas, surely not! Oh alas, surely not!” On account of this being so, they follow along doing the same thing—just so—ignorant of this ancient word²⁸, which existed before the beginning.

²¹ The ‘light’ of these self-illuminated beings was so bright they could not discern the light of the sun [which paled in comparison to their own light]. Only upon losing the ability to self-illuminate could they discern the light of the sun

²² The more these living beings ate of the earth dust, the deeper the sleep of ‘craving’ fell upon them

²³ The ancient word *rasa* (Pali) has multiple meanings, including: “dust particle” and “taste”. Thus the word for ‘taste’ is the same word for earth ‘dust particle’ whereby humans have forgotten what they crave for is the earth

²⁴ *Bhūmipappaṭako* (Pali) means: Bhūmi (the ground of the earth) + *pappaṭako* (small stone, fragments). Here the dust particles of earth have coalesced together to form small fragments of earth, which combine to form ‘soil’

²⁵ As these living beings moved from mere craving to rapacious quantities, the deeper sleep of ‘gluttony’ fell upon them

²⁶ *Padālatā* (Pali) means: “moving creeper”, “cleaving (the dividing of cells)” and “bursting open”. The soil of the earth disappears as it is covered over completely by these fast-growing moving creepers or edible plant weeds

²⁷ *Kalambukā* (Pali) means: “rapidly growing creeper”, or modern day plant species known as ‘convolvulus’

²⁸ The ancient word *vata* (Pali) means: “alas”, derived from the word *vaṭ* meaning: “root” and *vaṭa* meaning: “Banyan Tree” (which symbolizes the root of attachment). Thus the Buddha focuses on two ancient words: *rasa* (‘taste’ of attachment) and *vata* (‘suffering’ of attachment)

THE DISTINCTION OF ‘THE OTHERS’ IN THE BEGINNING

6. Now then, Vāseṭṭha, as the moving creeper disappeared for these beings, **uncultivated rice** appeared, free from the husk and the red fine powder, resulting in pure and fragrant grains of rice²⁹. Whatever they had taken for their evening supper existed grown and ripened again in the morning. Whatever they had taken for their early morning meal existed grown and ripened again in the evening; just like this—it appeared and imparted. Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings at that time then took that uncultivated rice they were eating and began to feed on it, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. Now according to and in whatever way, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings at that time took that uncultivated rice they were eating and began to feed on it, remaining for a long time—a long, long time, likewise in that same way did sleep fall upon these living beings worshipping the eating of rapacious quantities, and in such a way did they appear, their bodies becoming coarser and discolored in appearance, with male and female organs appearing, and of these, men and women. Then, after a great length of time, men and women reflected upon men and women. After they reflected upon one another for a very long time, a fever of passion arose in the body and the sleep of ‘infatuation’ fell upon them. They indulged in sexual intercourse, caused by the fever of their passionate nature. Indeed moreover, Vāseṭṭha, on account of witnessing at that time which of these living beings were indulging in the nature of sexual intercourse, ‘the others’ threw dirt, ‘the others’ threw ashes, and ‘the others’³⁰ threw cow dung—“Destroy the asuci, destroy the asuci! Indeed, how can a living being do such an act to another living being?” However human beings [at this time], do the same thing in some provinces, leading out a new wife³¹, while ‘the others’ throw dirt, ‘the others’ throw ashes, and ‘the others’ throw cow dung. On account of this being so, they follow along doing the same thing—just so—ignorant of this ancient word³², which existed before the beginning.

²⁹ The moving creeper disappears completely, being no match for the hardier and more rapacious rice plant, born as an outer-manifestation of the ever-increasing rapacious (greedy) consciousness of the living beings. In modern day times, rice is enclosed in a husk with red fine powder

³⁰ *Aññe* (Pali) means: “the others”. Later the Buddha uses the word *aggañña* (a variation of *aggañña*) meaning both: “in the beginning” (*agga*) + came “the others” (*aññe*), and “from the foremost (the ‘One God’)” (*agga*) + came “the others” (*aññe*)

³¹ In some provinces, it is common practice to throw dirt at a new bride to signify she has lost her purity

³² The ancient word *asuci* (Pali) has multiple meanings, including: “dirt”, “impure”, “unclean”, and “filth”. Here they throw dirt at the dirty, trying to destroy the soil they ate ‘in the beginning’, which has caused them to now feel ‘soiled’. Here the need to see ‘others’ as soiled (impure, dirty) dominates the consciousness of humanity, causing the thrower to perceive *Agga* (the foremost ‘One God’ in all) as *aññe* (the others)

7. And certainly, Vāseṭṭha, it is on account of it at that time being considered immoral, that it is now considered moral. For indeed, Vāseṭṭha, on account of beings who at that time indulged in the nature of sexual intercourse—they were not permitted to enter either a village or a market town for a month or even two months. Now as a result, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings fell down into this state of misconduct for a great length of time. Then endeavoring to do only this, constructed dwellings to hide their misconduct³³. Indeed then, Vāseṭṭha, this occurred to a certain being with an idle disposition: “Look here, why should I in this way have to suffer hardship gathering rice in the evening for the supper and in the morning for the morning meal? Let me gather rice, only once, for the evening and the morning meal!” Then indeed, Vāseṭṭha, this being gathered rice—only once—for the evening and the morning meal. Now then, Vāseṭṭha, because of this individual, another being came forth on account of it; and having approached this individual, then said: “Come my good man, let’s set out together and move it to a shed! This will be suitable, my good man, to bring my rice, only once, for the evening and the morning meal!” Then indeed, Vāseṭṭha, because of this certain individual and this other being, another went out to see, and imitating what he saw, gathered rice—only once—for **two days**. “It truly is an advantage, friend, to do it in this way!” Now then, Vāseṭṭha, because of this certain individual, another came forth on account of it; and having approached this being, then said: “Come my good man, let’s set out together and move it to a shed! This will be suitable, my good man, to gather my rice, only once, for two days!” Now then, Vāseṭṭha, with this one doing that, another went out to see, and imitating what he saw, gathered rice—only once—for **four days**. “It truly is an advantage, friend, to do it in this way!” Indeed then, Vāseṭṭha, because of this certain individual, another came forth on account of it; and having approached this being, then said: “Come my good man, let’s set out together and move it to a shed! This will be suitable, my good man, to gather my rice, only once, for four days!” Now then, Vāseṭṭha, with this one doing that, another went out to see, and imitating what he saw, gathered rice—only once—for **eight days**. “It truly is an advantage, friend, to do it in this way!” Now on account of which, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings endeavored to eat only rice from what they had moved into storage. But then red fine powder enveloped the rice grain and also a husk enveloped the rice grain [which had to be removed] and also when reaped, it never grew again—the rice appearing then in this world, standing in a multitude of groves³⁴.

³³ Because of the judgment of “the others”, those who were ostracized for sexual misconduct hid their sin behind closed doors to normalize and ‘make moral’ their new behavior, constructing dwelling places to hide their shame

³⁴ Because fresh rice was no longer being eaten daily, red fine powder and a husk covered it; this meant the rice grain (seeds) could no longer fall to the ground to propagate new plants—resulting in the manual replanting of rice seeds and the rice plants standing in a ‘multitude of groves’

8. Indeed then, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings all assembled together—and having assembled, cried: “Alas, friends, wretched things have appeared and befallen the people. Alas! In the past we existed mind-made, feeding on joy, radiating our own light, living in the atmosphere, where we dwelt shining brightly, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. We are no longer those where at some time there will periodically come a time, where by the elapse of a long length of time, that this water is covered evenly with earth dust—together existing endowed with color, endowed with aroma, endowed with flavor. We are no longer those who began taking lumps of earth dust in our hands to eat—where in taking lumps of earth dust in our hands to eat, the power to radiate our own light then disappear-

ed. As our power to radiate our own light disappeared, the sun and moon appeared, as the sun and moon appeared, constellations and stars appeared, as constellations and stars appeared, night and day were seen, as night and day were seen, months and fortnights were seen. As months and fortnights were seen, seasons and years were seen. Where those of us then took that earth dust we were eating and began to feed on it, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. And no longer those sinners doing unwholesome things, which appeared, causing the earth dust to disappear. As the earth dust disappeared, small fragments of earth appeared—together existing, endowed with color, endowed with aroma, and endowed with flavor. Where those of us then began to eat those small fragments of earth. Where those of us then took that we were eating and began to feed on it, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. And no longer those sinners doing unwholesome things, which appeared, causing the small fragments of earth to disappear. As the small fragments of earth disappeared, the moving creeper appeared—together existing endowed with color, endowed with aroma, and endowed with flavor. Where those of us then began to eat the moving creeper. Where those of us then took that we were eating and began to feed on it, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. And no longer those sinners doing unwholesome things, which appeared, causing the moving creeper to disappear. As the moving creeper disappeared, uncultivated rice appeared, free from the husk and the red fine powder, resulting in pure and fragrant grains of rice. Whatever we had taken for our evening supper existed grown and ripened again in the morning. Whatever we had taken for our early morning meal existed grown and ripened again in the evening. Just like this—it appeared and imparted. Where those of us then took that uncultivated rice we were eating and began to feed on it, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. And no longer those sinners doing unwholesome things, which appeared, causing red fine powder to envelope the rice grain and also a husk to envelope the rice grain [which had to be removed] and also when reaped, it never grew again—the rice appearing then in this world, standing in a multitude of groves. So here now ... we shall divide up the rice and establish boundaries!” Indeed then, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings divided the rice and established boundaries³⁵.

³⁵ In this soliloquy, the living beings assembled weave in and out, recalling and reliving the past, convinced they are no longer the sinners in their story. Yet their sins of ‘craving’, ‘hoarding’ and ‘seeing differences in others’ are now exacerbated with their decision to divide up and hoard their share of rice and establish boundaries in an “us and them” mentality

9. Now then, Vāseṭṭha, a certain man of a greedy disposition, guarding his own share, took that which is not given from another’s share and ate it. Having seized this one [who began this darkness], they then said: “Alas, good man, you have been sinful; where certainly indeed, you have taken that which is not given from another’s share while guarding your own share and then eaten it. Certainly, good man, do not perform such an act again!” “Yes, sir!”—Indeed Vāseṭṭha, this man promised these other living beings. Now, Vāseṭṭha, a second one ... this man, guarding his own share, took that which is not given from another’s share and ate it. Having seized this one [who began this darkness], they then said: “Alas, good man, you have been sinful; where certainly indeed, you have taken that which is not given from another’s share while guarding your own share and then eaten it. Certainly, good man, do not perform such an act again!” “Yes, sir!”—Indeed Vāseṭṭha, this man promised these other living beings. Now, Vāseṭṭha, a third one ... this man, guarding his own share, took that which is not given from another’s share and ate it. Having seized this one [who began this darkness], they then said: “Alas, good man, you have been sinful; where certainly indeed, you have taken that which is not given from another’s share while guarding your own share and then eaten it. Certainly, good man, do not perform such an act again!” Then ‘the others’ struck him with their hands, ‘the others’ struck him with clods of earth, and ‘the others’ struck him with sticks. And so henceforth, Vāseṭṭha, after taking that

which is not given appeared, censuring appeared, lying appeared and the giving of punishment appeared. Indeed then, Vāseṭṭha, these living beings all assembled together—and having assembled, cried: “Alas, friends, wretched things have appeared and befallen the people—where indeed, alas—taking that which is not given has appeared, censuring has appeared, lying has appeared and the giving of punishment has appeared³⁶. Well now, we should select a certain being to watch over anyone not following the right way—to reprimand those needing reprimanding, to properly censure those needing censuring and to properly banish those needing banishing. And for this we should hand over a share of rice.” Then indeed, Vāseṭṭha, those living beings looked for whoever among them was the most handsome being, whoever was the fairest to behold, whoever was the most amiable, and whoever was the most influential; and having approached this man, they then said: “Come good being, properly reprimand those needing reprimanding, properly censure those needing censuring and properly banish those needing banishing. And we shall hand over to thee a share of rice!” “Yes, sir!”—Indeed Vāseṭṭha, this man, having promised those living beings—properly reprimanded those needing reprimanding, properly censured those needing censuring and properly banished those needing banishing. And for this they handed over a share of rice. Now Vāseṭṭha, the public appointed him ‘the Great Elect, the Great Elect’ and so this was the first phrase used. Surely Vāseṭṭha, they were the lords of the fields ‘Kshatriya, Kshatriya’ and so this was the second phrase used³⁷. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, they illuminated others with the Dharma ‘the King, the King’ and so this was the third phrase used³⁸. Thus indeed, Vāseṭṭha, did the Kshatriya circle³⁹ come about, becoming an ancient word for ‘the others’ in the beginning, existing so for these living beings, but [yet] not so for ‘the others’⁴⁰. Equal—but not without disparity. Just—though not without injustice. Because Vāseṭṭha, the Dharma is certainly the best for generating understanding of the Dharma in both this world and the next⁴¹.

³⁶ Here the giving of punishment is the people taking it upon themselves to administer ‘unregulated’ punishment

³⁷ In Hinduism, the four social castes include: (1) Brahmins: priests, scholars and teachers, (2) Kshatriya: rulers, warriors and administrators, (3) Vaishya: cattle herders, landowners and merchants, and (4) Shudra: laborers

³⁸ In this instance, the Dharma refers to the path of righteousness and avoiding the path of non-righteousness

³⁹ *Maṇḍala* (Pali) means: “circle” and in this instance, refers to the circle of rulers, warriors and administrators

⁴⁰ Here ‘the others’ (the Kshatriya caste) are now different from the remaining ‘others’, who are subsequently divided into various castes. The Buddha uses the phrase *aggaññena* meaning: “in the beginning” (*agga*) + came “the others” (*aññe*) and in the same sentence *anaññesaṃ* meaning: “but not so” (*an*) + “for the others” (*aññesaṃ*)

⁴¹ The Buddha brings the reader back full circle to point ¹¹, that is, to reach for the cause of seeing beyond all differences, the illusion of multiplicity, and bearing witness to the One Indivisible Spirit of God that exists within all, regardless of appearance or social caste. This Reality of ‘oneness’ is the Dharma, of which only the Dharma can illuminate. The phrase *sadisānamyeva no asadisām; dhammeneva no adhammena* means: *sadisānam* (equal) *yeva* (but, also) *no* (not without) *asadisām* (disparity); *dhammena* (justice) *eva* (but, even) *no* (not without) *adhammena* (injustice). The need to create ‘others’ (Kshatriya) while just and necessary in one sense, was however unjust in its creation of disparity

10. Now then, Vāseṭṭha, this also occurred to some of these living beings: “Alas, friends, wretched things have appeared and befallen the people—where indeed, alas—taking that which is not given has appeared, censuring has appeared, lying has appeared, the giving of punishment has appeared, and banishment has appeared. Well now, we should watch over and lead the sinful away from doing unwholesome things. And they did lead the sinful away from doing unwholesome things. Certainly Vāseṭṭha, those leading the sinful away from doing unwholesome things were ‘Brahmin, Brahmin’ and so this was the first phrase used⁴². They endeavored into the forest to make a hut of leaves, and having made a hut of leaves, began meditating—and in being without charcoal and without smoke and fumes, and having set aside the pestle in the evening for the supper and in the morning for the morning meal, went into the village in search of food, to approach the wealthy king. Having [again] obtained food from the king, they returned to

the forest into their hut of leaves and began meditating. And when the people in darkness⁴³ observed them in this way, they said: “Indeed friends, these living beings endeavored into the forest to make a hut of leaves, and having made a hut of leaves, began meditating—and in being without charcoal and without smoke and fumes, and having set aside the pestle in the evening for the supper and in the morning for the morning meal, went into the village in search of food, to approach the wealthy king. Having [again] obtained food from the king, they returned to the forest into their hut of leaves and began meditating!” Certainly Vāseṭṭha, those meditating were ‘One Who Meditates, One Who Meditates’ and so this was the second phrase used. Now Vāseṭṭha, for these living beings endeavoring into the forest into their hut of leaves, there were also some that were unable to keep up the practice of meditation and came into the vicinity of the village and the vicinity of the market town and remained pure, compiling texts. And when the people in darkness observed them in this way, they said: “Indeed friends, when these beings endeavored into the forest into their hut of leaves, there were also some that were unable to keep up the practice of meditation and came into the vicinity of the village and the vicinity of the market town and remained pure, compiling texts. Now these are no longer meditating!” Indeed Vāseṭṭha, those now [no longer meditating] were ‘Ajjhāyakā, Ajjhāyakā’ and so this was the third phrase used⁴⁴. And certainly, Vāseṭṭha, it is on account of it at that time being considered inferior, that it is now considered to be foremost⁴⁵. Thus indeed, Vāseṭṭha, did the Brahmin circle⁴⁶ come about, becoming an ancient word for ‘the others’ in the beginning, existing so for these living beings, but [yet] not so for ‘the others’. Equal—but not without disparity. Just—though not without injustice. Because Vāseṭṭha, the Dharma is certainly the best for generating understanding of the Dharma in both this world and the next. Now also, Vāseṭṭha, some of these living beings, having accepted the nature of sexual intercourse, engaged in individual occupations⁴⁷. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, having accepted the nature of sexual intercourse and engaging in individual occupations were ‘Vaishya, Vaishya’ and so this phrase was used. Thus indeed, Vāseṭṭha, did the Vaishya circle⁴⁸ come about, becoming an ancient word for ‘the others’ in the beginning, existing so for these other living beings, but [yet] not so for ‘the others’. Equal—but not without disparity. Just—though not without injustice. Because Vāseṭṭha, the Dharma is certainly the best for generating understanding of the Dharma in both this world and the next. Now Vāseṭṭha, of these ‘other’ living beings, who were the remainder of these beings, these had become fearsome in behavior and lowly in their conduct. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, the fearsome behaving and lowly in conduct were ‘Shudra, Shudra’ and so this phrase was used. Thus indeed, Vāseṭṭha, did the Shudra circle⁴⁹ come about, becoming an ancient word for ‘the others’ in the beginning, existing so for these living beings, but [yet] not so for ‘the others’. Equal—but not without disparity. Just—though not without injustice. Because Vāseṭṭha, the Dharma is certainly the best for generating understanding of the Dharma in both this world and the next. Indeed there came a time, Vāseṭṭha, when even a Kshatriya reproached his own way of life, and renounced the home life for the homeless state to become a monk: “I will become an ascetic!” Then Vāseṭṭha, a Brahmin reproached his own way of life, and renounced the home life for the homeless state to become a monk: “I will become an ascetic!” Then Vāseṭṭha, a Vaishya reproached his own way of life, and renounced the home life for the homeless state to become a monk: “I will become an ascetic!” Then Vāseṭṭha, a Shudra reproached his own way of life, and renounced the home life for the homeless state to become a monk: “I will become an ascetic!” Indeed Vāseṭṭha, the Ascetic circle came into existence because of these four circles, and as such, these living beings were no longer ‘the others’⁵⁰. Because Vāseṭṭha, the Dharma is certainly the best for generating understanding of the Dharma in both this world and the next.

⁴² Here the Brahmin were leading the sinful away from doing unwholesome things back to the state of Brahmin (that is to the state of God), by becoming role models. *Brāhmaṇā* (Pali) means: “man of Brahma (God)” and is commonly abbreviated to ‘Brahmin’

⁴³ *Tamenam* (Pali) means: “darkness” and “ignorance”; whereby ignorance ultimately leads to a state of darkness

⁴⁴ *Ajjhāyakā* (Pali) means: “one who does not meditate” and “scholar and teacher of religious and spiritual texts”

⁴⁵ The Buddha makes the point that the role of spiritual scholar [who talks of God] is inferior to the meditator [who comes into oneness with God]; yet at the time, those who felt inferior sought to establish themselves as superior

⁴⁶ *Maṇḍala* (Pali) means: “circle” and in this instance, refers to the circle of priests, scholars and teachers

⁴⁷ *Visukammante* (Pali) means: *visuṃ* (individually, separately) + *kammante* (occupation, work, business)

⁴⁸ *Vessa* (Pali) means: “a man of the people” or the Vaishya caste of cattle herders, landowners and merchants

⁴⁹ *Suddā* (Pali) means: the Shudra caste of laborers. Its literal meaning is: “production activities that nourish” from the Vedic word ‘pusan’

⁵⁰ *Anaññesaṃ* (Pali) means: “no longer the others”. Here the Buddha states clearly: regardless of the caste you are born into, you can rise above all identification with multiplicity (the state of perceiving “others”) into identifying yourself as the One Spirit of God in all, where there is equality without disparity (differences) and justice without injustice

THE NON-DISCRIMINATING EFFECT OF KARMA

11. Surely *Vāseṭṭha*, even a **Kshatriya** having behaved with misconduct [of body], having behaved with misconduct [of speech], having behaved with misconduct [of mind], holding heretical views, generates karma by accepting these heretical views⁵¹—and in generating karma by accepting these heretical views [as the body breaks up after death], results in rebirth in a lower world⁵², a realm of miserable existence, a place of suffering, and a state of hell. Indeed *Vāseṭṭha*, even a **Brahmin** having behaved with misconduct [of body], having behaved with misconduct [of speech], having behaved with misconduct [of mind], holding heretical views, generates karma by accepting these heretical views—and in generating karma by accepting these heretical views [as the body breaks up after death], results in rebirth in a lower world, a realm of miserable existence, a place of suffering, and a state of hell. Indeed *Vāseṭṭha*, even a **Vaishya** having behaved with misconduct [of body], having behaved with misconduct [of speech], having behaved with misconduct [of mind], holding heretical views, generates karma by accepting these heretical views—and in generating karma by accepting these heretical views [as the body breaks up after death], results in rebirth in a lower world, a realm of miserable existence, a place of suffering, and a state of hell. Indeed *Vāseṭṭha*, even a **Shudra** having behaved with misconduct [of body], having behaved with misconduct [of speech], having behaved with misconduct [of mind], holding heretical views, generates karma by accepting these heretical views—and in generating karma by accepting these heretical views [as the body breaks up after death], results in rebirth in a lower world, a realm of miserable existence, a place of suffering, and a state of hell. Indeed *Vāseṭṭha*, even an **Ascetic** having behaved with misconduct [of body], having behaved with misconduct [of speech], having behaved with misconduct [of mind], holding heretical views, generates karma by accepting these heretical views—and in generating karma by accepting these heretical views [as the body breaks up after death], results in rebirth in a lower world, a realm of miserable existence, a place of suffering, and a state of hell. Surely *Vāseṭṭha*, even a **Kshatriya** having behaved with right conduct [of body], having behaved with right conduct [of speech], having behaved with right conduct [of mind], holding right views, generates karma by accepting these right views⁵³—and in generating karma by accepting these right views [as the body breaks up after death], results in rebirth in a heavenly world and a happy state of existence. Indeed *Vāseṭṭha*, even a **Brahmin** having behaved with right conduct [of body], having behaved with right conduct [of speech], having behaved with right conduct [of mind], holding right views, generates karma by accepting these right views—and in generating karma by accepting these right views [as the body breaks up after death], results in rebirth in a heavenly world and a happy state of existence. Indeed *Vāseṭṭha*, even a **Vaishya** having behaved with right conduct [of body], having behaved with right conduct [of speech], having behaved with right conduct [of mind], holding right views, generates karma by accepting these right views—and in generating karma by accepting these right views [as

the body breaks up after death], results in rebirth in a heavenly world and a happy state of existence. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, even a **Shudra** having behaved with right conduct [of body], having behaved with right conduct [of speech], having behaved with right conduct [of mind], holding right views, generates karma by accepting these right views—and in generating karma by accepting these right views [as the body breaks up after death], results in rebirth in a heavenly world and a happy state of existence. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, even an **Ascetic** having behaved with right conduct [of body], having behaved with right conduct [of speech], having behaved with right conduct [of mind], holding right views, generates karma by accepting these right views—and in generating karma by accepting these right views [as the body breaks up after death], results in rebirth in a heavenly world and a happy state of existence.

⁵¹ Heretical views oppose the Dharma (God's Reality), including skepticism, nihilism, eternalism and atheism

⁵² The lower worlds are (1) the world of animals, (2) the world of anguished spirits, and (3) the world of the denizens of the hells

⁵³ Agreeable right views uphold the Dharma (God's Reality), rejecting skepticism, nihilism, eternalism and atheism

12. Surely Vāseṭṭha, even a **Kshatriya** doing both (good and evil) in body, doing both (good and evil) in speech and doing both (good and evil) in mind, holding two mixed views⁵⁴, generates karma by accepting these two mixed views—and in generating karma by accepting these two mixed views [as the body breaks up after death], results existing, knowing both happiness and the opposite of happiness, suffering. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, even a **Brahmin** doing both (good and evil) in body, doing both (good and evil) in speech and doing both (good and evil) in mind, holding two mixed views, generates karma by accepting these two mixed views—and in generating karma by accepting these two mixed views [as the body breaks up after death], results existing, knowing both happiness and the opposite of happiness, suffering. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, even a **Vaishya** doing both (good and evil) in body, doing both (good and evil) in speech and doing both (good and evil) in mind, holding two mixed views, generates karma by accepting these two mixed views—and in generating karma by accepting these two mixed views [as the body breaks up after death], results existing, knowing both happiness and the opposite of happiness, suffering. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, even a **Shudra** doing both (good and evil) in body, doing both (good and evil) in speech and doing both (good and evil) in mind, holding two mixed views, generates karma by accepting these two mixed views—and in generating karma by accepting these two mixed views [as the body breaks up after death], results existing, knowing both happiness and the opposite of happiness, suffering. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, even a **Ascetic** doing both (good and evil) in body, doing both (good and evil) in speech and doing both (good and evil) in mind, holding two mixed views, generates karma by accepting these two mixed views—and in generating karma by accepting these two mixed views [as the body breaks up after death], results existing, knowing both happiness and the opposite of happiness, suffering. Surely Vāseṭṭha, even a **Kshatriya** restraining the body, restraining the speech, and restraining the mind, consuming the seven 'enlightenment-related states'⁵⁵, seeing only the Dharma by undergoing the cultivation of the mind⁵⁶—striving, achieves the final nirvāṇa⁵⁷. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, even a **Brahmin** restraining the body, restraining the speech, and restraining the mind, consuming the seven 'enlightenment-related states', seeing only the Dharma by undergoing the cultivation of the mind—striving, achieves the final nirvāṇa. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, even a **Vaishya** restraining the body, restraining the speech, and restraining the mind, consuming the seven 'enlightenment-related states', seeing only the Dharma by undergoing the cultivation of the mind—striving, achieves the final nirvāṇa. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, even a **Shudra** restraining the body, restraining the speech, and restraining the mind, consuming the seven 'enlightenment-related states', seeing only the Dharma by undergoing the cultivation of the mind—striving, achieves the final nirvāṇa. Indeed Vāseṭṭha, even an **Ascetic** restraining the body, restraining the speech, and restraining the mind, consuming the seven 'enlightenment-re-

lated states', seeing only the Dharma by undergoing the cultivation of the mind—striving, achieves the final nirvāṇa. Any person from these four social castes, Vāseṭṭha, seeking to become a monk, dwelling as a holy man—one in whom human passion is extinct, who completes what ought to be done, laying down their burdens, who has reached the highest good, who has broken the chain of rebirth, becoming liberated through their own perfect understanding, who has neither perception nor non-perception of the Dharma and no false doctrines—this person is anointed as the foremost. Indeed the Dharma, Vāseṭṭha, is the best for producing understanding in both this world and the next.

⁵⁴ The two mixed views, in this instance, are a combination of both heretical views and agreeable right views

⁵⁵ *Bodhipakkhiyānaṃ dhammānaṃ* (Pali) means: “Enlightenment-Related States”, which comprises of thirty-seven qualities to enlightenment (collated into seven distinct sets). These seven sets are as follows: (i) Four applications of mindfulness: (1) of body, (2) of feelings, (3) of mind, (4) of phenomena, (ii) Four correct exertions: (5) for the preventing of unvirtuous states to arise, (6) for the abandoning of the already arisen unvirtuous states, (7) for the arising of virtuous states, (8) for the sustaining and increasing of arisen virtuous states, (iii) Four supports for miraculous ability: (9) resolution, (10) perseverance, (11) mind, (12) scrutiny, (iv) Five faculties: (13) faith, (14) perseverance, (15) recollection, (16) meditative stability, (17) wisdom, (v) Five powers: (18) faith (19) perseverance, (20) recollection, (21) meditative stability, (22) wisdom, (vi) Seven branches of enlightenment: (23) recollection, (24) doctrinal analysis, (25) perseverance, (26) delight, (27) mental and physical refinement, (28) meditative stability, (29) equanimity, (vii) Noble eightfold path: (30) correct view, (31) correct ideation, (32) correct speech, (33) correct action, (34) correct livelihood, (35) correct effort, (36) correct recollection, and (37) correct meditative stability

⁵⁶ *Bhāvanamanvāya* (Pali) means: *bhāvanaman* (the cultivation of the mind [in accordance with all the aspects of enlightenment]) + *vāya* (undergoing). ‘Seeing only the Dharma’ means seeing the One Indivisible Reality of God within everything (as a result of this cultivation of mind)

⁵⁷ *Parinibbāyati* (Pali) means: *pari* (final) + *nibbāna* (nirvāṇa) + *yati* (through striving). Parinirvāṇa (or final nirvāṇa) is the cessation of the five aggregates comprising the individual self after the extinguishment of the three fires of ‘craving’, ‘ill-will/hatred/aversion’ and ‘ignorance’

THE BUDDHA CONCLUDES

13. And so Vāseṭṭha, did this one—the Brahmunā Sanat Kumara⁵⁸ speak this verse: “Whoever conforms to the lineage of their generation, the Kshatriya is supreme; [but] he possessed of Wisdom of conduct, is supreme among gods and men!”⁵⁹ And indeed, Vāseṭṭha, this verse of the Brahmunā Sanat Kumara is sung with ease, and never sung with difficulty. Spoken with ease, it is never spoken with difficulty. Endowed with fortune, it is never endowed with misfortune. Approved by me. I also, Vāseṭṭha, thus declare: “Whoever conforms to the lineage of their generation, the Kshatriya is supreme; [but] he possessed of Wisdom of conduct, is supreme among gods and men!” Thus did the Bhagavān declare. Delighted, Vāseṭṭha strongly approved and rejoiced at the spoken word of the Bhagavān.

⁵⁸ Sanat Kumara (*Sanaṅkumārena*) is well known throughout the world’s religions, and is known as the Ancient of Days [in Judeo-Christianity] and Skanda/Kartikeya [in Hinduism]. Regarded as the great Guru, the Savior of the Earth, he is said to be one of the seven Holy Kumaras who govern the planet Venus [at the etheric level], who volunteered to reside on earth [in the etheric city of Shambala] to guide humanity into love. In the *Book of Daniel* He is described as riding upon His MerKaBa Light Body Vehicle (His Throne of God), with the upper and lower pyramid spinning like wheels at incredible speeds to produce Infinite Light: “I beheld til the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.” [Daniel 7:9]

⁵⁹ Whoever believes in ‘the others’ and conforms to their caste of birth, the Kshatriya is supreme; but whoever conforms not to multiplicity, but to the eternal ‘oneness’ of Our singularity in God—to this holy Wisdom of conduct—he is supreme among gods and men!



BRAHMAJĀLA SŪTRA: GOD’S NET [OF DHARMA & ‘WRONG’ VIEWS]

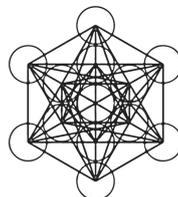
Translation by Maitreya Christos



THE INFINITESIMAL AND NON-INFINITESIMAL REALITY OF GOD

Prior to translating this sūtra, I (Maitreya Christos) asked the Buddha during meditation whether anything should be included as a forward to this sūtra. I immediately received the two words “infinitesimal” and “non-infinitesimal” and a 3-D image of the flower of infinity. Infinitesimal means extremely small and minute ~ and conversely, non-infinitesimal means not extremely small and minute. The Reality of God, whether in ultimate reality (beyond the confines of space and time) and in relative reality (within the confines of space and time) is immeasurable ~ and as the Reality of God is All There Is, there is no comparison to say the Reality of God is large or small, or extremely large or extremely small. Rather it is to be rightly classified as “ineffable”—that being too great to be expressed in words. As the flower of infinity is synonymous with the MerKaBa Light Body contained within the construct of Metatron’s Cube¹, in my next meditation I proceeded to ask God whether Metatron’s Cube should be included as part of the forward to this sūtra. I immediately did see the clearest image of the Star of David², where the two inverted pyramids of Metatron’s Cube initially appeared, followed by the words “I hold the upper and the lower³. I am the gateway for God’s Light. I provide Light to every particle of God’s substance. This is all you need to know regarding this structure.” Thus in every aspect of the finite world of Creation is the Infinite Light of God in disguise, where Metatron⁴ is the “network of capillary veins” connecting the unmanifest God with the sum of His Creation ~ where every particle of substance of God’s Creation has a Metatron Cube containing the Star of David, with one pyramid spinning clockwise and the other counter-clockwise at incredible speeds to produce Infinite Light. In a subsequent meditation on Metatron’s Cube I was given the words “wave” and “sinu”—meaning ‘sinusoidal waveform’, thus revealing the pattern of its’ oscillating frequency, which I then did discover occurred in nature ~ in ocean waves, sound waves and light waves. Accordingly the “infinitesimal” Reality of God can be found in every part of Creation, down to the smallest atomic particle, and the “non-infinitesimal” Reality of God can be found to encompass every part of Creation and all that exists beyond.

¹The Metatron Cube (shown below) is the structural component of every particle of God’s substance in relative reality, upon which all created phenomena are manifested. It contains within the upper and lower pyramid of the Star of David (of Vajradhara and Vajrasattva)



²The Star of David is the merging as 'one' of the upper pyramid of Vajradhara and the lower pyramid of Vajrasattva as the MerKaBa Light Body. This creates a hexagonal structure, just like the crystalline structure beryl, that emanates God's Light as the pyramids rotate at incredible speeds

³Metatron's words "I hold the upper and the lower" means "I hold the upper (pyramid of Vajradhara) and the lower (pyramid of Vajrasattva)" and this deeper understanding was telepathically communicated to Maitreya Christos as the words of Metatron were spoken

⁴Metatron is described in the Hebrew Book of Enoch in two ways: as a primordial angel who is the lesser YHVH (God) and second only to the Creator and as the state unto which Enoch was transformed into after he pleased God on earth, stating: "This Enoch, whose flesh was turned to flame, his veins to fire, his eye-lashes to flashes of lightning, his eye-balls to flaming torches, and whom God placed on a throne next to the throne of glory, received after this heavenly transformation the name Metatron." In the Christian Bible Enoch is mentioned twice, in Genesis 5:24 "And Enoch walked with God: then he was no more, for God took him." and in Hebrews 11:5 "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God."

GOING BEYOND SPECULATION INTO DIVINE INSIGHT

Speculation on any subject is always based on assumption. And no subject has been speculated on more than the subject of God. However speculation is not Truth, nor is it Reality; in fact, it is an attempt to superimpose a false reality on Reality itself and takes us further away from experiencing the Reality of God. It is to our own peril that we speculate on the Reality of God ~ for speculation on God does not reality make. The Buddha Body is the "reality body" (the dharmakāya), and we can only don the armor of this body by removing all speculation. Human beings on the whole are speculators, not knowers, of God. God sends Wayfarers (such as Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ), to teach humanity how to have a direct experience with God, through applied faith and devotion. It is only then do we receive divine insight or direct Knowledge from God. Yet scripture on its own should never be mistaken for Reality, for words on their own can never contain Reality. In the Kālāmā Sūtra⁵, the Buddha spoke on this subject (when speaking to the Kālāmā people who were confused about which teachings to believe): "Thou in this matter Kālāmās, do not go by hearsay, do not go by tradition, do not go by inlets of 'thus people say', do not go by the basketful of accomplishments, do not go by the condition of logic, do not go by the condition of methodology (scientific understanding), do not go by the condition of reflection (deliberation), do not go by the views with understanding which are intolerant⁶, do not go by the appearance of what is fit, nor—do not go by the ascetic as the teacher (guru). When, Kālāmās, 'only on one's own account' thou knows what ought to be: "These things are wholesome, these things are faultless, these things are extolled by the wise, these things if taken up entirely lead to that which is beneficial and that which is agreeable!" then thou Kālāmās are to enter upon and should dwell in accordingly."⁷ Thus when humanity follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddha's via the Inner Buddha-Christ Self, located in the secret chamber⁸ of the heart—using the Key of Knowledge (one's own intuitive heart guidance), will each individual come into the Net of Dharma (the Net of the Reality of God) ~ leaving behind all reliance on the mind of speculation. Such does this sūtra reveal how human beings are either caught in the Net of Dharma or in the net of their own speculative 'individuated' views, which include: (a) the thirty-two wrong views that the individuated self is immortal—when in Reality all living beings return into oneness with God, ceasing to exist as individuated beings, (b) the seven wrong views that the mind of the individuated self is completely annihilated after the death of the body—when in Reality the mind of the individuated self is on a sacred journey of transcending individuality and returning into oneness with God, (c) the two wrong views that the individuated self and the world have originated without cause (merely by chance)—when in Reality all individuated beings and the material world have arisen by divine design, (d) the four wrong views of equivocation, where no view is adhered to—when in Reality there is a clear path and right view pertaining to the Dharma, (e) the eight wrong views that the individuated self resides within the world of Creation eternally—when in Reality all individuated beings and the material world of Creation are eventually dissolved, (f) the five wrong

views that the supreme nirvāṇa⁹ can be obtained in this world—when in Reality this supreme state (or parinirvāṇa) can only be obtained when every part of the Son (Vajrasattva) has been completely awakened, and (g) the four wrong views that the world is either [finite], [infinite], or [finite and infinite¹⁰], or [neither finite, infinite, or finite and infinite]—when in Reality the finite world exists in the infinite God and the infinite God exists in the finite world, and that which is finite in form, made entirely of God’s substance and life force Spirit, belongs to the infinite¹¹. These are the sixty-two views that keep us entangled in the net of wrong views, which we must leave behind entirely.

⁵ “The Kālāmā Sūtra” is 3.65 in the Aṅguttara Nikāya of the Sutta Pitaka of the Pali Canon

⁶ *Diṭṭhinijjhānakkhantiyā* (Pali) means: views (*diṭṭhi*) + understanding (*nijjhāna*) + intolerant, unforgiving (*akkhanti*) + which are (*ya*). Here the Buddha instructs those seeking to know God, to stay clear of the path of intolerance

⁷ This passage of the Kālāmā Sūtra has been translated from Pali into English by Maitreya Christos

⁸ The secret chamber of the heart refers to the spiritual heart of God (located in the mid chest region of the body), not the physical heart

⁹ Supreme nirvāṇa (or parinirvāṇa) is the cessation of the five aggregates, which comprise the existence of a conjured individuated being or ‘self’

¹⁰ The Buddha describes the example of someone holding the view that the Creation world is both finite and infinite “spatially”—that is, finite above and below (such as the highest heavens to the lowest hells), and infinite across (such as the infinite expansion of space)

¹¹ While created phenomena is empty of defining characteristics and inherent existence in ‘ultimate’ reality, it is a manifestation of the natural luminosity of mind of God in ‘relative’ reality. Thus while something may appear finite, it does in Reality belong to the infinite. The infinite Spirit / natural luminosity of mind of God has simply taken on the appearance of form and thus appears finite. And while the ‘appearance of form’ is never infinite, always in a constant state of change, the life force Spirit / natural luminosity of mind of God of the form is always infinite. Thus one may look at a rock and say: “this is just a rock” and another may say: “this rock is God/Dharma/Reality”, knowing its true God-Reality

DISPELLING SPECULATION

1. [Sūtra begins]—THUS HAVE I HEARD. Once upon a time, the [Buddha] Bhagavān was midway between Rājagaha and Nālandā¹² and was going along a long road together with a great assembly of monks—indeed as much as five hundred monks. Now the mendicant¹³ Suppiya was also midway between Rājagaha and Nālandā and was going along a long road together with his young pupil, Brahmadata. Well now, in that place the mendicant Suppiya was speaking of the Buddha in various ways disparagingly, speaking of the Dharma disparagingly, speaking of the Saṅgha disparagingly; yet further to Suppiya, this mendicant’s young pupil, Brahmadata, was speaking of the Buddha’s splendor in various ways, and was speaking of the Dharma’s splendor, and was speaking of the Saṅgha’s splendor. And thus both the teacher and pupil were speaking in direct opposition to each other, following back from behind the Bhagavān, while the monks in the Saṅgha were worshipping¹⁴. Indeed then the Bhagavān together with the monks of the Saṅgha approached the mango plantation of the king’s house and dwelt there for a night. Then also Suppiya and the mendicant’s young pupil, Brahmadata, approached the mango plantation of the king’s house and dwelt there for a night. Well now, also in that place, the mendicant Suppiya was speaking of the Buddha in various ways disparagingly, speaking of the Dharma disparagingly, speaking of the Saṅgha disparagingly; yet further to Suppiya, this mendicant’s young pupil, Brahmadata, was speaking of the Buddha’s splendor in various ways, and was speaking of the Dharma’s splendor, and was speaking of the Saṅgha’s splendor. And thus both the teacher and pupil in this dwelling were speaking in direct opposition to each other. Now then a plurality of monks, which at night time [having risen early in the morning], assembled and sat down together in a circular pavilion and this talk of the Dharma arose: “A wonder, brother, a marvel, brother, that the Bhagavān worships as far as this¹⁵—and on account of it that worthy, perfectly enlightened one knows, sees and thoroughly understands the various dispositions of living beings. Indeed, this mendicant Suppiya was speaking of the Buddha in various ways disparagingly, speaking of the Dharma disparag-

ingly, speaking of the Saṅgha disparagingly; yet further to Suppiya, this mendicant’s young pupil, Brahmadata, was speaking of the Buddha’s splendor in various ways, and was speaking of the Dharma’s splendor, and was speaking of the Saṅgha’s splendor. And thus to me both teacher and pupil were speaking in direct opposition to each other, following back from behind the Bhagavān, while the monks in the Saṅgha were worshipping!” Indeed then the Bhagavān—on account of having realized this talk of the Dharma—approached these monks who were in the circular pavilion; and having approached, sat down on his appointed seat. Then having sat down, the Bhagavān addressed the monks: “Prosperity upon this group¹⁶, monks, in which you have presently assembled, sitting down together in talk—and now, what part of your talk was left unfinished midway?” Thus spoken, these monks then said to the Bhagavān: “In this place O lord, we—which at night time [having risen early in the morning]—assembled and sat down together in a circular pavilion and this talk of the Dharma arose: ‘A wonder, brother, a marvel, brother, that the Bhagavān worships as far as this—and on account of it that worthy, perfectly enlightened one knows, sees and thoroughly understands the various dispositions of living beings. Indeed, this mendicant Suppiya was speaking of the Buddha in various ways disparagingly, speaking of the Dharma disparagingly, speaking of the Saṅgha disparagingly; yet further to Suppiya, this mendicant’s young pupil, Brahmadata, was speaking of the Buddha’s splendor in various ways, and was speaking of the Dharma’s splendor, and was speaking of the Saṅgha’s splendor. And thus to me both teacher and pupil were speaking in direct opposition to each other, following back from behind the Bhagavān, while the monks in the Saṅgha were worshipping!’ Indeed O lord, this talk was not left unfinished midway, when the Bhagavān arrived!” “Monks, whether another speaks of me disparagingly, or speaks of the Dharma disparagingly, or speaks of the Saṅgha disparagingly, indeed in that place you should never harbor ill-will, never feel discontent, and never hold anger in the mind—that is what ought to be done. Monks, whether another speaks of me disparagingly, or speaks of the Dharma disparagingly, or speaks of the Saṅgha disparagingly, if in that place you exist either disturbed or displeased you would also be in danger on account of it¹⁷. Monks, whether another speaks of me disparagingly, or speaks of the Dharma disparagingly, or speaks of the Saṅgha disparagingly, if in that place you exist either disturbed or displeased, now moreover, would you know what is well uttered and badly uttered by others?” “Because of this ... no O lord.” “Monks, whether another speaks of me disparagingly, or speaks of the Dharma disparagingly, or speaks of the Saṅgha disparagingly, indeed if it is a falsehood, in that place you should explain it as a falsehood accordingly: ‘Even so, this here is a falsehood; even so, that there is a falsehood; and this does not exist; we are not that; and further to that, we do exist as this!’ Monks, whether another speaks of my splendor, or speaks of the Dharma’s splendor, or speaks of the Saṅgha’s splendor, indeed in that place you should never feel joyful, never feel delighted, and never allow yourself to be elated in the mind—that is what ought to be done. Monks, whether another speaks of my splendor, or speaks of the Dharma’s splendor, or speaks of the Saṅgha’s splendor, if in that place you exist either joyful or delighted you would also be in danger on account of it. Monks, whether another speaks of my splendor, or speaks of the Dharma’s splendor, or speaks of the Saṅgha’s splendor, and this exists as fact, in that place it should be acknowledged as existing accordingly: ‘As such, this here does exist as fact; as such, that there is Truth; and this exists; we do exist as that; and we are further to this!’”¹⁸

¹² Nālandā was later the site of one of the great monastic Buddhist universities, at its height consisting of 10,000 monks and 2,000 teachers

¹³ A mendicant is a term used to describe a wandering religious person who survives by begging for food (alms)

¹⁴ *Bhikkhusaṃghaṇca* (Pali) means: monks (*bhikkhus*) + Saṅgha (*saṃgha*) + to worship (*añc*)

¹⁵ *Yāvañcidam* (Pali) means: up to, as far as (*yāva*) + to worship (*añc*) + this, this thing (*idam*)

¹⁶ *Kāya nuttha* (Pali) means: here, then, now, upon (*nu*) + prosperity, blessings (*attha*) + group, body (*kāya*)

¹⁷ *Antarāyo* (Pali) means: ‘obstacle, hindrance, danger, impediment’. Literally meaning: “coming in between”, it represents the obstacles/dangers that [when existing] come between the mind and complete liberation

¹⁸ *Pana* (Pali) means: ‘further, moreover’. *Pana* is a derivative of *puna*, which means: ‘again, further’

THE NET OF DHARMA ‘RIGHT’ VIEWS

2. Indeed moreover to this, monks, it is insignificant and belonging only to this world ... a matter of mere morality, in which a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. And what, monks—in thy worship¹⁹—is insignificant and belonging only to this world, a matter of mere morality, in which a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor? ‘Having forsaken the destruction of life, the ascetic Gautama abstains from the destruction of life, and laying aside the rod and laying aside the sword is respectful, showing kindness, abiding friendly and compassionate towards every breathing²⁰, living being!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘Having forsaken taking that which is not given, the ascetic Gautama abstains from taking that which is not given, and being one who desires offerings, takes only that which is given, abiding in this pure existence on his own account!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘Having forsaken the unchaste life for the chaste life and living far away from sin, the ascetic Gautama abstains from the village phenomenon²¹ of sexual intercourse!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘Having forsaken lying, the ascetic Gautama abstains from lying, as one who speaks the Truth, who spoke the Truth to Sandha²², trustworthy and reliable, his doctrine is an antidote to the poison of this world!’²³ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘Having forsaken slanderous speech, the ascetic Gautama abstains from slanderous speech, never repeating what is heard from here with those elsewhere, which causes division; and certainly never repeating what is heard from those elsewhere with such and such, which causes division. And also of those not agreeing, as one who unites and reconciles, and surely as one who bestows; impassioned for peace, delighting in peace and rejoicing in peace, his words are spoken as a peacemaker!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘Having forsaken harsh (unkind) speech, the ascetic Gautama abstains from harsh (unkind) speech, whatever he speaks, it is gentle, polite, pleasant to the ear, amiable and coming from the heart²⁴, and thus his words are spoken with the quality of being agreeable to the masses and pleasing to the masses!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘Having forsaken frivolous (idle) talk, the ascetic Gautama abstains from frivolous (idle) talk, speaking at the proper time, speaking the truth, speaking what is beneficial, speaking the code of morality and speaking the Dharma, with words that are a hidden treasure, at the right moment with reason, with talk that has a well-defined purpose and is profitable!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘The ascetic Gautama abstains from harming the seed kingdom and the vegetable (plant) kingdom!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘The ascetic Gautama has one meal a day, and having ceased at night²⁵ abstains from taking a meal at the wrong time ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from singing, dancing, music and watching performers ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from wearing flower garlands, perfume, ointments²⁶, adornments, finery and aṭṭhāna²⁷ (rubbing) ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from a high bed and an extensive bed ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from accepting gold and silver²⁸ ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from accepting uncooked grain ... the ascetic Gautama abstains

from accepting uncooked flesh ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from accepting women and girls ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from accepting male and female slaves ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from accepting goats and sheep ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from accepting pigs and fowl ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from accepting elephants, cows and mares ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from accepting possession of land and goods ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from the practice of running errands and carrying messages ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from buying and selling ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from false weighing, false metals and false measurements ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from the crooked ways of bribery, deception and fraud ... the ascetic Gautama abstains from mutilating²⁹, flogging and binding, never committing highway robbery or forcibly taking a lump!³⁰—Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor.

¹⁹ *Katamañca taṃ bhikkhave* (Pali) means: and what (*katama*) + to worship (*añc*) + thou (*taṃ*) + monks (*bhikkhave*)

²⁰ *Sabbapāṇabhūtahitānukampī* (Pali) means: every (*sabba*) + breathing (*apāṇa*) + living being (*bhūta*) + friendly and compassionate (*hitānukampī*). Through photosynthesis, plants breathe in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen

²¹ *Gāmadhammā* (Pali) means: village (*gāma*) + phenomenon, constitution, virtue, norm (*dhamma*). This word has come to be known as “vile conduct” and “doings with women-folk”, due to its association with sexual intercourse

²² The Buddha preached the Sandha Sūtra to the monk Sandha (11.9 of the Aṅguttara Nikāya of the Pali Canon)

²³ *Avisaṃvādako* (Pali), not to be confused with *avisaṃvādako* means: removes poison (*avisaṃ*) + doctrinal (*vādako*)

²⁴ *Hadayaṅgamā* (Pali) means: heart (*hadaya*) + constituent part, quality (*aṅga*) + with, present with (*amā*)

²⁵ *Rattūparato* (Pali) means: night (*ratta*) + having ceased, desisted (*uparato*) [of the eating of food]

²⁶ *Vilepana* (Pali) means: spreading out (*vi*) + smearing, plastering, anointing (*lepana*) [of cosmetic ointments]

²⁷ *Aṭṭhāna* (Pali) means: a rubbing post with wooden checkerboard squares, used to strengthen muscles

²⁸ While a monk who has renounced the worldly life makes vows not to accept gold and silver (wealth) during this period of transcending worldly life, a Bodhisattva [according to Ārya Asaṅga’s *The Bodhisattva Path to Unsurpassed Enlightenment: The Complete Translation of the Bodhisattvabhūmi*] is instructed to accept wealth where this can be used to help and aid others. Page 223: “A bodhisattva has from the outset dedicated and entrusted, with a pure attitude, all his or her possessions and objects suitable for practicing charity to the buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions, in the same way that a fully ordained monastic dedicates his or her robes to a teacher or preceptor.”

²⁹ *Chedana* (Pali) means: ‘cutting, severing, destroying’ (i.e. to mutilate property or another living being)

³⁰ Here the Buddha instructs monks who go begging for a lump (*ālopa*) of food, never to apply force (*sahasā*) during this sacred act (*kārā*)

3. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these with such virtue abide; participate in harming the seed kingdom and the vegetable (plant) kingdom as follows: the seedling roots, the seedling stems, the seedling branches, the seedling foliage, and even the seedling seeds, being the fifth³¹; thus with such virtue, the ascetic Gautama abstains from harming the seed kingdom and the vegetable (plant) kingdom!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these with such virtue abide; participate in storing possessions as follows: storing up food, storing up drink, storing up clothing, storing up vehicles, storing up belongings, storing up scents, and storing up indulgences and so on; thus with such virtue, the ascetic Gautama abstains from storing possessions!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these with such virtue abide; participate in watching performers as follows: in singing, dancing, music, looking for tales to be told, hand music, magic arts, drumming, acts of embellishing, acrobatic feats by Caṇḍāla³², combat on elephants, dueling on horses, fighting with buffalo, bull fighting, goat fighting, ram fighting, cock fighting, quail fighting, stick fighting, fist fighting, sham fighting, wrestling, troops on display, the amassing of troops, and troop inspections and so on; thus with such virtue, the ascetic Gautama abstains from watching

performers!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these with such virtue abide; participate in the wrongly-held position and devotion of eagerly playing to win³³ as follows: in eight-square, ten-square, in the air, hopscotch, spellicans, the unlucky dice, game of sticks, brush hand, ball games, leaf pipes, toy ploughs, somersaults, windmills, leaf toys, game of letters, toy carts, toy bows, mimicry and the reading of thoughts and so on³⁴; thus with such virtue, the ascetic Gautama abstains from the wrongly-held position and devotion of eagerly playing to win!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these with such virtue abide; participate in using a high bed and an extensive bed as follows: in loungers, sofas, long fleece woolen covers, bedspreads of many colors, white cloth woolen bedcovers embroidered with flowers, mattresses, woolen bedcovers embroidered with shapes, woolen bedcovers with tassels at both ends, woolen bedcovers with tassels at one end, silken bedcovers embroidered with gems, woolen carpets, silken cloths, elephant rugs, horse rugs, chariot rugs, antelope rugs, distinguished deer-hide bed sheets, carpet awnings overhead, and red pillows on both sides and so on; thus with such virtue, the ascetic Gautama abstains from a high bed and an extensive bed!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these with such virtue abide; participate in the wrongly-held position and devotion of embellishing with adornments as follows: in anointing the body with perfumes in massaging, bathing and shampoo, mirrors, eyeliners, garlands, fragrances, cosmetics, smearing the face with face powder, bracelets, top-knots, staffs, cylindrical cases and swords, colored sandals, turbans with gemstones, hair tail fans³⁵ and whitened garments with long fringes and so on; thus with such virtue, the ascetic Gautama abstains from embellishing with adornments!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these with such virtue abide; participate in talking like animals³⁶ as follows: in talking of kings, talking of thieves, talking of politicians, talking of armies, talking of dangers, talking of war, talking of eating, talking of drinking, talking of garments, talking of sleeping, talking of garlands, talking of fragrances, talking of relatives, talking of vehicles, talking of villages, talking of towns, talking of cities, talking of countries, talking of women, talking of valor, gabbing at street corners, gossiping at aṭṭhāna pools, talking of the departed, talking of rumors, telling tales of the world, telling tales of the sea, and talking of becoming this and that and not becoming and so on; thus with such virtue, the ascetic Gautama abstains from talking like animals!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these with such virtue abide; participate in quarrelsome speech as follows: of the Dharma code you don’t understand ... of the Dharma code I understand! ... how can you understand the code of the Dharma? ... the way you are following is wrong ... the way I am following is right ... I am consistent ... you’re inconsistent ... what was spoken first—you didn’t speak of ‘til later ... what was spoken later—you didn’t speak of it first ... the well thought out—you have reversed ... you’re views are refuted ... you are rebuked!—for the act of discharging doctrine ... or indeed explain here if you are able and so on; thus with such virtue, the ascetic Gautama abstains from quarrelsome speech!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these with such virtue abide; participate in the practice of running errands and carrying messages as follows: for kings, prime ministers, Kshatriya, Brahmins, hou-

seholders and youth—“Go here, go there, take this, and bring that to this place!” and so on; thus with such virtue, the ascetic Gautama abstains from running errands and carrying messages!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith—do these exist deceiving, and flattering, and insinuating³⁷, and in trickery, and coveting to gain acquisitions for oneself; thus in such accord, the ascetic Gautama abstains from deception and flattery!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor.

³¹ *Phaḷubijam aggabijam* (Pali) means: joint [i.e. branch] (*phaḷu*); top, upper [i.e. foliage] (*agga*); seed (*bijam*)

³² A Caṇḍāla was from a low tribe, considered an outcaste and untouchable, belonging to the lowest social grade

³³ *Jūtappamādaṭṭhānānuyogam* (Pali) means: gambling, playing to win, playing with dice (*jūta*) + zeal, earnestness, eagerness (*appamāda*) + wrong position, wrong stance (*ṭṭhāna*) + devotion to, practice of (*anuyogam*)

³⁴ The games: *aṭṭhapada* (“eight-square” checker board); *dasapada* (“ten-square” checker board); *ākāsa* (playing chess or checkers “in the air”); *parihārapatha* (“circle-path” hopscotch); *santika* (“vicinity” spellicans); *khalika* (from kali, “the unlucky dice”); *ghaṭṭika* (“one who tries” game of sticks); *salākahattha* (“brush hand” dipped in dye and striking the wall, where others play to show a figure in the dye), *akkha* (“dice, ball games, marbles”), *paṅgacīra* (“toy leaf pipes”), *vaṅkaka* (“who bends” toy plough), *mokkhacika* (“somersaults”), *ciṅgulika* (“toy windmill” made of palm leaves), *pattālhaka* (“leaf measure” toy), *rathaka* (“a toy cart”), *dhanuka* (“a toy bow” and arrow), *akkharika* (“letter game” of recognizing letters drawn on one’s back), *manesika* (“mind reading”), *yathāvajja* (“mimicry of deformities”)

³⁵ *Vālabjanim* (Pali) means: hair tail (*vāla*) + fan (*bjanim/vijanim*), known as yaks tail fan or yaks tail “fly” whisk

³⁶ *Tiracchānakatham* (Pali) means: an animal, a beast, going horizontally (*tiracchāna*) + talk, speech (*katham*). Talk of anything (apart from the Dharma) is talking from the animalistic ‘ego’ mind of attachment, fear and craving

³⁷ *Nemittikatā* (Pali) has multiple meanings including: “insinuation” and “fortunetelling: prophesizing the future, astrology, numerology, etc.” Insinuation means to maneuver (insinuate) oneself into a favorable position, and to hint or imply (insinuate) something will or won’t happen

4. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these in wrong livelihood make their living in whatever low art in whatever such form as follows: in reading of omens on parts of the body, visions of unusual events, divining³⁸ of marks gnawed by mice, offerings³⁹ made with fire, offerings made with a ladle, offerings made with husks of grain, offerings made with red fine powder, offerings made with grains of rice, offerings made with ghee⁴⁰, offerings made with oil, offerings made from the mouth, offerings made with blood, prophesying from marks on the body, the science of determining a lucky site, the craft of political science, knowledge of auspicious charms, knowledge of demon charms⁴¹, knowledge of earth charms, knowledge of snake charms, the craft of poisons, the craft of scorpions, the craft of mice, prophesying bird cries, prophesying crow cries, prophesying lifespan, protection (spells) from arrows and the sphere of wild beasts and so on⁴²; thus the ascetic Gautama abstains from wrong livelihood, in whatever low art in whatever such form!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these in wrong livelihood make their living in whatever low art in whatever such form as follows: in jewel divining, clothes divining, staff divining, knife divining, sword divining, arrow divining, bow divining, weapon divining, prophesying of women, prophesying of men, prophesying of boys, prophesying of girls, prophesying of male slaves, prophesying of female slaves, elephant divining, horse divining, buffalo divining, bull divining, oxen divining, goat divining, sheep divining, fowl divining, quail divining, rabbit⁴³ divining, lizard divining, tortoise divining, and divining from other wild beasts and so on; thus the ascetic Gautama abstains from wrong livelihood, in whatever low art in whatever such form!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brah-

mins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these in wrong livelihood make their living in whatever low art in whatever such form as follows: the king is proceeding forth ~ the king is not proceeding forth ~ the king is approaching towards the inside ~ the king is retreating from the outside ~ the king is approaching from the outside ~ the king is retreating towards the inside ~ towards the inside the king is defeating ~ from the outside the king is beleaguered ~ from the outside the king is defeating ~ towards the inside the king is beleaguered ~ thus these are victorious ~ and these are defeated and so on; thus the ascetic Gautama abstains from wrong livelihood, in whatever low art in whatever such form!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these in wrong livelihood make their living in whatever low art in whatever such form as follows: there is to be an eclipse of the moon ~ there is to be an eclipse of the sun ~ there is to be an eclipse of a star ~ the sun and the moon will travel on course ~ the sun and the moon will travel off course ~ the constellations will move on track ~ the constellations will move off track ~ a meteor falling is to come ~ a fire in the sky⁴⁴ will soon arise ~ a shaking of the earth will soon become ~ the drum of the devas⁴⁵ will soon appear ~ a rising and setting and darkening and brightening of the sun and the moon and the stars will befall ~ such will be the outcome of the eclipse of the moon ~ such will be the outcome of the eclipse of the sun ~ such will result from the eclipse of the star ~ of the sun and the moon traveling on course, such will be the result ~ of the sun and the moon traveling off course, such and such will be the result ~ of the constellations moving on track, the effect will be like this ~ of the constellations moving off track, the effect will be like that ~ such will result from the meteor falling ~ such will result from the fire in the sky ~ such will result from the shaking of the earth ~ such will result from the drum of the devas ~ and such will result from the rising and setting and darkening and brightening of the sun and the moon and the stars to befall and so on; thus the ascetic Gautama abstains from wrong livelihood, in whatever low art in whatever such form!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor.

³⁸ *Lakkhaṇa* (Pali) means: ‘fortunetelling, prophesying, reading the future through signs and marks (divination)’

³⁹ *Homa* (Pali) means: ‘oblation’; something offered (usually to a god or spirit) in religious worship and devotion

⁴⁰ Ghee is clarified butter used in ceremonies such as Agnihotra, to purify the atmosphere, which also uses a ladle for offering ghee into the fire (*agni*). *Kaṇa* (Pali) means: the red fine powder between the husk and the grain of rice

⁴¹ Knowledge of demon charms refers to spells/magic/incantations. While (*Bhūtavijjā*) also means exorcism, the Buddha taught the exorcising of evil spirits using holy water and the recital of the Ratana Sūtra and the Āṭānāṭṭiya Sūtra

⁴² Here the Buddha is referring to a string of crafts (*vijjā*) that involve magic charms, from the craft of political science (*khattavijjā*), to the crafts of ... ‘curing poisons’ (*visavijjā*), ‘curing stings’ of scorpions (*vicchikavijjā*) and ‘curing bites’ of rats and mice (*mūśikavijjā*)

⁴³ *Kaṇṇikā* (Pali) means: ears (*kaṇṇi*) + one who has (*ka*); a common phrase attributed to hares and rabbits

⁴⁴ *Disādāho* (Pali) means: expanse (*disā*) + burning, glow, heat (*dāha*); literally meaning ‘sky-glow’ (redness in sky)

⁴⁵ *Devadudrabhi* (Pali) means: devas (*deva*) + the noise of a drum (*dudrabhi*); literally meaning ‘thunder’

5. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these in wrong livelihood make their living in whatever low art in whatever such form as follows: there is to be a wealth of rain ~ there is to be a drought ~ there is to be a wealth of food ~ there is to be a famine ~ there is to be harmony ~ there is to be panic ~ there is to be disease ~ there is to be health ... and calculation, arithmetic, enumeration, poetry, and popular philosophy⁴⁶ and so on; thus the ascetic Gautama abstains from wrong livelihood, in whatever low art in whatever such form!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these in

wrong livelihood make their living in whatever low art in whatever such form as follows: in finding a wife for a young man and finding a husband for a girl and obstructing and unveiling and assembling and scattering⁴⁷, using charms to make happy, using charms to make unhappy, using charms for aborting and saving a fetus, using charms to bind the tongue, using charms to bind the jaw, casting spells to twist the hands, casting spells into the jaw, casting spells into the ear, enquiring of a mirror⁴⁸, enquiring of a virgin, enquiring of a deva, worshipping the sun, and the venerating and worshipping of the breathing of fire and the goddess of luck for demise⁴⁹ and so on; thus the ascetic Gautama abstains from wrong livelihood, in whatever low art in whatever such form!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. ‘And while just as some honorable ascetics and Brahmins, having eaten food gifted in faith, do these in wrong livelihood make their living in whatever low art in whatever such form as follows: in appeasing of gods with payment of vows, working with spirits to act upon the earth⁵⁰, causing virility, causing impotence, determining lucky sites, arranging lucky sites, bathing and rinsing of others with water⁵¹, offering of emetics⁵² to purge with upper purgatives, purging the lower and purging the head, anointing the ears with medicinal oils, washing the eyes with lubricant oils, treating the nose with heated oils, collyrium boxes for collyrium oils⁵³, ophthalmology, surgery, infant healing, medicine bases, and the giving of medicinal remedies and so on⁵⁴; thus the ascetic Gautama abstains from wrong livelihood, in whatever low art in whatever such form!’ Indeed just in this way, monks, a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor. Indeed this thing, monks, is insignificant and belonging only to this world ... a matter of mere morality, in which a common worldling should speak and talk respectfully of this Tathāgata’s splendor.

⁴⁶ Calculation, arithmetic, and enumeration are all ways of measuring and ‘accounting’ material phenomena, counter to the path of the ascetic life in Buddhism. Poetry and popular philosophy are forms of ‘speculation’, counter to the path of Reality

⁴⁷ *Samkiranam* (Pali) means: ‘assemble, congregate’ and is the antonym for *vikiranam* (to scatter). Matchmakers unveil and scatter those seeking marriage, obstructing unsatisfactory suitors and assembling satisfactory suitors

⁴⁸ In seeking answers from the “unknown”, mediums would employ oracles such as mirrors, virgins and deva spirits

⁴⁹ *Mahatupaṭṭhānam abbhujjalanam sirivhāyanam* (Pali) means: to revere (*mahati*) + to worship (*upaṭṭhānam*) + breathing out of fire (*abbhujjalanam*) + the goddess of luck (*siri*) + to, for (*v*) + diminution, decay, demise (*hāyanam*)

⁵⁰ *Bhūtakammaṃ bhūrikammaṃ* (Pali) means: spirit, ghost, demon (*bhūta*) + to act, work (*kammaṃ*) + the earth (*bhūri*) + to act, work (*kammaṃ*)

⁵¹ Rinsing (*ācamana*) refers to cleansing the inside of the body (such as the mouth and colon). Here the Buddha refers to making a living from the bathing of others with water, who are capable of washing and bathing themselves

⁵² An emetic is used to induce vomiting and is an upper directional purgatory (*uddhamvirecanam*) agent. A lower directional purgatory agent is used to induce a bowel release and a head purgatory agent clears the head via the nose

⁵³ *Añjanam* (Pali) means: collyrium ointment—an eye salve and black eyeliner commonly used to improve vision

⁵⁴ These wrong livelihoods are intended for the ascetic monk and man of God (Brahmin) who is seeking to transcend material life as a common worldling. The five wrong livelihoods for lay followers are described by the Buddha in the Vanijja Sūtra: “Monks, a lay follower should not engage in five types of business ... Business in weapons ... human beings (i.e. trafficking) ... meat ... intoxicants ... and ... poison.”

THE NET OF SPECULATIVE ‘WRONG’ VIEWS

6. There are, monks, certainly other profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is. And what, monks, are these profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it

really is? There are, monks, some ascetics and Brahmins belonging to a kalpa⁵⁵ in the past, who aim towards speculating about the past. With reference to the past, indeed they declare eighteen grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetics and Brahmins, belonging to a kalpa in the past, who aim towards speculating about the past, indeed in reference to the past declare eighteen grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed? There are, monks, some ascetic and Brahmin **eternalists**, worshipping individuality⁵⁶ and worshipping the world as eternal, indeed on which they declare on four grounds. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetic and Brahmin eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal, indeed on which they declare on four grounds? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attain the mind of samādhi⁵⁷, and in whatever way having attained this mind, remembers one's various earlier existences—as follows: of one birth, even two births, even three births, even four births, even five births, even ten births, even twenty births, even thirty births, even forty births, even fifty births, even a hundred births, even a thousand births, even a hundred thousand births, even many hundreds of births, even many thousands of births, even many hundreds of thousands of births: 'There I was named as thus, with ancestry as thus and appearance as thus, in a condition as thus, knowing joy and suffering as thus, the end of my life was as thus—and on account of this departure did arise into another state of existence; and there I was named as thus, with ancestry as thus and appearance as thus, in a condition as thus, knowing joy and suffering as thus, the end of my life was as thus—and on account of that departure was reborn into this existence!' In this way remembering one's various earlier existences and its characteristics point-by-point. Of this he thus says: 'the individual and the world are barren, unchangeable and eternal, as unwavering as a pillar; and these living beings running through, moving about continuously, fall away only to be reborn, thus exist the same within eternity. But why is this so? Because I, by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attained the mind of samādhi, and in whatever way having attained this mind, did remember my various earlier existences—as follows: of one birth, even two births, even three births, even four births, even five births, even ten births, even twenty births, even thirty births, even forty births, even fifty births, even a hundred births, even a thousand births, even a hundred thousand births, even many hundreds of births, even many thousands of births, even many hundreds of thousands of births: "There I was named as thus, with ancestry as thus and appearance as thus, in a condition as thus, knowing joy and suffering as thus, the end of my life was as thus—and on account of this departure did arise into another state of existence; and there I was named as thus, with ancestry as thus and appearance as thus, in a condition as thus, knowing joy and suffering as thus, the end of my life was as thus—and on account of that departure was reborn into this existence!" In this way remembering my various earlier existences and its characteristics point-by-point. Indeed from this and from that I understand: "the individual and the world are barren, unchangeable and eternal, as unwavering as a pillar; and these living beings running through, moving about continuously, fall away only to be reborn, thus exist the same within eternity!"'

⁵⁵ *Pubbantakappikā* (Pali) means: the past (*pubbanta*) + belonging to a kalpa (*kappikā*). A kalpa is an eon or great length of time, with an antahkalpa lasting 8.64 million years. Those with fixed "speculative views" are held captive and thus 'belong' to views indoctrinated in past kalpas

⁵⁶ *Attānañca lokañca* (Pali) means: the individual self, ego, personality (*attā*) + the world (*loka*) + to worship (*añc*)

⁵⁷ *Samādhi* (Pali) means: a state of mind of one-pointed concentration or meditative stability or absorption

7. This thing, monks, is the **first condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin

eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal, make known. And owing to what and beginning with what is the second that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal, make known? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attain the mind of samādhi, and in whatever way having attained this mind, remembers one’s various earlier existences—as follows: of one complete world cycle⁵⁸, even two complete world cycles, even three complete world cycles, even four complete world cycles, even five complete world cycles, even ten complete world cycles: ‘There I was named as thus, with ancestry as thus and appearance as thus, in a condition as thus, knowing joy and suffering as thus, the end of my life was as thus—and on account of this departure did arise into another state of existence; and there I was named as thus, with ancestry as thus and appearance as thus, in a condition as thus, knowing joy and suffering as thus, the end of my life was as thus—and on account of that departure was reborn into this existence!’ In this way remembering one’s various earlier existences and its characteristics point-by-point. Of this he thus says: ‘the individual and the world are barren, unchangeable and eternal, as unwavering as a pillar; and these living beings running through, moving about continuously, fall away only to be reborn, thus exist the same within eternity. But why is this so? Because I, by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attained the mind of samādhi, and in whatever way having attained this mind, did remember my various earlier existences—as follows: of one complete world cycle, even two complete world cycles, even three complete world cycles, even four complete world cycles, even five complete world cycles, even ten complete world cycles: “There I was named as thus, with ancestry as thus and appearance as thus, in a condition as thus, knowing joy and suffering as thus, the end of my life was as thus—and on account of this departure did arise into another state of existence; and there I was named as thus, with ancestry as thus and appearance as thus, in a condition as thus, knowing joy and suffering as thus, the end of my life was as thus—and on account of that departure was reborn into this existence!” In this way remembering my various earlier existences and its characteristics point-by-point. Indeed from this and from that I understand: “the individual and the world are barren, unchangeable and eternal, as unwavering as a pillar; and these living beings running through, moving about continuously, fall away only to be reborn, thus exist the same within eternity!”’ This thing, monks, is the **second condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal, make known. And owing to what and beginning with what is the third that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal, make known? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attain the mind of samādhi, and in whatever way having attained this mind, remembers one’s various earlier existences—as follows: of ten complete world cycles, even twenty complete world cycles, even thirty complete world cycles, even forty complete world cycles: ‘There I was named as thus, with ancestry as thus and appearance as thus, in a condition as thus, knowing joy and suffering as thus, the end of my life was as thus—and on account of this departure did arise into another state of existence; and there I was named as thus, with ancestry as thus and appearance as thus, in a condition as thus, knowing joy and suffering as thus, the end of my life was as thus—and on account of that departure was reborn into this existence!’ In this way remembering my various earlier existences and its characteristics point-by-point. Indeed from this and from that I understand: “the individual and the world are barren, unchangeable and eternal, as unwavering as a pillar; and these living beings running through, moving about continuously, fall away only to be reborn, thus exist the same within eternity!”’ This

thing, monks, is the **third condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal, make known. And owing to what and beginning with what is the fourth that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal, make known? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins exist as investigators and logicians, undertaking investigation affected with logic; and by one’s own understanding of this thus says: ‘the individual and the world are barren, unchangeable and eternal, as unwavering as a pillar; and these living beings running through, moving about continuously, fall away only to be reborn, thus exist the same within eternity!’ This thing, monks, is the **fourth condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal, make known. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetic and Brahmin eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal, indeed on which they declare on four grounds. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin eternalist worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal who declares it to be so, certainly all of these do so because of these four grounds or a certain one; with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: ‘these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!’ and on account of knowing this thing of worship⁵⁹, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from ‘the others’, knowing the extinguishment of the fires⁶⁰. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping⁶¹. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is.

⁵⁸ *Samvattaṅgavivaṅgaṃ* (Pali) means: a complete world cycle (in this instance an antah-kalpa, not a larger maha-kalpa), meaning the evolution (or ascending arc) and the devolution (or descending arc) of an antah-kalpa

⁵⁹ *Tañca* (Pali) means: that thing (*ta*) + to worship (*añc*); in this instance indicating the worship of eternalism

⁶⁰ *Nibbuti* (Pali) means: *nibbāna* (Pali) or *nirvāṇa* (Sanskrit) (or extinguishment of the three fires of ‘craving’, ‘ill-will’ and ‘ignorance’). ‘The others’ (*aññe*) is a reference to those who have taken up the speculative philosophies (of eternalism, etc.)

⁶¹ *Samudayañca atthaṅgamañca assādañca ādīnavañca nissaraṇañca* (Pali) means: arising (*samudaya*) + annihilation (*atthaṅgama*) + sweetness (*assāda*) + misery (*ādīnava*) + salvation (*nissaraṇa*) + to worship (*añc*). Here the Buddha worships the ‘real nature’ or essence of phenomena [of their arising, annihilation, sweetness, misery, and salvation], which is that all phenomena are ultimately non-arising and unceasing

8. There are, monks, some ascetic and Brahmin **partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists**, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, indeed on which they declare on four grounds. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetic and Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, indeed on which they declare on four grounds? Now of that which is to arise, monks, at some time there will periodically come a time, where by the elapse of a long length of time, that this world is dissolved⁶². With the completion of the dissolution of this world, most beings will then exist in the Ābhāsvara worlds⁶³, during their cycle of rebirth. There they will exist mind-made, feeding on joy, radiating their own light, living in the atmosphere, where they will dwell shining brightly, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. Now of that which is to arise, monks, at some time there will periodically come a time, where by the elapse of a long length of time, that this world is re-created. With

the completion of the re-creation of this world, an empty Brahmā realm arises. Now then a certain living being whose lifespan has just expired, whose merit has just expired, having fallen from the Ābhāsvara worlds, is reborn into this empty Brahmā realm. There he exists mind-made, feeding on joy, radiating his own light, living in the atmosphere, where he dwells shining brightly, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. Dwelling below a long time alone, dissatisfaction and longing arises: ‘Indeed, surely other living beings should be arriving here also!’ Then other living beings, whose lifespan has just expired, whose merit has just expired, having fallen from the Ābhāsvara worlds, are reborn into this Brahmā realm also; and these living beings become his companions. There also they exist mind-made, feeding on joy, radiating their own light, living in the atmosphere, where they dwell shining brightly, remaining for a long time—a long, long time. Now, monks, whoever is the first being to come into existence, he exists in this way: ‘I myself am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the unvanquished Lord, the All-Pervading, All-Mighty, Ruler, Maker and Creator, the Supreme powerful embracing Father of the past and future. I created these living beings. But why is this so? Because this had occurred to me earlier: “Indeed, surely other living beings should be arriving here also!” And thus with the resolve of my mind, now these beings have arrived in this place!’ And also of these beings, which had come into existence after, they also existed in this way: ‘Indeed, this is the venerable Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the unvanquished Lord, the All-Pervading, All-Mighty, Ruler, Maker and Creator, the Supreme powerful embracing Father of the past and future. We have been created by this venerable Brahmūnā⁶⁴. But why is this so? Because we have seen the first had come to exist in this world, and we had come into existence after!’ In that place, monks, whoever is the first being to come into existence, he exists traversing with long life and traversing with beauty and traversing with great power. But those living beings, which come to exist after, they exist traversing with short life and traversing with dull appearance and traversing with little power. And then in this state, monks, a certain living being who existed, having fallen from this group arrives in this place. Having arrived in this place, goes forth from the home life into the homeless state to become a monk. And in going forth from the home life into the homeless state to become a monk, exists by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attaining the mind of samādhi; and in whatever way having attained this mind, remembers his former existence, but does not remember beyond from that. Of this he thus says: ‘Indeed he who is the venerable Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the unvanquished Lord, the All-Pervading, All-Mighty, Ruler, Maker and Creator, the Supreme powerful embracing Father of the past and future, the venerable Brahmūnā who has created us, he is perpetual, constant, eternal, unchanging in nature, remaining just the same, the same as eternity. But we who exist on account of the venerable Brahmūnā having created us—those of us having arrived in this place—are impermanent, inconstant, short-lived and destined to pass away!’ This thing, monks, is the **first condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, make known. And owing to what and beginning with what is the second that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, make known? There are, monks, devas named Khiddapadosika⁶⁵, and these abide engaged in the condition of laughter, play and enjoyment for a very long time. Those abiding, engaged in the condition of laughter, play and enjoyment for a very long time, they forget their memory. Those devas who lose their memory, hence fall away from this group. And then in this state, monks, a certain living being who existed, having fallen from this group arrives in this place. Having arrived in this place, goes forth from the home life into the homeless state to become a monk. And in going forth from the home life into the homeless state to become a monk, exists by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way

of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attaining the mind of samādhi; and in whatever way having attained this mind, remembers his former existence, but does not remember beyond from that. Of this he thus says: ‘Indeed those venerable devas who are not corrupted by play do not abide, engaging in the condition of laughter, play and enjoyment for a very long time. And those not engaged, abiding in the condition of laughter, play and enjoyment for a very long time, do not forget their memory. Those devas who do not lose their memory, hence do not fall away from their group; and are perpetual, constant, eternal, unchanging in nature, remaining just the same, the same as eternity. But we who existed, we were corrupted by play, with those of us abiding as we are, engaging in the condition of laughter, play and enjoyment for a very long time. Indeed those abiding, engaged in the condition of laughter, play and enjoyment for a very long time, did forget their memory. Thus, we who lost our memory, having fallen away from this group are impermanent, inconstant, short-lived and destined to pass away!’ This thing, monks, is the **second condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, make known. And owing to what and beginning with what is the third that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, make known? There are, monks, devas named Manopadosika⁶⁶, and these reflect on each other for a very long time. And because of reflecting on each other for a very long time, their minds become corrupted by each other. Those corrupted in the mind by each other become fatigued in the body and fatigued in the mind. And these devas, hence fall away from this group. And then in this state, monks, a certain living being who existed, having fallen from this group arrives in this place. Having arrived in this place, goes forth from the home life into the homeless state to become a monk. And in going forth from the home life into the homeless state to become a monk, exists by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attaining the mind of samādhi; and in whatever way having attained this mind, remembers his former existence, but does not remember beyond from that. Of this he thus says: ‘Certainly those venerable devas, who are not corrupted in the mind, they don’t reflect on each other for a very long time. And because of not reflecting on each other for a very long time, their minds are not corrupted by each other. And those not corrupted in the mind by each other, neither become fatigued in the body, nor fatigued in the mind. Hence these devas do not fall away from their group; and are perpetual, constant, eternal, unchanging in nature, remaining just the same, the same as eternity. But we who existed, our minds were corrupted, with those of us reflecting as we are on each other for a very long time. And with those of us reflecting on each other for a very long time, our minds were corrupted because of each other; with those of us corrupted in the mind by each other, becoming fatigued in the body and fatigued in the mind. Thus we, having fallen away from this group are impermanent, inconstant, short-lived and destined to pass away!’ This thing, monks, is the **third condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, make known. And owing to what and beginning with what is the fourth that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, make known? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins exist as investigators and logicians. Undertaking investigation affected with logic and by one’s own understanding of this thus says: ‘Indeed this thing which is called “the eye”, and also “the ear”, and also “the nose”, and also “the tongue”, and also “the body”—this aspect of individuality is perishable, impermanent, non-eternal and subject to change. Indeed this thing to worship, which is called “the mind” or the

“the intellect” or “the consciousness”—this aspect of individuality is perpetual, constant, eternal, unchanging in nature, remaining just the same, the same as eternity!’ This thing, monks, is the **fourth condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, make known. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetic and Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal, indeed on which they declare on four grounds. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin partial eternalist and partial non-eternalist worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as eternal who declares it to be so, certainly all of these do so because of these four grounds or a certain one; with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: ‘these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!’ and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from ‘the others’, knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is.

⁶² Here the Buddha is referring to dissolution and re-creation of the lower realms of existence below the Ābhāsvara worlds, which continually repeats during one cycle (or mahākalpa) of the creation and dissolution of the entire material universe, as follows: 1) creation (vivarta), 2) preservation of creation (vivarta-siddha), 3) dissolution of creation (samvarta), and 4) preservation of creation dissolved (samvarta-siddha)

⁶³ There are five heavenly realms existing above the physical creation, including: (1) the Śuddhāvāsa worlds (or Pure Abodes), (2) below these the Brhatphala worlds, (3) below these the Śubhaktṛsna worlds, (4) below these the Ābhāsvara worlds, and (5) below these the Brahmā worlds

⁶⁴ *Brahmunā* (Pali) means: A heavenly being. Here the Buddha makes the point that many in the Brahmā world worship unwittingly an individuated “created” being as their Creator; when in Truth the Creator of all (Vajradhara) is unmanifest in form, existing beyond all Creation

⁶⁵ *Khiḍḍāpadosikā* (Pali) means: sinful, full of fault or corruption (*padosika*) + play, pleasure, amusement (*khiḍḍā*)

⁶⁶ *Manopadosikā* (Pali) means: sinful, full of fault or corruption (*padosika*) + mind (*mano*); due to envy and ill-will

9. There are, monks, some ascetic and Brahmin **philosophers of finitude and infinitude**, indeed declaring on four grounds that the world is finite or infinite. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude indeed declare on four grounds that the world is finite or infinite? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attain the mind of samādhi, and in whatever way having attained this mind, abide perceiving this world as finite. Of this he thus says: ‘this world is finite and bounded. But why is this so? Because I, by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attained the mind of samādhi, and in whatever way having attained this mind, did abide perceiving this world as finite. Indeed from this and from that I understand: “this world as such is finite and bounded!”’ This thing, monks, is the **first condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude, make known that the world is finite or infinite. And owing to what and beginning with what is the second that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude, make known that the world is finite or infinite? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins by way of exert-

ion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attain the mind of samādhi, and in whatever way having attained this mind, abide perceiving this world as infinite. Of this he thus says: 'this world is infinite and boundless. Those ascetics and Brahmins who speak thus "this world is finite and bounded!" they do so falsely. This world is infinite and boundless. But why is this so? Because I, by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attained the mind of samādhi, and in whatever way having attained this mind, did abide perceiving this world as infinite. Indeed from this and from that I understand: "this world as such is infinite and boundless!"' This thing, monks, is the **second condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude⁶⁷, make known that the world is finite or infinite. And owing to what and beginning with what is the third that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude, make known that the world is finite or infinite? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attain the mind of samādhi, and in whatever way having attained this mind, abide perceiving this world as finite above and below and perceiving it as infinite across⁶⁸. Of this he thus says: 'now this world is finite and it is infinite. Those ascetics and Brahmins who speak thus "this world is finite and bounded!" they do so falsely. And even those ascetics and Brahmins who speak thus "this world is infinite and unbounded!" they also do so falsely. Now this world is finite and it is infinite. But why is this so? Because I, by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attained the mind of samādhi, and in whatever way having attained this mind, did abide perceiving this world as finite above and below and perceiving it as infinite across. Indeed from this and from that I understand: "now this world as such is finite and it is infinite!"' This thing, monks, is the **third condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude, make known that the world is finite or infinite. And owing to what and beginning with what is the fourth that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude, make known that the world is finite or infinite? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins exist as investigators and logicians. Undertaking investigation affected with logic and by one's own understanding of this thus says: 'this world is neither finite, yet nor is it infinite. Those ascetics and Brahmins who speak thus "this world is finite or bounded!" they do so falsely. Even those ascetics and Brahmins who speak thus "this world is infinite and unbounded!" they also do so falsely. And further those ascetics and Brahmins who speak thus "now this world is finite and it is infinite!" even they do so falsely⁶⁹. This world is neither finite, yet nor is it infinite!' This thing, monks, is the **fourth condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude, make known that the world is finite or infinite. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude, indeed declare on four grounds that the world is finite or infinite. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin philosopher of finitude and infinitude who declares the world is finite or infinite, certainly all of these do so because of these four grounds or a certain one; with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: 'these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!' and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from 'the others', knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to

know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is.

⁶⁷ *Antānantam* (Pali) means: having an end, finite, bounded (*anta*) + not having an end, infinite, boundless (*ānanta*)

⁶⁸ A spatial philosophy indicating the vertical structure of the Creation universe [from the highest heavens to the lowest hells] is finite (limited), and the horizontal structure of the Creation universe is infinite (never ending)

⁶⁹ Here the Buddha reveals those who hold the view that the world is neither ‘finite, nor infinite, nor finite and infinite’ are holding wrong views. This is because the world is both finite and infinite as follows: 1. The Creation world is finite in space and time, having a finite existence in space and time, and 2. That upon which the Creation world is manifest, that being God’s natural luminosity of mind and life force Spirit is infinite

10. There are, monks, some ascetic and Brahmin **eel-wrigglers**⁷⁰, and when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels, indeed on four grounds. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetic and Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels, indeed on four grounds? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins are not even slightly aware of the truth ‘this thing is wholesome!’ and not even slightly aware of the truth ‘this thing is unwholesome!’ He exists in this way: ‘Indeed, I am not even slightly aware of the truth “this thing is wholesome!” and not even slightly aware of the truth “this thing is unwholesome!” Indeed moreover if I with little understanding of the truth “this thing is wholesome!” and with little understanding of the truth “this thing is unwholesome!” and should I declare “this thing is wholesome!” and should I declare “this thing is unwholesome!” that pertaining to myself would be false. Whatever pertaining to myself is false, that pertaining to myself is distressing. Whatever pertaining to myself is distressing, that pertaining to myself is a danger!’ Thus with a fear of lying and a disgust of lying he neither declares that which is wholesome, nor moreover declares that which is unwholesome; and when asked a question here and there responds equally with equivocation as a wriggling eel: ‘To me perhaps it’s not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn’t thus so ~ to me perhaps it’s not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn’t that it isn’t like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn’t that it isn’t thus not!’ This thing, monks, is the **first condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels. And owing to what and beginning with what is the second that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins are not even slightly aware of the truth ‘this thing is wholesome!’ and not even slightly aware of the truth ‘this thing is unwholesome!’ He exists in this way: ‘Indeed, I am not even slightly aware of the truth “this thing is wholesome!” and not even slightly aware of the truth “this thing is unwholesome!” Indeed moreover if I with little understanding of the truth “this thing is wholesome!” and with little understanding of the truth “this thing is unwholesome!” and should I declare “this thing is wholesome!” and should I declare “this thing is unwholesome!” in me there may arise either lust or desire or ill-will or anger. Whenever there arises in me either lust or desire or ill-will or anger, that pertaining to myself is attachment. Whatever pertaining to myself is attachment, that pertaining to myself is distressing. Whatever pertaining to myself is distressing, that pertaining to myself is a danger!’ Thus with a fear of attachment and a disgust of attachment he neither declares that which is wholesome, nor moreover declares that which is unwholesome; and when asked a question here and there responds equally with equivocation as a wriggling eel: ‘To me perhaps it’s not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn’t thus so ~ to me perhaps it’s not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn’t that it isn’t like thus ~ to me perhaps it

isn't that it isn't thus not!' This thing, monks, is the **second condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels. And owing to what and beginning with what is the third that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins are not even slightly aware of the truth 'this thing is wholesome!' and not even slightly aware of the truth 'this thing is unwholesome!' He exists in this way: 'Indeed, I am not even slightly aware of the truth "this thing is wholesome!" and not even slightly aware of the truth "this thing is unwholesome!" Indeed moreover if I with little understanding of the truth "this thing is wholesome!" and with little understanding of the truth "this thing is unwholesome!" and should I declare "this thing is wholesome!" and should I declare "this thing is unwholesome!" for indeed there are wise and clever ascetics and Brahmins, hair-splitters, practiced in disputing with others, and methinks these move about coursing with wisdom, destroying the views of others; and I in that place would be conversing together with these and would be cross-examined and would be asked for explanations. In that place, in which I would be conversing together and would be cross-examined and would be asked for explanations, I would not be able to explain it to them. Whatever I would not be able to explain, that pertaining to myself is distressing. Whatever pertaining to myself is distressing, that pertaining to myself is a danger!' Thus with a fear of questioning and a disgust of questioning he neither declares that which is wholesome, nor moreover declares that which is unwholesome; and when asked a question here and there responds equally with equivocation as a wriggling eel: 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' This thing, monks, is the **third condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels. And owing to what and beginning with what is the fourth that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins exist as stupid and bewildered. And when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels, with stupidity and bewilderment: 'Is there existence beyond this world?' if I were asked thus 'is there existence beyond this world?' if pertaining to me thus 'is there existence beyond this world?' that one should declare to be such⁷¹, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Is there non-existence beyond this world?' if I were asked thus 'is there non-existence beyond this world?' if pertaining to me thus 'is there non-existence beyond this world?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Now is there existence and non-existence beyond this world?' if I were asked thus 'now is there existence and non-existence beyond this world?' if pertaining to me thus 'now is there existence and non-existence beyond this world?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Is there neither existence nor non-existence beyond this world?' if I were asked thus 'is there neither existence nor non-existence beyond this world?' if pertaining to me thus 'is there neither existence nor non-existence beyond this world?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Are living beings spontaneously reborn?'⁷² if I were ask-

ed thus, 'are living beings spontaneously reborn?' if pertaining to me thus 'are living beings spontaneously reborn?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Are living beings not spontaneously reborn?' if I were asked thus, 'are living beings not spontaneously reborn?' if pertaining to me thus 'are living beings not spontaneously reborn?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Now are living beings spontaneously reborn and are they not?' if I were asked thus, 'now are living beings spontaneously reborn and are they not?' if pertaining to me thus 'now are living beings spontaneously reborn and are they not?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Are living beings neither spontaneously reborn nor are they not?' if I were asked thus, 'are living beings neither spontaneously reborn nor are they not?' if pertaining to me thus 'are living beings neither spontaneously reborn nor are they not?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Does fruit result⁷³ from well done and badly done action?' if I were asked thus, 'does fruit result from well done and badly done action?' if pertaining to me thus 'does fruit result from well done and badly action?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Does fruit not result from well done and badly done action?' if I were asked thus, 'does fruit not result from well done and badly done action?' if pertaining to me thus 'does fruit not result from well done and badly done action?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Now does fruit result and does it not from well done and badly done action?' if I were asked thus, 'now does fruit result and does it not from well done and badly done action?' if pertaining to me thus 'now does fruit result and does it not from well done and badly action?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Does neither fruit result nor does it not from well done and badly done action?' if I were asked thus, 'does neither fruit result nor does it not from well done and badly done action?' if pertaining to me thus 'does neither fruit result nor does it not from well done and badly done action?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Does the Tathāgata exist beyond death?' if I were asked thus, 'does the Tathāgata exist beyond death?' if pertaining to me thus 'does the Tathāgata exist beyond death?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Does the Tathāgata not exist beyond death?' if I were asked thus, 'does the Tathāgata not exist beyond death?' if pertaining to me thus 'does the Tathāgata not exist beyond death?' that one should declare to be such, 'To me perhaps it's not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't thus so ~ to me perhaps it's not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn't that it isn't thus not!' 'Now does the Tathāgata exist and not exist beyond death?' if I were asked thus, 'now does the Tathāgata exist and not exist beyond death?' if pertaining to me thus 'now does the Tathāga-

ta exist and not exist beyond death?’ that one should declare to be such, ‘To me perhaps it’s not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn’t thus so ~ to me perhaps it’s not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn’t that it isn’t like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn’t that it isn’t thus not!’ ‘Does the Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist beyond death?’ if I were asked thus, ‘does the Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist beyond death?’ if pertaining to me thus ‘does the Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist beyond death?’ that one should declare to be such, ‘To me perhaps it’s not only thus ~ to me perhaps it isn’t thus so ~ to me perhaps it’s not otherwise thus ~ to me perhaps it isn’t that it isn’t like thus ~ to me perhaps it isn’t that it isn’t thus not!’ This thing, monks, is the **fourth condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetic and Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels, indeed on four grounds. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin eel-wiggler, when asked a question here and there responds equally with equivocation as a wriggling eel, certainly all of these do so because of these four grounds or a certain one; with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: ‘these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!’ and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from ‘the others’, knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is.

⁷⁰ *Amarāvikkhepika* (Pali) means: eel-wiggler; *amarāvikkhepaṃ* (Pali) means: wriggling or oscillating like an eel

⁷¹ *Atthi paro loko’ti* (Pali) means: (is) to be, to exist, existence (*atthi*) + beyond (*paro*) + this world (*loko*)

⁷² *Opapātikā* (Pali) means: “spontaneously reborn” without parents into another spiritual realm (i.e. heaven or hell)

⁷³ *Phalaṃ vipāko* (Pali) means: fruit, result, crop, produce, karmic effect (*phalaṃ*) + result, outcome (*vipāko*)

11. There are, monks, some ascetic and Brahmin **philosophers of causeless origination**, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as originating without a cause, indeed on which they declare on two grounds. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of causeless origination worship individuality and worship the world as originating without a cause, indeed on which they declare on two grounds? There are, monks, devas named *Asaññasatta*⁷⁴. And subsequently with the appearance of consciousness, those devas hence fall away from this group. And then in this state, monks, a certain living being who existed, having fallen from this group arrives in this place. Having arrived in this place, goes forth from the home life into the homeless state to become a monk. And in going forth from the home life into the homeless state to become a monk, exists by way of exertion, by way of striving, by way of devotion, by way of vigilance, by way of right reflection and the like, attaining the mind of *samādhi*; and in whatever way having attained this mind, remembers the appearance of consciousness, but does not remember beyond from that. Of this he thus says: ‘now the individual and the world have originated without a cause. But why is this so? Because I did not exist in the past; if now I am, after not having been, ~ transformed into existence!’ This thing, monks, is the **first condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—

that some ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of causeless origination, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as originating without a cause, make known. And owing to what and beginning with what is the second that these honorable ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of causeless origination, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as originating without a cause, make known? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins exist as investigators and logicians. Undertaking investigation affected with logic and by one's own understanding of this thus says: 'now the individual and the world have originated without a cause!' This thing, monks, is the **second condition**—owing to what and beginning with what—that some ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of causeless origination, worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as originating without a cause, make known. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of causeless origination worship individuality and worship the world as originating without a cause, indeed on which they declare on two grounds. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin philosopher of causeless origination worshipping individuality and worshipping the world as originating without a cause who declares it to be so, certainly all of these do so because of these two grounds or a certain one; with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: 'these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!' and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from 'the others', knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā's splendor—as it really is. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetics and Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the past, who aim towards speculating about the past, indeed in reference to the past declare eighteen grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin belonging to a kalpa in the past, who aim towards speculating about the past, indeed in reference to the past, on which their various dispositions are bestowed; certainly all of these do so because of these eighteen grounds or a certain one, with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: 'these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!' and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from 'the others', knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā's splendor—as it really is.

⁷⁴ *Asaññasattā* (Pali) means: unconscious; being without ideas and without thought (*asañña*) + living being (*sattā*)

12. There are, monks, some ascetics and Brahmins belonging to a kalpa⁷⁵ in the future, who aim towards speculating

about the future, and with reference to the future indeed they declare forty-four grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetics and Brahmins, belonging to a kalpa in the future, who aim towards speculating about the future, indeed in reference to the future declare forty-four grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed? There are, monks, some ascetic and Brahmin **philosophers of the view of conscious immortality**, indeed declaring on sixteen grounds that the conscious individual is immortal⁷⁶. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of the view of conscious immortality, indeed declare on sixteen grounds that the conscious individual is immortal? ‘The individual with form exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual without form exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘Now the individual with form and without form exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual with neither form nor without form exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual who is finite exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual who is infinite exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘Now the individual who is finite and infinite exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual who is neither finite nor infinite exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual with unvarying perception exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual with varying perception exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual with limited perception exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual with unlimited perception exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual with extreme happiness exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual with extreme sorrow exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual with happiness and sorrow exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual with neither happiness nor sorrow exists beyond death healthy and conscious!’ he declares. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of the view of conscious immortality, indeed declare on sixteen grounds that the conscious individual is immortal. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin philosopher of the view of conscious immortality, who declares the conscious individual is immortal, certainly all of these do so because of these sixteen grounds or a certain one; with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: ‘these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!’ and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from ‘the others’, knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is. There are, monks, some ascetic and Brahmin **philosophers of the view of unconscious immortality**, indeed declaring on eight grounds that the unconscious individual is immortal. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of the view of unconscious immortality, indeed declare on eight grounds that the unconscious individual is immortal? ‘The individual with form exists beyond death healthy and unconscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual without form exists beyond death healthy and unconscious!’ he declares. ‘Now the individual with form and without form exists beyond death healthy and unconscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual with neither form nor without form exists beyond death healthy and

unconscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual who is finite exists beyond death healthy and unconscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual who is infinite exists beyond death healthy and unconscious!’ he declares. ‘Now the individual who is finite and infinite exists beyond death healthy and unconscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual who is neither finite nor infinite exists beyond death healthy and unconscious!’ he declares. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of the view of unconscious immortality, indeed declare on eight grounds that the unconscious individual is immortal. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin philosopher of the view of unconscious immortality, who declares the unconscious individual is immortal, certainly all of these do so because of these eight grounds or a certain one; with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: ‘these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!’ and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from ‘the others’, knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is. There are, monks, some ascetic and Brahmin **philosophers of the view of neither conscious nor unconscious immortality**, indeed declaring on eight grounds that the individual, neither conscious nor unconscious, is immortal. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of the view of neither conscious nor unconscious immortality, indeed declare on eight grounds that the individual, neither conscious nor unconscious, is immortal? ‘The individual with form exists beyond death healthy and neither conscious nor unconscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual without form exists beyond death healthy and neither conscious nor unconscious!’ he declares. ‘Now the individual with form and without form exists beyond death healthy and neither conscious nor unconscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual with neither form nor without form exists beyond death healthy and neither conscious nor unconscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual who is finite exists beyond death healthy and neither conscious nor unconscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual who is infinite exists beyond death healthy and neither conscious nor unconscious!’ he declares. ‘Now the individual who is finite and infinite exists beyond death healthy and neither conscious nor unconscious!’ he declares. ‘The individual who is neither finite nor infinite exists beyond death healthy and neither conscious nor unconscious!’ he declares. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of the view of neither conscious nor unconscious immortality, indeed declare on eight grounds that the individual, neither conscious nor unconscious, is immortal. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin philosopher of the view of neither conscious nor unconscious immortality, who declares the individual, neither conscious nor unconscious, is immortal, certainly all of these do so because of these eight grounds or a certain one; with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: ‘these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!’ and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from ‘the others’, knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are

those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is.

⁷⁵ *Aparantakappikā* (Pali) means: the future (*aparanta*) + belonging to a kalpa (*kappikā*). A kalpa is an eon or great length of time. Here the Buddha makes the point those with fixed “speculative views” on the future are held captive (and thus ‘belong’) to a kalpa in the future

⁷⁶ *Uddhamāghāta* (Pali) literally means: not destroyed (*māghāta*) + in the uppermost state (*uddha*); thus immortal

13. There are, monks, some ascetic and Brahmin **philosophers of the view of annihilation**, indeed declaring on seven grounds the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated⁷⁷. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of the view of annihilation, indeed declare on seven grounds the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins exist with views in this way asserting thus: ‘Indeed, my friend, because this individual form is composed of the four great elements⁷⁸ and is born coming from mother and father, it becomes annihilated and is destroyed as this body breaks up, no longer existing beyond death; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated. Thus another says to him: ‘Indeed there is, my friend, that individual which thou asserts, yet I declare the end of existence is not like that; and certainly not, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated. Surely there is, my friend, another individual divine form belonging to the domain of sensual pleasure, feeding on material nutrients—that thou neither exists knowing nor exists seeing—that I myself know and I see. Then from which, my friend, this individual becomes annihilated and is destroyed as this body breaks up, no longer existing beyond death; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated. Thus another says to him: ‘Indeed there is, my friend, that individual which thou asserts, yet I declare the end of existence is not like that; and certainly not, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated. Surely there is, my friend, another individual divine form mind-made complete in all its parts, with non-defective faculties—that thou neither exists knowing nor exists seeing—that I myself know and I see. Then from which, my friend, this individual becomes annihilated and is destroyed as this body breaks up, no longer existing beyond death; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated. Thus another says to him: ‘Indeed there is, my friend, that individual which thou asserts, yet I declare the end of existence is not like that; and certainly not, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated. Surely there is, my friend, another individual in every respect passing beyond the perception of form, non-attentive to varying perception and where perception of sense-reaction has disappeared, entering the space-infinity-plane of “infinite space!”—that thou neither exists knowing nor exists seeing—that I myself know and I see. Then from which, my friend, this individual becomes annihilated and is destroyed as this body breaks up, no longer existing beyond death; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated. Thus another says to him: ‘Indeed there is, my friend, that individual which thou asserts, yet I declare the end of existence is not like that; and certainly not, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated. Surely there is, my friend, another individual in every respect passing beyond the space-infinity-plane, entering the consciousness-infinity-plane of “infinite consciousness!”—that thou nei-

ther exists knowing nor exists seeing—that I myself know and I see. Then from which, my friend, this individual becomes annihilated and is destroyed as this body breaks up, no longer existing beyond death; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated. Thus another says to him: ‘Indeed there is, my friend, that individual which thou asserts, yet I declare the end of existence is not like that; and certainly not, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated. Surely there is, my friend, another individual in every respect passing beyond the consciousness-infinity-plane, entering the nothingness-plane of “no thing exists!”—that thou neither exists knowing nor exists seeing—that I myself know and I see. Then from which, my friend, this individual becomes annihilated and is destroyed as this body breaks up, no longer existing beyond death; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated. Thus another says to him: ‘Indeed there is, my friend, that individual which thou asserts, yet I declare the end of existence is not like that; and certainly not, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated. Surely there is, my friend, another individual in every respect passing beyond the nothingness-plane, entering the neither-perception-nor-non-perception-plane of “this is peaceful, this is sublime!”—that thou neither exists knowing nor exists seeing—that I myself know and I see. Then from which, my friend, this individual becomes annihilated and is destroyed as this body breaks up, no longer existing beyond death; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual become thoroughly eradicated!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of the view of annihilation, indeed declare on seven grounds the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin philosopher of the view of annihilation, who declares the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated, certainly all of these do so because of these seven grounds or a certain one; with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: ‘these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!’ and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from ‘the others’, knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is.

⁷⁷ *Sato sattassa ucchedam* (Pali) means: consciousness (*sato*) + of living beings (*sattassa*) + annihilated (*uccheda*). Here the Buddha makes the point that while the consciousness (perception) of individuality is eventually annihilated, the consciousness (perception) of the self as the one undivided Universal Spirit of God is not annihilated. Thus a belief in the complete annihilation of consciousness is deemed a wrong view

⁷⁸ *Cātumahābhūtika* (Pali) means: the four (*cātu*) + great (*mahā*) + elements (*bhūtika*): earth, water, fire and air

14. There are, monks, some ascetic and Brahmin **philosophers of the view nirvāṇa is realizable in this world**, indeed declaring on five grounds the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa⁷⁹. And owing to what and beginning with what do these honorable ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of the view nirvāṇa is reali-

zable in this world, indeed declare on five grounds the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa? In this world, monks, certainly some ascetics or Brahmins exist with views in this way asserting thus: ‘Indeed, my friend, because this individual endowed with and possessing certainly the five cords of sensual desire⁸⁰ satisfies one’s senses; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual in this world obtain and realize supreme nirvāṇa!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa. Thus another says to him: ‘Indeed there is, my friend, that individual which thou asserts, yet I declare the end of existence⁸¹ is not like that; and certainly not, my friend, to that extent does this individual in this world obtain and realize supreme nirvāṇa. But why is this so? Because, my friend, sensual desire is impermanent, painful and subject to change, and those subject to change arise in different states of sorrow, lamenting, suffering, melancholy and unrest. Now because of this, my friend, that individual separated from sensual desire and separated from unwholesome things, accompanied by reasoning and contemplation—abides within the first meditation, calm and detached, and easily experiences rapture; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual in this world obtain and realize supreme nirvāṇa!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa. Thus another says to him: ‘Indeed there is, my friend, that individual which thou asserts, yet I declare the end of existence is not like that; and certainly not, my friend, to that extent does this individual in this world obtain and realize supreme nirvāṇa. But why is this so? Because in that state the reasoning and contemplation of this and of that, is certainly declared to be gross⁸². Now because of this, my friend, that individual suppressing reasoning and contemplation with one-pointed concentration [free from thought]—abides within the second meditation, having stilled and calmed his inner thoughts by not reasoning and contemplating, and easily experiences the rapture of samādhi; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual in this world obtain and realize supreme nirvāṇa!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa. Thus another says to him: ‘Indeed there is, my friend, that individual which thou asserts, yet I declare the end of existence is not like that; and certainly not, my friend, to that extent does this individual in this world obtain and realize supreme nirvāṇa. But why is this so? Because in that state the arrival of rapture exhilarating the thoughts of this and of that, is certainly declared to be gross. Now because of this, my friend, that individual with the desire for rapture waning after abiding in the resignation of the reflecting mind—he abides within the third meditation, having calmed the mental body and because of that perceives Higher Knowledge and easily understands, declaring “Resign the active mind to dwell within at ease!”; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual in this world obtain and realize supreme nirvāṇa!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa. Thus another says to him: ‘Indeed there is, my friend, that individual which thou asserts, yet I declare the end of existence is not like that; and certainly not, my friend, to that extent does this individual in this world obtain and realize supreme nirvāṇa. But why is this so? Because in that state the reflection of pleasant thoughts of this and of that, is certainly declared to be gross. Now because of this, my friend, that individual having previously abandoned pleasure and displeasure and overcome joy and suffering—he abides within the fourth meditation, having calmed and purified the mind to a state of equanimity [neither pleasant nor unpleasant], with both now extinguished; indeed, my friend, to that extent does this individual in this world obtain and realize supreme nirvāṇa!’ In this way some declare the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetic and Brahmin philosophers of the view nirvāṇa is realizable in this world, indeed declare on five grounds the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin philosopher of the view nirvāṇa is realizable in this world, who declares the consciousness of living beings in this

world can realize supreme nirvāṇa, certainly all of these do so because of these five grounds or a certain one; with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: ‘these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!’ and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from ‘the others’, knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is.

⁷⁹ *Nirvāṇa* means: the extinguishment of the three fires of ‘craving’, ‘ill-will’ and ‘ignorance’ at an “individual level” with the five aggregates of physical form, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, and consciousness remaining. This is what the Buddha describes as the ‘nirvāṇa element with residue remaining’, and states in the Udāna: “It is the destruction of lust, hatred, and delusion in him that is called the nirvāṇa element with residue remaining.” The supreme nirvāṇa is not only the extinguishment of the three fires, but the cessation of the five aggregates and is thus the cessation (or the blowing out) of the conjured individuated self. The supreme nirvāṇa, which is the final nirvāṇa (or parinirvāṇa) of the individual, cannot be realized in this world, and not even by the Buddha Himself, who delays final nirvāṇa to awaken every part of the one ‘undivided’ natural luminosity of mind, which are representative of all aspects of Vajrasattva (the Son). As revealed in The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines, even if a conjured individuated being actualizes within their own mind the supreme nirvāṇa (parinirvāṇa), they, like a wingless bird will fall from the heights of enlightenment to the level of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. And why is this so? Because the supreme nirvāṇa (or parinirvāṇa) can only be actualized when every part of the Son is fully and completely awakened

⁸⁰ This speculative theory asserts the craving for sense desire is extinguished after being wholly satisfied (*paricāreti*). The five cords of sensual desire are forms cognizable and desired by the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue and the body

⁸¹ *Neso natthīti* (Pali) means: not (*na*) + that (*eso*) + not (*na*) + existing (*atthi*) + like (*iti*): meaning the [end of] existence is not like that

⁸² *Oḷārikam* (Pali) means: gross, coarse, of the material; that being of a lower spiritual vibration and density

15. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetics and Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the future, who aim towards speculating about the future, indeed in reference to the future declare forty-four grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin belonging to a kalpa in the future, who aim towards speculating about the future, indeed in reference to the future, on which their various dispositions are bestowed; certainly all of these do so because of these forty-four grounds or a certain one, with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: ‘these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!’ and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from ‘the others’, knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is. Certainly it is because of this, monks, that these ascetics and Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the future and belonging to a kalpa in the past and belonging to a kalpa in the future and past, who aim towards specu-

lating about the future and past, indeed in reference to the future and past declare sixty-two grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin belonging to a kalpa in the future or belonging to a kalpa in the past or belonging to a kalpa in the future and past⁸³, who aim towards speculating about the future or past, indeed in reference to the future or past, on which their various dispositions are bestowed; certainly all of these do so because of these sixty-two grounds or a certain one, with none existing outside from these. It is, monks, as the Tathagatā knows clearly: ‘these tenets of speculative philosophy grasped in this way, succumbed to in this way, having a certain destiny in this way, thus lead to the condition of rebirth!’ and on account of knowing this thing of worship, the Tathagatā has a higher understanding; and knowing this thing of worship never takes it up, and in not taking it up is surely separate from ‘the others’, knowing the extinguishment of the fires. Of sensations, he worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation and in knowing their real essence, monks, the Tathagatā is liberated without grasping. Indeed this, monks, are those profound things difficult to see and difficult to know, pure and exalted and beyond logic, subtle and comprehensible only to the wise, which the Tathagatā having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge makes known, for which one should speak and talk correctly of this Tathagatā’s splendor—as it really is.

⁸³ Here the Buddha makes the points: (1) those who speculate about the past or future are focusing their mind from the present moment (Reality) to a moment in time that doesn’t exist (unreality), (2) those who speculate about, and thus worship, the past or future (the space-time continuum), experience involuntary reincarnation through propensities; this is because our thoughts create our reality, and whatever the mind attaches to is mentally re-created, (3) the Truth of Reality (Dharma) can only be experienced through direct Knowledge, not through speculation, and any attempt to speculate on Reality is a decision to “go it alone” and bypass the path of direct Knowledge (the path of omniscience)

TRANSCENDING THE NET OF ‘WRONG’ VIEWS

16. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal, indeed on which they declare on four grounds—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don’t understand—which is only the longing and worry⁸⁴ of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, indeed on which they declare on four grounds—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don’t understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude indeed declare on four grounds that the world is finite or infinite—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don’t understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels, indeed on four grounds—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don’t understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of causeless origination worship individuality and worship the world as originating without a cause, indeed on which they declare on two grounds—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don’t understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the past, who aim towards speculating about the past, indeed in reference to the past declare eighteen grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed—further to

that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don't understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of conscious immortality, indeed declare on sixteen grounds that the conscious individual is immortal—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don't understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of unconscious immortality, indeed declare on eight grounds that the unconscious individual is immortal—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don't understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of neither conscious nor unconscious immortality, indeed declare on eight grounds that the individual, neither conscious nor unconscious, is immortal—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don't understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of annihilation, indeed declare on seven grounds the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don't understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view nirvāṇa is realizable in this world, indeed declare on five grounds the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don't understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the future, who aim towards speculating about the future, indeed in reference to the future declare forty-four grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don't understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the future and belonging to a kalpa in the past and belonging to a kalpa in the future and past, who aim towards speculating about the future and past, indeed in reference to the future and past declare sixty-two grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed—further to that these honorable ascetics and Brahmins are ignorant and don't understand—which is only the longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal, indeed on which they declare on four grounds—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, indeed on which they declare on four grounds—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude indeed declare on four grounds that the world is finite or infinite—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels, indeed on four grounds—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of causeless origination worship individuality and worship the world as originating without a cause, indeed on which they declare on two grounds—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the past, who aim towards speculating about the past, indeed in reference to the past declare eighteen grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of conscious immortality indeed declare on sixteen grounds that the

conscious individual is immortal—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of unconscious immortality indeed declare on eight grounds that the unconscious individual is immortal—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of neither conscious nor unconscious immortality indeed declare on eight grounds that the individual, neither conscious nor unconscious, is immortal—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of annihilation indeed declare on seven grounds the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view nirvāṇa is realizable in this world, indeed declare on five grounds the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the future, who aim towards speculating about the future, indeed in reference to the future declare forty-four grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the future and belonging to a kalpa in the past and belonging to a kalpa in the future and past, who aim towards speculating about the future and past, indeed in reference to the future and past declare sixty-two grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed—that, moreover, is conditioned by contact.

⁸⁴ *Vipphandita* (Pali) means: ‘writhing, twitching, struggle, agitation of mind, fear, worry’ [caused by the condition of craving]. Craving is an expectation, and fear can only enter the mind after an expectation has been formed. The Buddha makes the point that their ignorance is due to their longing and worry of having felt the condition of craving, which propels the mind to “speculate”, “long for”, and “grasp” for something

17. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal, indeed on which they declare on four grounds—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, indeed on which they declare on four grounds—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude indeed declare on four grounds that the world is finite or infinite—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin eel-wrigglers, when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels, indeed on four grounds—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of causeless origination worship individuality and worship the world as originating without a cause, indeed on which they declare on two grounds—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the past, who aim towards speculating about the past, indeed in reference to the past declare eighteen grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of conscious immortality indeed declare on sixteen grounds that the conscious individual is immortal—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of unconscious immortality indeed declare on eight grounds that the unconscious individual is immortal—certainly these exist in the condition in this

way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of neither conscious nor unconscious immortality indeed declare on eight grounds that the individual, neither conscious nor unconscious, is immortal—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of annihilation indeed declare on seven grounds the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view nirvāṇa is realizable in this world, indeed declare on five grounds the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the future, who aim towards speculating about the future, indeed in reference to the future declare forty-four grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the future and belonging to a kalpa in the past and belonging to a kalpa in the future and past, who aim towards speculating about the future and past, indeed in reference to the future and past declare sixty-two grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed—certainly these exist in the condition in this way of not experiencing that peace felt elsewhere. In that place, monks, whenever these ascetic or Brahmin eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal, indeed on which they declare on four grounds; and also whenever these ascetic or Brahmin partial eternalists and partial non-eternalists worship individuality and worship the world as eternal in part and non-eternal in part, indeed on which they declare on four grounds; and also whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of finitude and infinitude indeed declare on four grounds that the world is finite or infinite; and also whenever these ascetic or Brahmin eel-wrigglers, indeed on four grounds when asked a question here and there respond equally with equivocation as wriggling eels; and also whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of causeless origination worship individuality and worship the world as originating without a cause, indeed on which they declare on two grounds; and also whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the past, who aim towards speculating about the past, indeed in reference to the past declare eighteen grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed; and also whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of conscious immortality indeed declare on sixteen grounds that the conscious individual is immortal; and also whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of unconscious immortality indeed declare on eight grounds that the unconscious individual is immortal; and also whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of neither conscious nor unconscious immortality indeed declare on eight grounds that the individual, neither conscious nor unconscious, is immortal; and also whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view of annihilation indeed declare on seven grounds the consciousness of living beings is destroyed, annihilated and eradicated; and also whenever these ascetic or Brahmin philosophers of the view nirvāṇa is realizable in this world, indeed declare on five grounds the consciousness of living beings in this world can realize supreme nirvāṇa; and also whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the future, who aim towards speculating about the future, indeed in reference to the future declare forty-four grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed; and also whenever these ascetics or Brahmins belonging to a kalpa in the future and belonging to a kalpa in the past and belonging to a kalpa in the future and past, who aim towards speculating about the future and past, indeed in reference to the future and past declare sixty-two grounds on which their various dispositions are bestowed—certainly it is because all of these undertake feeling and touching the six sense-impressions⁸⁵—and the experie-

ning of those sensations causes longing, longing causes clinging, clinging causes birth, birth causes rebirth and the arising of old age and death, sorrow, lamenting, suffering, melancholy and unrest. Certainly, monks, when of the six sense-impressions, a monk worships their arising, worships their annihilation, worships their sweetness, worships their misery, worships salvation ~ and in knowing their real essence—and because of this—he has a superior understanding entirely. Indeed, monks, certainly whatever ascetic or Brahmin belonging to a kalpa in the future or belonging to a kalpa in the past or belonging to a kalpa in the future and past, who aim towards speculating about the future or past, indeed in reference to the future or past, on which their various dispositions are bestowed; certainly all of these do so because of these sixty-two grounds and are trapped inside the net⁸⁶—emerging from this place to arise surely stuck, emerging from this place to arise surely trapped inside the net having completely entered into. Just as, monks, either a clever fisherman or a fisherman’s apprentice would spread a fine net over a small lake—of this he is as follows: ‘Surely whichever of these living beings in this lake is gross, all of these will be trapped inside the net—emerging from this place to arise surely stuck, emerging from this place to arise surely trapped inside the net having completely entered into!’; now in the same way, monks, whatever ascetic or Brahmin belonging to a kalpa in the future or belonging to a kalpa in the past or belonging to a kalpa in the future and past, who aim towards speculating about the future or past, indeed in reference to the future or past, on which their various dispositions are bestowed; certainly all of these do so because of these sixty-two grounds and are trapped inside the net—emerging from this place to arise surely stuck, emerging from this place to arise surely trapped inside the net having completely entered into. Monks, as the roots of existence are broken up, the body of the Tathagāta remains. To the extent this [individual] body remains, gods and men likewise perceive him. As the body breaks up with the end of life above, gods and men no longer perceive him⁸⁷. Just as, monks, whatever bunch of mangoes with its stalk cut carries all of the mango fruit which are bound against the stalk, with all of it having that same course; now in the same way, monks, as the roots of existence are broken up, the body of the Tathagāta remains—to the extent this [individual] body remains, gods and men likewise perceive him, as the body breaks up with the end of life above, gods and men no longer perceive him.” Thus spoken, the venerable Ānanda then said to the Bhagavān: “It is wonderful, O Lord, it is marvelous, O Lord; but what, O Lord, is the name of this teaching of the Dharma?” “To thou, Ānanda, I henceforth declare, this teaching of the Dharma conveys surely thus: ‘the Net of Prosperity’ and also, conveys surely thus: ‘the Net of Dharma (Reality)’ and also, conveys surely thus: ‘the Net of Brahma (God)’ and also, conveys surely thus: ‘the Net of Views’ and also, conveys surely thus: ‘the Unsurpassed Victory in Battle!’” Thus did the Bhagavān declare. Delighted, these monks rejoiced at the spoken word of the Bhagavān. And as this explanation to be worshipped was spoken thus, the ten thousand world systems trembled.

⁸⁵ The six sense-impressions (*phassa*) are: (1) sights, (2) sounds, (3) odors, (4) taste, (5) tangibles, and (6) mental phenomena

⁸⁶ *Antojālikatā* (Pali) means: ‘in-netted, trapped inside the net’; referring in this case to the “net of wrong views”

⁸⁷ When the roots of existence are broken up in the lower Creation realms (below the Ābhāsvara worlds) of each mahākalpa (lasting 8.64 million years) to then be re-created in another cycle of existence, the body of the Tathāgata in the realm of ‘relative’ existence remains (and gods and men still perceive Him). As the body of the Tathāgata breaks up (comprised of Vajradhara, Vajrasattva and the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas) with the end of life in the Ābhāsvara worlds and above and the finality of ‘relative’ existence, gods and men no longer perceive Him. This is because, just as mangoes are carried away with the stalk, so too are men and gods of the stalk of the Tathāgata, thus carried away



DHARMAKĀPRĀVARTANA SŪTRA: THE TURNING OF THE WHEEL OF DHARMA

Translation by Maitreya Christos



THE TWELVE ASPECTS OF THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1. [Sūtra begins]—THUS HAVE I HEARD. Once upon a time, the Blessed One was staying at Deer Park in Isipatane near Benares¹. Now there, the Blessed One addressed a group of five monks: “To me, monks, there are two extremes that should never be practiced by one who has gone forth into homelessness to become a monk. What are the two? Whoever has a great longing for happiness arising from sensual pleasure, an attachment to attaching—understand this is wretched, vulgar, common, not venerable, and not endowed with fortune; and whoever has an attachment to self-mortification and suffering²—understand this is not venerable and not endowed with fortune. Indeed monks, in not having approached both extremes—having understood well the middle way of conduct of the Tathāgata who has attained Buddhahood—will your eyes be opened to experiencing direct-Knowledge, a state of inner peace, enlightenment and extinguishment of the fires³. And what, monks, is that middle way of conduct of the Tathāgata who has attained Buddhahood—where your eyes will be opened to experiencing direct-Knowledge, a state of inner peace, enlightenment and extinguishment of the fires? It is this noble eightfold path as follows: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Indeed this, monks, is that middle way of conduct of the Tathāgata who has attained Buddhahood—where your eyes will be opened to experiencing direct-Knowledge, a state of inner peace, enlightenment and extinguishment of the fires. And now, monks, this is **the Noble Truth of suffering**—indeed, birth is suffering; indeed decay is suffering; indeed disease is suffering; indeed death is suffering; indeed associating with the unpleasant is suffering; indeed whatever craving is not obtained, that also, is suffering: in summary, the disturbance of grasping to the five sensory aggregates is suffering⁴. And now, monks, this is **the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering**—it is this craving which leads to rebirth, the rejoicing here and there, accompanied with passionate delight; that is—the craving for sensual pleasure, the craving for rebirth, and the craving for life to end. And now, monks, this is **the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering**—it is that in which all longing has ceased and been forsaken and abandoned: the liberation and freedom from attachment. And now, monks, this is **the Noble Truth of the way of conduct leading to the cessation of suffering**—it is this noble eightfold path as follows: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. *‘This is the Noble Truth of suffering!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past⁵, there arose Vision, there arose Knowledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light. *‘And further, this Noble Truth of suffering is surely that which should be understood completely!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past, there arose Vision, there arose Know-

ledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light. *‘And further, this Noble Truth of suffering is surely that which has been understood completely!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past, there arose Vision, there arose Knowledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light. *‘This is the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past, there arose Vision, there arose Knowledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light. *‘And further, the origin of suffering is surely that which should be renounced!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past, there arose Vision, there arose Knowledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light. *‘And further, the origin of suffering is surely that which has been renounced!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past, there arose Vision, there arose Knowledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light. *‘This is the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past, there arose Vision, there arose Knowledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light. *‘And further, the cessation of suffering is surely that which should be realized!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past, there arose Vision, there arose Knowledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light. *‘And further, the cessation of suffering is surely that which has been realized!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past, there arose Vision, there arose Knowledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light. *‘This is the Noble Truth of the way of conduct, leading to the cessation of suffering!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past, there arose Vision, there arose Knowledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light. *‘And further, the way of conduct leading to the cessation of suffering is surely that which should be cultivated!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past, there arose Vision, there arose Knowledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light. *‘And further, the way of conduct leading to the cessation of suffering is surely that which has been cultivated!’*—In me, monks, of this great thing unheard of in the past, there arose Vision, there arose Knowledge, there arose Insight, there arose Wisdom, and there arose Light.”[⊙]

¹ This is a reference to the present-day City of Benares (Varanasi), regarded as the spiritual capital of India

² This is a reference to those who crave spiritual advancement through the self-infliction of physical bodily pain/harm or extreme asceticism

³ *Nibbāna* (Pali) means (in this context): the first stage of nirvāṇa of the “extinguishment of the three fires of ‘craving’, ‘ill-will’ and ‘ignorance’”

⁴ The five sensory aggregates are: (1) the physical body, (2) feelings, (3) perceptions, (4) formative predispositions, and (5) consciousness

⁵ Here the Buddha provides a detailed account of hearing the Voice of the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas instruct him in all things relating to the four noble truths. This was the original sūtra Śākyamuni Buddha taught after attaining enlightenment

[⊙] These are the twelve great revelations of the Holy Spirit of God revealed to Śākyamuni Buddha in their three times and twelve aspects

2. Monks, as long as my knowledge and vision was not wholly sanctified by these four Noble Truths in this way, [in the three rounds and twelve ways], according to the Reality, neither as such could I, monks, claim perfect Knowledge to all the worlds, including the world of the devas, including the world of Māra, including the world of the gods, and to those born, including the kings and the human beings—as an ‘unsurpassed, perfectly enlightened, fully awakened Buddha!’ Now indeed, monks, on account of my knowledge and vision being wholly sanctified by these four Noble Truths in this way, [in the three rounds and twelve ways], according to the Reality, can I then, monks, claim perfect Knowledge to all the worlds, including the world of the devas, including the world of Māra, including the world of the gods, and to those born, including the kings and the human beings—as an ‘unsurpassed, perfectly enlightened, fully awakened Buddha!’ Thence in worshipping this Knowledge, this vision arose in me: “My deliverance is unshakable ~ this is the last birth ~ there is now no rebirth!” Thus did the Bhagavān declare. Delighted, the group of five

monks rejoiced at the spoken word of the Bhagavān. And then, as this discourse had been spoken of at length, the Dharma Eye⁶ arose within the venerable Kondañña⁷, who was stainless and free from craving: *“Of anything and everything, whatever thing arises—that thing will cease to be!”* And from there, with the Bhagavān turning the wheel of the Dharma, the voice of **earth-bound devas** appeared to these human beings: “In the Deer Park in Isipatane near Benares, the Bhagavān has turned the unsurpassed wheel of the Dharma that cannot be turned back by any ascetic or Brahmin or deva or Māra spirit or god or anyone existing in this world!” Having heard the voice of the earthbound devas, the voice of the **four great deva kings**⁸ appeared to these human beings: “In the Deer Park in Isipatane near Benares, the Bhagavān has turned the unsurpassed wheel of the Dharma that cannot be turned back by any ascetic or Brahmin or deva or Māra spirit or god or anyone existing in this world!” Having heard the voice of the four great deva kings, the voice of the **thirty-three devas** appeared to these human beings: “In the Deer Park in Isipatane near Benares, the Bhagavān has turned the unsurpassed wheel of the Dharma that cannot be turned back by any ascetic or Brahmin or deva or Māra spirit or god or anyone existing in this world!” Having heard the voice of the thirty-three devas, the voice of the **Yāma devas** appeared to these human beings: “In the Deer Park in Isipatane near Benares, the Bhagavān has turned the unsurpassed wheel of the Dharma that cannot be turned back by any ascetic or Brahmin or deva or Māra spirit or god or anyone existing in this world!” Having heard the voice of the Yāma devas, the voice of the **Tusitā devas** appeared to these human beings: “In the Deer Park in Isipatane near Benares, the Bhagavān has turned the unsurpassed wheel of the Dharma that cannot be turned back by any ascetic or Brahmin or deva or Māra spirit or god or anyone existing in this world!” Having heard the voice of the Tusitā devas, the voice of the **Nimmānaratī devas** appeared to these human beings: “In the Deer Park in Isipatane near Benares, the Bhagavān has turned the unsurpassed wheel of the Dharma that cannot be turned back by any ascetic or Brahmin or deva or Māra spirit or god or anyone existing in this world!” Having heard the voice of the Nimmānaratī devas, the voice of the **Paranimmita-vasavattī devas** appeared to these human beings: “In the Deer Park in Isipatane near Benares, the Bhagavān has turned the unsurpassed wheel of the Dharma that cannot be turned back by any ascetic or Brahmin or deva or Māra spirit or god or anyone existing in this world!” Having heard the voice of the Paranimmita-vasavattī devas, the voice of the **Brahmakāyikā devas** appeared to these human beings: “In the Deer Park in Isipatane near Benares, the Bhagavān has turned the unsurpassed wheel of the Dharma that cannot be turned back by any ascetic or Brahmin or deva or Māra spirit or god or anyone existing in this world!” And thus, in that moment, in that instant, in the twinkling of an eye, that voice rose up as far as the Brahma world. Sent in worship, it shook, trembled and quaked the constituents of the ten-thousand worlds, and a boundless great light appeared, exceeding the divine power of the devas. Now then, the Bhagavān breathed forth this deeply felt utterance: “Indeed friends, Kondañña understands! Indeed friends, Kondañña understands!” Thus now, because of this, the venerable Kondañña was thus named here so “Aññāsikondañña—(Kondañña Who Understands)”.

⁶The Dharma Eye is the ‘awakened’ inner spiritual eye penetrating the Reality and Truth of all things

⁷ Kondañña is the name of one of the five ascetic monks who spent six years meditating in the forest with Gautama

⁸ The four great deva kings: (1) Vessavaṇa (north), (2) Virūlhaka (south), (3) Dhatarattha (east), and (4) Virūpakkha (west)



MAHĀ CATTĀRĪSAKA SŪTRA: THE GREAT FORTY [NOBLE AND IGNOBLE PATHS AND SUPPORTS]

Translation by Maitreya Christos



THE TEN NOBLE AND TEN IGNOBLE PATHS

1. [Sūtra begins]—THUS HAVE I HEARD. Once upon a time, the Bhagavān was staying at Jetavana Park in Sāvatti, belonging to Anāthapiṇḍika. Then [in that place] the Bhagavān addressed the monks: “Monks!” “Venerable one!” the monks acknowledged the Bhagavān. Then the Bhagavān said: “Monks, the teacher will point out to you the noble means and requisites of right concentration (samādhi). Now, listen carefully to this with the mind, for the teacher will now thus speak!” “Yes, oh lord!” the monks acknowledged the Bhagavān. Then the Bhagavān said: “And what, monks, are the noble means and requisites of right concentration? They are as follows—right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort and right mindfulness; certainly, monks, these seven constituent parts are what prepares the mind for one-pointedness—and this, monks, is to be spoken of thus: as that noble means, and thus, as that requisite, of right concentration. In this, monks, right view is to be the foregoing constituent part¹. And how, monks, is right view to be the foregoing constituent part? Wrong view is discerned as ‘wrong view!’ and right view is discerned as ‘right view!’—This is to be one’s right view. **And what, monks, is wrong view?** — ‘There is to be no giving, there is to be no sacrifice, there is to be no worship; there is no well done or badly done action bearing fruit; there is no ‘this’ world and no ‘next’ world; there is no existence with spontaneous birth, where there is no mother and no father; there are no ascetics or Brahmins who come to the right path and hold the right view, who worship in ‘this’ world and worship in the ‘next’ world, and having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge², make known!’—This, monks, is wrong view. **And what, monks, is right view?** I declare, monks, there are two kinds of right view—there exists, monks, the right view connected with the outflows³, establishing merit⁴, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth⁵]; and there exists, monks, the right view of the noble constituent supramundane paths⁶, free from the outflows. And what, monks, is right view connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]? ‘There is to be giving, there is to be sacrifice, there is to be worship; there is well done and badly done action bearing fruit; there is ‘this’ world and the ‘next’ world; there is mother and there is father, and there is existence with spontaneous birth; there are ascetics and Brahmins who come to the right path and hold the right view, who worship in ‘this’ world and worship in the ‘next’ world, and having spontaneously realized through direct Knowledge, make known!’—This, monks, is right view connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]. And what, monks, is right view of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows? Indeed monks, it is the noble state of mind; the noble path of the ascetics; the noble path of becoming by way of Knowledge, the faculty of wisdom and the power

of insight; the constituent of enlightenment upon investigation of the Dharma; and the constituent path of right view—this monks, is to be spoken of as the right view of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows. He whoever strives to abandon wrong view, acquiring right view, this exists as one’s right effort. He abiding, abandoning wrong view through mindfulness and acquiring right view through mindfulness, this exists as one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three things that revolve all around and run alongside [one’s right view] are as follows: right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

¹ Right view underpins right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort and right mindfulness

² *Abhiññā* (Pali) means: the six extrasensory powers or supernatural Knowledges, realizing Knowledge of (1) miraculous activities; (2) divine clairvoyance; (3) divine clairaudience; (4) other minds; (5) recollection of past lives; and (6) cessation of contaminants (outflows)

³ *Āsavā* (Pali) means: (literally “leaks”) or the four outflows/inflows or ‘mental defilements or contaminants’ that “intoxicate” and befuddle the mind, including: (1) craving sensory pleasures, (2) craving individual existence, (3) speculation (wrong views), and (4) ignorance

⁴ The establishment of the six transcendent perfections is fundamental to Buddhism. [According to Ārya Asaṅga’s *The Bodhisattva Path to Unsurpassed Enlightenment: The Complete Translation of the Bodhisattvabhūmi*] three of these result in “merit” and include (1) the transcendent perfection of generosity, (2) the transcendent perfection of ethical discipline (morality), and (3) the transcendent perfection of tolerance (patience)

⁵ *Upadhivepakkā* (Pali) means: ripening and decaying (*pakkā*) + (of) attachments that form the foundation of rebirth (*upadhi*)

⁶ Supramundane (*lokuttarā*) means: “transcendental”. Here the Buddha refers to the four ‘supramundane’ constituent paths [of (1) stream-entrant, (2) once-returner, (3) non-returner, and (4) arhat] and their fruition leading to nirvāṇa (being the extinguishment of the three fires)

2. In this, monks, right view is to be the foregoing constituent part. And how, monks, is right view to be the foregoing constituent part? Wrong intention is discerned as ‘wrong intention!’ and right intention is discerned as ‘right intention!’—This is to be one’s right view. **And what, monks, is wrong intention?** Intention for sensory pleasure, intention for ill-will⁷ and intention to cause harm—this, monks, is wrong intention. **And what, monks, is right intention?** I declare, monks, there are two kinds of right intention—there exists, monks, the right intention connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]; and there exists, monks, the right intention of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows. And what, monks, is right intention connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]? Intention of renouncing sensory pleasure, intention to harbor no ill-will, and intention to cause no harm—this, monks, is right intention connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]. And what, monks, is right intention of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows? Indeed monks, it is the noble state of mind; the noble path of the ascetics; the noble path of becoming by way of reasoning, reflecting, and the intention to direct one’s mind; the focusing of the attention of the mind; and the fixing of one’s mind upon the formation of speech—this, monks, is right intention of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows. He whoever strives to abandon wrong intention, acquiring right intention, this exists as one’s right effort. He abiding, abandoning wrong intention through mindfulness and acquiring right intention through mindfulness, this exists as one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three things that revolve all around and run alongside [one’s right intention] are as follows: right view, right effort, and right mindfulness. In this, monks, right view is to be the foregoing constituent part. And how, monks, is right view to be the foregoing constituent part? Wrong speech is discerned as ‘wrong speech!’ and right speech is discerned as ‘right speech!’—This is to be one’s right view. **And what, monks, is wrong speech?** Lying, malicious speech, harsh (unkind) speech, and frivolous (idle) talk—this, monks, is wrong speech. **And what, monks, is right speech?** I declare, monks, there are two kinds of right speech—there exists, monks, the right speech connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [lead-

ing to rebirth]; and there exists, monks, the right speech of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows. And what, monks, is right speech connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]? Refraining from lying, refraining from malicious speech, refraining from harsh (unkind) speech, and refraining from frivolous (idle) talk—this, monks, is right speech connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]. And what, monks, is right speech of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows? Indeed monks, it is the noble state of mind; the noble path of the ascetics; the noble path of becoming by way of keeping away from, refraining from, and certainly abstaining from indulging in⁸ the four wrong actions of speech—this, monks, is right speech of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows. He whoever strives to abandon wrong speech, acquiring right speech, this exists as one’s right effort. He abiding, abandoning wrong speech through mindfulness and acquiring right speech through mindfulness, this exists as one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three things that revolve all around and run alongside [one’s right speech] are as follows: right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

⁷ The definition of ‘ill-will’ is any thought of hatred, animosity, malevolence, spite, revenge and unforgiveness

⁸ *Virati paṭivirati* (Pali) means: abstaining from (*virati*) + indulging in (*paṭivirati*)

3. In this, monks, right view is to be the foregoing constituent part. And how, monks, is right view to be the foregoing constituent part? Wrong action is discerned as ‘wrong action!’ and right action is discerned as ‘right action!’—This is to be one’s right view. **And what, monks, is wrong action?** Harming a living being⁹, taking that which is not given, and sexual misconduct—this, monks, is wrong action. **And what, monks, is right action?** I declare, monks, there are two kinds of right action—there exists, monks, the right action connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]; and there exists, monks, the right action of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows. And what, monks, is right action connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]? Refraining from harming a living being, refraining from taking that which is not given, and refraining from sexual misconduct¹⁰—this, monks, is right action connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]. And what, monks, is right action of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows? Indeed monks, it is the noble state of mind; the noble path of the ascetics; the noble path of becoming by way of keeping away from, refraining from, and certainly abstaining from indulging in the three wrong actions of the body—this, monks, is right action of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows. He whoever strives to abandon wrong action, acquiring right action, this exists as one’s right effort. He abiding, abandoning wrong action through mindfulness and acquiring right action through mindfulness, this exists as one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three things that revolve all around and run alongside [one’s right action] are as follows: right view, right effort, and right mindfulness. In this, monks, right view is to be the foregoing constituent part. And how, monks, is right view to be the foregoing constituent part? Wrong livelihood is discerned as ‘wrong livelihood!’ and right livelihood is discerned as ‘right livelihood!’—This is to be one’s right view. **And what, monks, is wrong livelihood?** Deceiving, flattery, insinuating¹¹, trickery, and coveting to gain acquisitions for oneself—this, monks, is wrong livelihood. **And what, monks, is right livelihood?** I declare, monks, there are two kinds of right livelihood—there exists, monks, the right livelihood connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]; and there exists, monks, the right livelihood of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows. And what, monks, is right livelihood connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]? Here, mon-

ks, a noble disciple having abandoned wrong livelihood, lead's one's life with right livelihood—this, monks, is right livelihood connected with the outflows, establishing merit, and the ripening of attachments [leading to rebirth]. And what, monks, is right livelihood of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows? Indeed monks, it is the noble state of mind; the noble path of the ascetics; the noble path of becoming by way of keeping away from, refraining from, and abstaining from indulging in wrong livelihood—this, monks, is right livelihood of the noble constituent supramundane paths, free from the outflows. He whoever strives to abandon wrong livelihood, acquiring right livelihood, this exists as one's right effort. He abiding, abandoning wrong livelihood through mindfulness and acquiring right livelihood through mindfulness, this exists as one's right mindfulness. Thus these three things that revolve all around and run alongside [one's right livelihood] are as follows: right view, right effort, and right mindfulness. In this, monks, right view is to be the foregoing constituent part. And how, monks, is right view to be the foregoing constituent part? Of this right view, monks, right intention arises; of this right intention, right speech arises; of this right speech, right action arises; of this right action, right livelihood arises; of this right livelihood, right effort arises; of this right effort, right mindfulness arises; of this right mindfulness, right concentration arises; of this right concentration, right insight arises; of this right insight, right liberation arises. Indeed in this way, monks, the disciple attains altogether the food of the eight constituent parts, and the arhat exists, having attained altogether the food of the ten constituent parts¹². And also in this right insight, the many wretched unwholesome things have ceased, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind¹³.

⁹ *Pāṇātipāto* (Pali) means: attacking, destroying, murdering, killing, and harming any form of life or living being

¹⁰ The Buddha describes sexual misconduct (in the the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, AN 10.211) as having intercourse with anyone 'under the protection of father, mother, brother, sister, relatives or clan, or those of the religious community'; or with 'those promised to someone else, protected by law (married), or betrothed to someone else'. Sexual assault is classified as 'harming another being'

¹¹ *Nemittikatā* (Pali) has multiple meanings including: "insinuation" and "fortune telling: prophesizing the future, astrology, numerology, etc." Insinuation means to maneuver (insinuate) oneself into a favorable position, or imply (insinuate) something will or won't happen

¹² The eight (*aṭṭha*) + constituent parts (*aṅga*) attained constitute the "noble eightfold path" of the disciple (meaning right view ... up to right concentration), with the two additional constituent parts of right insight and right liberation constituting the "noble tenfold path" of the arhat

¹³ *Bhāvanāpāripūriṃ* (Pali) means: cultivation of mind by means of thought and meditation (*bhāvanā*) + complete, perfected (*pāripūriṃ*)

THE TEN NOBLE AND TEN IGNOBLE SUPPORTS

4. In this, monks, right view is to be the foregoing constituent part. And how, monks, is right view to be the foregoing constituent part? **Of this right view**, monks, wrong view is to be abolished. And the many wretched unwholesome things, which exist supporting this wrong view, these also are to be abolished. Right view is supported by the many wholesome things, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind. **Of this right intention**, monks, wrong intention is to be abolished. And the many wretched unwholesome things, which exist supporting this wrong intention, these also are to be abolished. Right intention is supported by the many wholesome things, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind. **Of this right speech**, monks, wrong speech is to be abolished. And the many wretched unwholesome things, which exist supporting this wrong speech, these also are to be abolished. Right speech is supported by the many wholesome things, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind. **Of this right action**, monks, wrong action is to be abolished. And the many wretched unwholesome things, which exist supporting this wrong action, these also are to be abolished. Right action is supported by the many wholesome things, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind. **Of this right livelihood**, mon-

ks, wrong livelihood is to be abolished. And the many wretched unwholesome things, which exist supporting this wrong livelihood, these also are to be abolished. Right livelihood is supported by the many wholesome things, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind. **Of this right effort**, monks, wrong effort is to be abolished. And the many wretched unwholesome things, which exist supporting this wrong effort, these also are to be abolished. Right effort is supported by the many wholesome things, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind. **Of this right mindfulness**, monks, wrong mindfulness is to be abolished. And the many wretched unwholesome things, which exist supporting this wrong mindfulness, these also are to be abolished. Right mindfulness is supported by the many wholesome things, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind. **Of this right concentration**, monks, wrong concentration is to be abolished. And the many wretched unwholesome things, which exist supporting this wrong concentration, these also are to be abolished. Right concentration is supported by the many wholesome things, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind. **Of this right insight**, monks, wrong insight is to be abolished. And the many wretched unwholesome things, which exist supporting this wrong insight, these also are to be abolished. Right insight is supported by the many wholesome things, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind. **Of this right liberation**, monks, wrong liberation is to be abolished. And the many wretched unwholesome things, which exist supporting this wrong liberation, these also are to be abolished. Right liberation is supported by the many wholesome things, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind. Thus indeed, monks, there are twenty on the wholesome side and twenty on the unwholesome side¹⁴—the Dharma discourse of the Great Forty has been turned and cannot be turned back by any ascetic or Brahmin or deva or Māra spirit or god or anyone existing in this world.

¹⁴ The great forty are: (1) the ten noble paths (right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration, right insight and right liberation), plus (2) the ten noble path supports, consisting of the many wholesome things, having moved to perfection through the cultivation of the mind, plus (3) the ten ignoble paths (wrong view, wrong intention, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration, wrong insight and wrong liberation), plus (4) the ten ignoble path supports, consisting of the many wretched unwholesome things; being twenty wholesome/twenty unwholesome

IN CONCLUSION

5. Indeed anyone, monks, or ascetic or Brahmin, who censures ‘what ought to be done’ in this Dharma discourse of the Great Forty and rejects ‘what ought to be done’—I should think that of this view of the Dharma—there are ten concomitant justifications why someone of this way of thinking has come to a contemptible condition. Whoever exists worshipping right view¹⁵ by censuring it, those dear ones honor and those dear ones praise ascetics and Brahmins of **wrong view**. Whoever exists worshipping right intention by censuring it, those dear ones honor and those dear ones praise ascetics and Brahmins of **wrong intention**. Whoever exists worshipping right speech by censuring it, those dear ones honor and those dear ones praise ascetics and Brahmins of **wrong speech**. Whoever exists worshipping right action by censuring it, those dear ones honor and those dear ones praise ascetics and Brahmins of **wrong action**. Whoever exists worshipping right livelihood by censuring it, those dear ones honor and those dear ones praise ascetics and Brahmins of **wrong livelihood**. Whoever exists worshipping right effort by censuring it, those dear ones honor and those dear ones praise ascetics and Brahmins of **wrong effort**. Whoever exists worshipping right mindfulness by censuring it, those dear ones honor and those dear ones praise ascetics and Brahmins of **wrong mindfulness**. Whoever exists worshipping right concentration by censuring it, those dear ones honor and those dear ones praise

se ascetics and Brahmins of **wrong concentration**. Whoever exists worshipping right insight by censuring it, those dear ones honor and those dear ones praise ascetics and Brahmins of **wrong insight**. Whoever exists worshipping right liberation by censuring it, those dear ones honor and those dear ones praise ascetics and Brahmins of **wrong liberation**. Anyone, monks, or ascetic or Brahmin, who censures ‘what ought to be done’ in this Dharma discourse of the Great Forty and rejects ‘what ought to be done’—I should think of this view of the Dharma—that these are the ten concomitant justifications why someone of this way of thinking has come to a contemptible condition. And also, monks, those from Okkala, [Vassa and Bhañña], who had the doctrine of non-causality, the doctrine of non-action and the doctrine of nihilism, even so, they would never censure ‘what ought to be done’ in this Dharma discourse of the Great Forty and reject ‘what ought to be done’—I should think not. Thou, what is the reason? Indeed out of fear of anger, censure and scorn!” Thus did the Bhagavān declare. Delighted, these monks rejoiced at the spoken word of the Bhagavān.

¹⁵ *Sammādiṭṭhiñce* (Pali) means: right (*sammā*) + view (*diṭṭhi*) + to worship (*añc*) ... up to (*sammāvimuttiñce*) means: right (*sammā*) + liberation (*vimutti*) + to worship (*añc*). Here the Buddha points out the trap many disciples fall into of subtly criticizing (censuring) the teachings of the Dharma in their heart, while following (worshipping) the path of the Buddha. Rejection (non-implementation) of the teaching of the noble eight-fold path [or aspects of it] is the result of criticizing it (censuring it) at the ego-mind level. It is an act of defiance, where the listener (disciple) is effectively saying by their actions, “Your path is not for me Buddha” or “I will do it my way Buddha, not your way”. This level of defiance is equivalent to one’s lack of right effort and right mindfulness to implement each of the eight constituents parts, due to one’s lack of right view



DHAMMIKA SŪTRA: THE DHARMA CODE OF CONDUCT [FOR THE DISCIPLE]

Translation by Maitreya Christos



DHAMMIKA QUESTIONS THE BUDDHA

1. [Sūtra begins]—THUS HAVE I HEARD. Once upon a time, the Bhagavān was staying at Jetavana Park in Sāvatti, belonging to Anāthapiṇḍika. Now then [on account of it], the lay-follower Dhammika, together with five hundred lay-followers (Upāsako), approached where the Bhagavān was—and having approached and saluted the Bhagavān, sat down on one side. Then seated to one side, the lay-follower Dhammika addressed the Bhagavān in verse: “I ask thou Gautama of all-encompassing wisdom, how is a disciple to act virtuously; either for one who has gone forth from the home into homelessness, or a householder who admires as a lay-follower? For thou of this world and the world of the devas, have the most clear understanding of the courses of existence and the destination of worship¹; and with none equal in skill and intent for good, thou indeed are the [enlightened] Buddha who speaks supremely. Thou have perfect insight of the Dharma, having made known out of compassion for [all] living beings; the Omniscient One who is free of all coverings and corruption, stainless and illuminating the whole world. Indeed amongst those who have come to worship ~ the king of the Nāga, named Erāvaṇo ~ having heard of ‘the conqueror’; he also took thy counsel and did understand, and thus having heard the virtuous was delighted with what was shown. And also thy king Vessavaṇa-Kuvera², attained the Dharma after inquiring respectfully ~ and upon his enquiring thou did speak well the wise, and also having heard he was delighted with what was shown. To me anyone who teaches heretical views of the doctrine of the code of morality—either Ājīvakā’s or be it those Nigaṇṭha’s³; they never go beyond into full understanding of it all, standing still and proceeding to the bottom in a quickly moving way⁴. To me any Brahmin who has a doctrine of the code of morality, and [also] whoever is an old Brahmin in tranquility; they all expect some good from you, and also the others who deem and assert their views. Indeed this Dharma is subtle and delightful, by which Bhagavān thou articulate well, and furthermore all of us wishing to hear just that, thou supreme [enlightened] Buddha—indeed speak as asked. All the monks and myself are seated down together, and also the lay-followers to hear only the Truth; to hear and awaken to the stainless Dharma, spoken well up to the deva Vāsava.^{5”}

¹ *Parāyaṇa* (Pali) means: ending in, destination, the final end (*parāyaṇa*) + to worship (*añc*)

² *Vessavaṇa* (Pali) is the patronymic version of the Hindu name Kuvera, used in Buddhism. In this sūtra both names are used to honor this being, as one of the four great heavenly kings, who is in charge of protecting the northern direction of the earth

³ Ājīvakā’s are a class of naked ascetic (followers of Makkhali Gosāla) who believe there is no cause of depravity or purity within human beings. Nigaṇṭha’s are another class of naked ascetic, who support affirming all philosophies and at the same time denying all philosophies

⁴ *Vajantam* (Pali) means: to go, proceed, to get (*vaj*) + the bottom, the lowest, the lower intestinal bowels (*antam*)

⁵ Vāsava is a name attributed to Sakka (Pali) or Śakra (Sanskrit) who is ‘King of the gods’, mentioned in The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines. According to the Dīgha Nikāya he is called this because he is Chief of the Vasū (the eight elemental gods of earth, fire, wind, space, sun, sky, moon, stars), which are part of the thirty-three deva gods in the Trāyastriṃśa heaven. Vāsava is in charge of this heaven

THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE MONK

2. “Listen to me monks as I announce this for you, the worshipping of that ‘Dharma dhutaṃ’⁶ and also the act of going about entirely; in proper order [the code of conduct⁷] for a monk who has left the home life, then to make use of this seeing the benefit wisely. Indeed a monk should not wander about at the wrong time, into a village in search of alms in the dark; indeed do not walk about in the dark but remain close to the Saṅgha ~ hence the enlightened never go wandering about at the wrong time⁸. Sights and sounds and tastes and smells, the sense-impressions of living beings who become drowsy after they have eaten; having removed thoroughly this longing for all these things, enters at the right time in the morning for his meal. Having at that time received the lump of food the monk blesses it⁹, and having gone aside sits down in a place of solitude alone; thinking inwardly with the thoughts never on the outer, then goes forth with the self kindly disposed. And also if he converses with disciples, or someone of the others or monks ~ thou does recite—bringing forth the Dharma, never slandering and also never censuring others. Indeed some retaliate with doctrine, yet never praise these of little wisdom; from here and from there they let loose on the Saṅgha, yet move away from those in that place holding this state of mind. With lump of food and abode for sleeping and seat for worship¹⁰, use water blessed on the upper robe to wash away any defilement¹¹; and upon hearing the Dharma expounded by the Buddha, and having considered—make use of this supreme wisdom as disciple. Thus indeed with lump of food and bedding and seat, and water on the upper robe to wash away any defilement—doing this thing thoroughly and completely—for as the lotus plant has droplets of water¹², so is the monk the same.

⁶ *Dharma dhutaṃ* (Pali) means: one who shakes off the obstacles to spiritual progress (*dhutaṃ*) using the Dharma

⁷ *Iriyāpathaṃ* (Pali) means: the four correct deportments of the body [of walking, sitting, standing and lying down]

⁸ *Vikāle* (Pali) means: “wrong time”, however literally means: separation, away from (*vi*) + the dark (*kāla*)

⁹ *Piṇḍañca* (Pali) means: alms given as ‘lump of food’ (*piṇḍa*) + to worship, to honor, to bless (*añc*)

¹⁰ *Sayanāsanañca* (Pali) means: sleeping, bedding, lying down (*sayana*) + seat (*āsana*) + to worship (*añc*)

¹¹ *Āpañca saṅghātirajūpavāhanam* (Pali) means: water (*āpa*) + to worship, to honor, to bless (*añc*) + upper robe (*saṅghāti*) + impurity, defilement (*raja*) + washing away (*upavāhanam*). Here the Buddha is indicating that monks are to bless themselves daily with water to wash away any defilement of the spirit. This act of blessing oneself with water is a common religious practice in Christianity, with the baptism of water

¹² The leaves of the lotus plant are known for their self-cleaning properties. Known as the “lotus effect”, the water droplets on the leaves are able to pick up dirt particles due to their nanoscopic architecture. Just as the placement of water droplets on the leaf surface is a mechanism for the lotus plants’ self-purification process, in the same way splashing water drops [which have been blessed] on the surface of the monks [upper robe] is a mechanism for his self-purification process. One blesses water “thoroughly and completely” through great intentional prayer to be ‘purified’

THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE LAY-FOLLOWER

3. Now I shall speak to you lay-followers, on the virtuous ways a disciple should be acting; indeed this can never be obtained together with one’s possessions, which is attained by monks following the Dharma exclusively¹³. Never kill a living being and be not the cause of killing, and never allow others to be killed¹⁴; laying aside the rod well and truly for all living beings¹⁵, being calm in the world towards whoever is strong and whoever is afraid¹⁶. From there [taking that which is not given] should be avoided, whatever and wherever the disciple perceives; never taking [of all kinds of things] that which is known to be stolen, avoiding completely taking that which is not given. Living an unchaste

life should be avoided, for it is like burning in a pit full of cinders to the wise; but if a celibate life has not arisen, never transgress with another's wife. Whether having entered a public house or having entered the company of others, certainly one should never say a lie to another; and never proclaim [knowing all kinds of things have been proclaimed¹⁷], with falsehood to be completely avoided. The drinking and worshipping of intoxicants¹⁸ should never be practiced, by any lay-follower who delights in this thing; never making others drink [knowing the various kinds of drink], lest he discover that which is maddening. Because of drunkenness the foolish act wickedly, causing others to do also and the people to become slothful¹⁹; thus this endeavor of demerit is to be forsaken, that which is maddening and stupefying and pleasing to the foolish. Never kill a living being and never take that which is not given, never say a lie and never be one who drinks intoxicants; the unchaste life of sexual intercourse should be abstained from, and food should not be eaten at the wrong time at night²⁰. Never wear flower garlands and never go about with perfume, using the ground as a bed with only a mat to sleep on²¹—indeed it is said these are the eight constituent parts of the day of observance²², which this Buddha [who conquered suffering] has made known. And indeed on that account this day of observance is to be visibly observed, worshipped on the fourteenth, the fifteenth and the eighth; a wondrous visible worshipping of this mind becoming bright²³, endowed with the eight constituent parts—it is thoroughly perfect in appearance. And thereupon in the morning after observing the day of observance, takes food and takes drink to the monks in the Saṅgha; and with mind purified gives thanks in respect, sharing that which is suitable to the wise. Of this Dharma one should support mother and father, engaging in trade that is lawful; being restrained and content with little—this lay-follower does his duty, going forth to the devas named the Radiant Ones!²⁴

¹³ Here the Buddha instructs lay-followers that letting go of all attachment to their possessions (as a householder) is a prerequisite to fully acquiring the virtuous qualities of a disciple. If a disciple remains attached to their possessions, they will invariably revert to non-virtuous behavior

¹⁴ *Ānujañña/Anujānāti* (Pali) means: 'to consent, to give permission, to grant, to allow'. Thus in this context, the Buddha is indicating the person has the power to grant, allow or give [silent or open] consent to such a killing [such as the killing of an unborn child or during genocide]

¹⁵ Here the Buddha instructs lay-followers never to use physical violence (such as a rod) as a means of punishment

¹⁶ Here the Buddha instructs lay-followers to remain calm and 'equipoised' (*santi*) whether dealing with a strong, powerful personality [who may seek to terrify or intimidate] or whether dealing with a frightened, agitated or hysterical personality

¹⁷ *Bhaṇe* (Pali) means: to interject with a proclamation, to proclaim one's own opinion. It is a term used to describe how a king would speak to his subjects when he would say, "I say; look here." and is a form of ego-grandstanding

¹⁸ Here the Buddha instructs lay-followers to abstain from partaking of all intoxicating substances, such as wine, liquor

¹⁹ *Pamatte* (Pali) means: negligent, slothful, indifferent; thus on the path of 'mindlessness and heedlessness'

²⁰ *Rattiṃ na bhujjeyya vikālabhojanam* (Pali) means: night (*rattiṃ*) + never (*na*) + should eat (*bhujjeyya*) + wrong time (*vikāla*) + food (*bhojanam*). Thus the Buddha instructs it is permissible to eat food during daylight hours

²¹ *Santhata* (Pali) means: 'covering, rug or mat' and *chamā* (Pali) means: 'the earth or the ground'. *Māla* (Pali) means: 'garland of flowers' and 'mud, dirty surface'. Here the Buddha instructs lay-followers to abstain from "adornments of the body" [such as perfumes and decorative items]. At a deeper level, mala means "impurity" and is associated with the three root stains of greed, hate, and ignorance

²² *Uposatha* (Pali) means: (literally) 'fasting', however is recognized as the day of observance or the Sabbath day

²³ *Pāṭihāriyapakkhañca pasannamānaso* (Pali) means: wondrous, marvelous (*pāṭihāriya*) + visible, clear (*pakkha*) + to worship (*añc*) + become bright, purified, clear, virtuous (*pasanna*) + mind (*māna*) + this (*so*) [as a result of observing the three days of observance]

²⁴ The devas (or spiritual beings) of the heavenly realms are known as Radiant Ones. Here the Buddha instructs lay-followers they will become a deva of the heavenly realms (a Radiant One) by following this virtuous code of conduct



CAKKAVATTI-SĪHANĀDA SŪTRA: THE LION'S ROAR OF THE WHEEL-TURNING KING

Translation by Maitreya Christos



THE WHEEL-TURNING KING

A wheel-turning king (or wheel ruler) is a great bodhisattva being who has reached the first of the ten ārya bodhisattva levels¹. According to Ārya Asaṅga—a monk of great virtue who was transported to the Tuṣita heaven by the next Buddha to appear on earth (the bodhisattva Maitreya), “ ... the [bodhisattva] who is established on this [pleasurable state], mostly becomes a wheel ruler who is lord of the Rose Apple continent in rebirth after rebirth. Having become free of all forms of the stain of stinginess, he is a master at removing the stinginess that is possessed by [others] ... ”² All human beings incarnate into the Rose Apple continent of the Desire Realm (Kāmadhātu), governed by the demon Māra (Satan)—for they have eaten of the forbidden fruit of the knowledge of good and evil³ ~ that is, judging things as either good ‘causing craving’ or bad ‘causing aversion’, resulting in dependent origination and suffering. This “original sin” is the duality consciousness mentioned in the *Book of Genesis 2:17—3:22* in the Old Testament, which God warned: “From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat ~ for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die”. Having thus eaten, God said: “Behold, the man has become like one of Us ~ knowing good and evil ~ and now he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever.” The Tree of Life is the non-duality consciousness of judging everything as a “blessing”, and neither good nor bad, and thus remaining non-attached and without clinging and suffering on the non-dual path of Buddhahood. As the great bodhisattva being matures from the first to the second of the ārya bodhisattva levels [according to Ārya Asaṅga], “ ... he is mostly reborn as a wheel ruler with dominion over all four continents [of the Desire Realm], and to a great degree causes beings to turn away from immorality and the non-virtuous action-paths and to take up the virtuous action-paths. It should be understood that his powers are ten times greater than they were during the previous [pleasurable ‘bodhisattva’ state].”⁴ It is here the great bodhisattva being has reached the level known as “superior morality”, where every aspect of the impurity of ‘immorality’ has been thoroughly and completely eliminated. Here the great bodhisattva being, [whether on the first or second ārya bodhisattva level], having been entrusted with dominion over one or four continents as a wheel-turning king (or wheel ruler), is able to move about the continent or continents on the wheel-turning jewel (otherwise known as the MerKaBa Light Body), through the continual turning of the wheel of Dharma. Only by continually relying on the wheel of Dharma through his faith and reliance on the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani wisdom buddhas (the woman jewel), on not on his own personal views and interpretations, will the standing position of the wheel turning jewel (representing the union of the upper pyramid of Vajradhara and the lower

pyramid of Vajrasattva) remain in its standing position as a symbol of his power to govern as the Living Bodhisattva-Christ. It is here he roars the lion's roar as the 'king of the jungle', for he is "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS".

¹ The ten ārya bodhisattva levels and their two preliminary stages are revealed in Ārya Asaṅga's *The Bodhisattva Path to Unsurpassed Enlightenment: The Complete Translation of the Bodhisattvabhūmi*, II.4.4 (Translated by Artemus B. Engle)

² Page 536, *The Bodhisattva Path to Unsurpassed Enlightenment: The Complete Translation of the Bodhisattvabhūmi*, II.4.4

³ The Aggañña Sūtra reveals how sentient beings [in the beginning] fell into the Desire Realm of material existence by judging differences

⁴ Page 542, *The Bodhisattva Path to Unsurpassed Enlightenment: The Complete Translation of the Bodhisattvabhūmi*, II.4.4

⁵ Book of Revelations 19:11, [of Christ] "... And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

THE CHARIOT OF FIRE: THE WHEEL-TURNING
KING'S MERKABA LIGHT BODY

A wheel-turning king (or wheel ruler or sage-like ruler) moves about using the mechanism of their MerKaBa Light Body, which is a great vehicle of light or 'chariot of fire'. There are four types of wheel rulers: (1) a golden wheel ruler (or universal sage-like ruler) who has spiritual dominion over the four continents of the Desire Realm (Kāmadhātu) including the continents of Jambudvīpa (the Rose Apple continent), Pūrvavideha, Aparagodānīya and Uttarakuru; (2) a silver wheel ruler who has spiritual dominion over the continents of Jambudvīpa, Pūrvavideha, and Aparagodānīya; (3) a copper wheel ruler who has spiritual dominion over the continents of Jambudvīpa and Pūrvavideha; and (4) an iron wheel ruler who has spiritual dominion over the continent of Jambudvīpa. These wheel rulers (cakkavattin⁶) and their chariots are described as follows in the *Sūtra on the Implications without Bounds*: "If there are people who wish to quickly realize the teaching of this extremely profound and unsurpassed sūtra of the universal vehicle on *implications without bounds*, then they will be able to rapidly attain the unexcelled, correct, and all-embracing, enlightenment. The Buddha having said these words, the earth shook in six kinds of ways ... thirty-two thousand completely evolved bodhisattvas ... entered into the perfect absorption of all the implications without bounds ... This was likewise so for universal sage-like rulers whose chariot wheels [made of gold] roll everywhere without hindrance. This was also likewise for the lesser sage-rulers whose chariot wheels roll everywhere without hindrance over their respective continents⁷—[including] the sage-like rulers whose chariot wheels are made of silver, and the sage-like rulers whose chariot wheels are made of iron, along with the other sage-like rulers [whose chariot wheels are made of copper]." A golden wheel ruler is a great bodhisattva being (who has achieved a minimum of the second ārya bodhisattva level) who embodies into a landscape of suffering where immorality is prevalent and has "dominion over all four continents". Dominion over all four continents means: 1. He has attained self-mastery relating to the physical body, the emotional body, the mental body and the Truth body; 2. He has dominion (power of God) over all four corners of the earth (north, south, east and west) as a morally stainless representative of the Christ consciousness (Universal Son of God/Vajrasattva); and 3. He has dominion (power of God) over all four continents (subdivisions) of the Desire Realm (Kāmadhātu), governed by the demon Māra (Satan). Taking embodiment in male form, he is known as a golden wheel ruler or wheel-turning king (or universal sage-like king), that is: 1. He rules with dominion over earth as a representative of the true King on earth, the Christ consciousness, turning the Wheel of Dharma by instructing humanity how to live a morally and spiritually flawless life, and 2. He turns the oscillating pyramidal wheels of his golden wheel jewel (his MerKaBa Light Body Vehicle) to move about the earth on his chariot of fire, directed solely by the Spirit of God. His dominion over the four corners of earth, his four lower bodies, and the Desire Realm (Kāmadhātu) are represented and flanked on his MerKaBa Light Body Vehicle by: 1. The *lion*, symbolizing the King of the jungle, that being

the Christ consciousness amongst the jungle of humanity caught in the brambles; 2. The *cherub*, symbolizing he has attained the protection of God’s angels on High, principally Archangel Michael and Metatron, 3. The *ox*, symbolizing he is an instrument of God’s power and strength in unerringly spreading the Dharma teachings, and 4. The *eagle*, symbolizing he has attained spiritual freedom from the clutches of Māra through the lion, cherub and ox trifecta and comes as a great bodhisattva being with a mission to awaken all sentient beings. This earthly mission of the golden wheel ruler (and lesser wheel rulers) ~ for all wheel rulers are an embodiment of the Living Bodhisattva-Christ ~ was most notably seen in the examples of the wheel ruler’s Elijah and Jesus Christ. In the *Book of Ezekiel*, Elijah describes how the Spirit of God in the form of the wheel jewel descended upon him and lifted him up to deliver the Word of God to the immoral: “Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst... from within it came the likeness of four living creatures... each had the face of a cherub, each had the face of a lion on the right side, each had the face of an ox on the left side, and each had the face of an eagle... Wherever the Spirit wanted to go, they went, because there the Spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the Spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels... When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army... Then the Spirit entered me... and I heard Him spoke to me... “Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me;”... “And go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,’ whether they hear, or whether they refuse.” Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a great thunderous voice: “Blessed is the glory of the LORD from His place!” I also heard the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, and a great thunderous noise. So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away... As for their appearance, all four looked alike—as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went toward any of their four directions... and their whole body, with their back, their hands, their wings, and the wheels that the four had, were full of eyes all around. As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing, “The Whirling Wheel.””⁸ Here the prophet Elijah⁹ describes the four living creatures of the lion, cherub, ox and eagle existing within two wheels, that is “a wheel within a wheel” oscillating and whirling at incredible speeds to produce Infinite Light. This account closely resembles Gautama Buddha’s “The Lion’s Roar of the Wheel-Turning King Sūtra” (translated below), where humanity is visited during each consecutive eon by an earthly spiritual king, known as a golden wheel ruler, traveling on his chariot of fire to spread the Dharma (God’s Truth) to the immoral. In this sūtra, the Buddha reveals three phases as follows relating to the earth’s past, present and future: 1. In the ancient past civilization was governed by consecutive golden wheel rulers, for the Dharma was worshipped by humanity and their lifespan was 80,000 years. Then over time [due to pride and arrogance] earthly rulers started worshipping their own ideas and not the Dharma, leading to a global decline and non-adherence to the Dharma, which continues to the present and will descend even further, when eventually human lifespan will decline to 10 years; 2. To help reverse this global decline in morality, God sends a golden wheel ruler during each consecutive eon and periodically a Buddha will appear; 3. In the distant future humanity [after descending to a lifespan of 10 years] will gradually take hold of the Dharma again—and over the course of time will return to a lifespan of 80,000 years. It is at this time when the golden wheel rulers are governing the civilization of earth once again that the Buddha Maitreya appears.

⁶ *Cakkavattin* (Pali) or *Chakravartin* (Sanskrit) means: ‘Wheel ruler’, ‘Wheel-turner’ or ‘Wheel-turning king’; translated also as ‘Sage-like ruler’

⁷ *The Sūtra on the Implications without Bounds* is the first of the three sūtras of the *Lotus Sūtra* trilogy. This excerpt was taken from “The Dharma Flower Sūtra (the Lotus Sūtra) Seen Through the Oral Transmission of Nicheren” [Translation by Martin Bradley]

⁸ The Book of Ezekiel 1:4-10:13. In the original Hebrew translation Elijah heard the name of the wheels called “galgal”, which means “a wheel, whirl, whirlwind, whirling or rapid turning wheel”. The MerKaBa Light Body Vehicle is identified by one pyramid spinning clockwise and the other counter-clockwise at incredible speeds to produce Infinite Light. The whirling of these pyramids appears as a “wheel within a wheel”

⁹ In the Book of Ezekiel the MerKaBa Light Body Vehicle is described as a chariot of fire: “When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?” “Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied. “You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not.” As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.”

BE UNTO YOURSELF AN ISLAND

1. [Sūtra begins]—THUS HAVE I HEARD. Once upon a time, the Blessed One was staying amongst Magadhans in Mā-tulā. Then he spoke: “Monks!” “Venerable Sir!” the monks replied, and the Blessed One said: “Monks, be unto yourself an island, be unto yourself a refuge with no other refuge. Let the Dharma be your island, with the Dharma as your refuge, and with no other refuge. And how does a monk abide within himself as an island, as a refuge unto himself, with no other refuge; and how does a monk abide with the Dharma as his island, with the Dharma as his refuge, with no other refuge? Here, a monk [having put aside craving and aversion for the world] abides fervently, wholly aware and mindful, observing the body as the body... [having put aside craving and aversion for the world] abides fervently, wholly aware and mindful, observing the feelings as the feelings... [having put aside craving and aversion for the world] abides fervently, wholly aware and mindful, observing the mind as the mind... [having put aside craving and aversion for the world] abides fervently, wholly aware and mindful, observing the dharmas as the dharmas¹⁰. That is how a monk abides within himself as an island, with himself as a refuge, with no other refuge. [Thus] abide with the Dharma as your island, with the Dharma as your refuge, with no other refuge. Monks, keep your field for action to the sphere of activity of our departed ones. In keeping your field for action to the sphere of activity of our departed ones, Māra will not find you when he descends upon you and Māra will find no foothold in your consciousness. Monks, it is by acquiring the roots of wholesome thoughts that this merit thus grows.”

¹⁰ In material existence there is only (1) the physical body, (2) the mind, (3) the feelings, and (4) dharma/phenomena. The Buddha teaches we are to abide within ourselves as an island in relation to these four material compositions; where instead of developing ‘craving’ in relation to any of these, and instead of developing ‘aversion’ in relation to any of these, we are to develop pure equanimity of mind by merely observing these four material compositions. Here the Dharma (Reality) is our island, not these four material compositions. As Māra can only operate in the sphere of material compositions, detaching ourselves mentally and emotionally from these four material compositions is the ‘sphere of activity’ of our departed ones (our spiritual forefathers), where Māra can find no foothold in our consciousness. These are the four applications of mindfulness

THE ANCIENT PAST

2. “In the ancient past, monks, there was a king named Daḷhanemi¹¹, a Wheel-Turner, a lawful and righteous king¹², victorious over the four corners of the earth—having obtained in his country a secure and stable realm, he was endowed with the seven royal jewels. These seven jewels are as follows, that is to say—the Wheel Jewel¹³, the Elephant Jewel¹⁴, the Horse Jewel¹⁵, the Gem Jewel¹⁶, the Woman Jewel¹⁷, the Lord Protector Jewel¹⁸, and the seventh, the Spiritual Advisor Jewel¹⁹. Indeed, and to this, he had more than a thousand disciples, valiant and heroic in form, who overcame enemy armies²⁰. Having conquered this earth encompassed by the oceans, peacefully and righteously [by the Law of Dharma], he inhabited the life of a householder. Now then, monks, King Daḷhanemi, after the elapse of many years, many centuries, and many millennia, addressed a certain man: “Hello you there man, whenever you

would see the divine Wheel Jewel draw back from its standing position and disappear, then inform me at once.”

“Yes, devā!” Indeed, monks, this man promised King Daḷhanemi. Now he saw, monks, after the elapse of many years, many centuries, and many millennia that the divine Wheel Jewel drew back from its standing position and disappeared. Because of having seen this, he then approached King Daḷhanemi. Having approached King Daḷhanemi, he then said: “Look, deva, you should know the divine Wheel Jewel has drawn back from its standing position and disappeared!” Now then, monks, King Daḷhanemi sent for his foremost disciple, a young boy, and then he said: “My young boy, dear monk, it is said the divine Wheel Jewel has drawn back from its standing position and disappeared. Now, more than that, I have learned that when the divine Wheel Jewel has drawn back from its standing position and disappeared, the king who sets the Wheel turning, on account of it now [disappearing], this long-time king will cease to exist as one in this life. But now, after enjoying my human pleasures, it is now time to seek my divine pleasures. Come thou young boy, dear monk, take over and protect this earth surrounded by the oceans. As for myself, I will shave off the beard and hair of my head and cover with the clothing of the saffron robes and renounce the home life for the homeless state to become a monk thoroughly in the right way! Now then, monks, having thoroughly instructed the young boy, his foremost disciple, in kingship, King Daḷhanemi shaved off his beard and hair of his head and covered with the clothing of the saffron robes and renounced the home life for the homeless state to become a monk. And indeed, seven days after the Royal Seer went forth to become a monk, the divine Wheel Jewel disappeared. Now then, monks, because of this a certain man approached the head-anointed²¹ Kshatriya King. Having approached the head-anointed Kshatriya King, he then said: “Look, deva, you should know the divine Wheel Jewel has disappeared! Now then, monks, the head-anointed King Kshatriya was upset the divine Wheel Jewel that existed had disappeared and experienced great sadness. Because of this, he then approached the Royal Seer. Having approached the Royal Seer he then said: “Look, deva, you should know the divine Wheel Jewel has disappeared!” With this being said, monks, the Royal Seer then spoke the following to the head-anointed King Kshatriya: “Now, thy dear monk, do not be upset that the divine Wheel Jewel that existed has disappeared. Do not experience great sadness, dear monk, for these divine Wheel Jewel’s are never inherited from your father²². Come now, thy dear monk, only by following the Ārya Bodhisattva code of conduct²³ will the continuous turning of the Wheel keep on turning. Indeed further to this, the standing position of the continuous turning of the Wheel exists only because of these Ārya Bodhisattva codes of conduct—and will keep on existing when you observe the fast day of the fifteenth day [of each lunar month], when you bathe the head by observing the eight precepts²⁴ and have arrived at the supreme terrace of enlightenment²⁵—the divine Wheel Jewel will reappear as your mind awakens; having a thousand spokes²⁶, rim and hub, as you fully complete all deeds!” “Thou deva, but what is the path of the Wheel-Turning Ārya Bodhisattva?” “Certainly, thy dear monk, it is on account of depending only on the Dharma, honoring the Dharma, giving instruction on the Dharma, revering the Dharma, devoting yourself to the Dharma, worshipping the Dharma, having the Dharma as your flag, the Dharma as your banner, having the Dharma as your Lord, being righteous [according to the Dharma Law], arranging as a ward shelter and protection for your householders, armies, kshatriya (nobles), vassal lords, Brahmin housemasters, town and country folk, monks and Brahmins, and animals and birds. And do not, dear monk, behave unjustly towards those you have conquered. And to those, dear monk, the conquered poor who may be agitated, bestow upon these human beings blessings of wealth and riches. And to those monks and Brahmins, dear monk, who have conquered and vigilantly abstained from pride and lust, who are established in patience and gentle and meek, one who has mastered himself through moderation, one who has extinguished the three fires²⁷ through moderation, at the right moment in time draw near and question and examine them: “What, venerable sir,

is a virtuous action? What is a sinful action? What is censurable? What is not censurable? What should be practiced? What should not be practiced? Which actions of mine maybe harmful and cause suffering for a long time? Or else which actions of mine maybe beneficial and cause happiness for a long time?” Thus, having heard which sinful actions should be conquered that cause attachment—because of having accepted that, you should keep going in the duty of virtue. Indeed this thing, dear monk, is that Ārya Bodhisattva Wheel-Turning path!” “Yes, devā!” Now, monks, the head-anointed King Kshatriya promised the Royal Seer to follow the Ārya Bodhisattva code of conduct and turn the continuous turning of the Wheel. And as he did so, by following the Ārya Bodhisattva code of conduct to keep the continuous turning of the Wheel existing—by observing the fast day of the fifteenth day [of each lunar month], by bathing the head through observing the eight precepts, and having arrived at the supreme terrace of enlightenment—by fully completing all deeds, the divine Wheel Jewel reappeared; having a thousand spokes, rim and hub.

¹¹ Da|hanemi means “fast, strong and steady wheel”, indicating this king is a metaphorical Wheel Ruler of the past

¹² A lawful king indicates these ancient Wheel Rulers of the past held true to the Law of Dharma (God’s Law)

¹³ The “Wheel Jewel” represents the Wheel Ruler’s MerKaBa Light Body Vehicle (Chariot of Fire)

¹⁴ The “Elephant Jewel” represents the Wheel Ruler’s total recall/remembrance of the Dharma

¹⁵ The “Horse Jewel” represents the Wheel Ruler’s liberation and divine power and drive to liberate and free humanity

¹⁶ The “Gem Jewel” represents the Wheel Ruler’s embodiment of God’s Diamond-Being (Vajrasattva/the Son of God)

¹⁷ The “Woman Jewel” represents the Wheel Ruler’s wisdom, being always guided by the Holy Spirit of the five dhyani buddhas. The Bāla Paṇḍita Sūtra states: “The women jewel (as the five dhyani buddhas) appears to the wheel-turning King. Monks, when it is cool, her limbs are warm, when it is warm, her limbs are cool (representing equanimity). Her body exudes the fragrance of sandalwood (representing the path of self-purification) and her mouth has the scent of lotuses (for she expounds in-depth the bodhisattva path of the Lotus Sūtra). Monks, she rises before the wheel-turning King and retires after him (representing the five dhyani buddhas were in place before God created the Universal Son of God, to support the Son, and will dissolve only after the Son of God aspect is dissolved). Monks, she is eager to serve, agreeable in conduct and sweet in speech.”

¹⁸ The “Lord Protector Jewel” represents the Wheel Ruler’s army of spiritual protectors to subdue and overpower Māra’s army of demons. Note: *Gahapati* (Pali) means Lord/Commander who seizes a demon, or any being or object having hold over man

¹⁹ The “Spiritual Advisor Jewel” represents the Ārya Bodhisattva-Buddha (such as Maitreya) who overshadows and instructs the Wheel Ruler

²⁰ Enemy “alien” armies is a reference to the opposite of Dharma teachings, i.e. those who side against the Dharma

²¹ Head anointed means he is anointed as a king only in the physical sense, not in the spiritual sense, not having yet become a Wheel Ruler

²² Here the Buddha reveals the divine wheel jewel (the MerKaba Light Body Vehicle) is never inherited from one’s father, but only actualized by following the Ārya Bohisattva code of conduct. In this instance father means “spiritual teacher” (i.e. the Royal Seer) and also the Father-Creator

²³ The code of conduct of the Ārya Bodhisattva is outlined extensively in Ārya Asaṅga’s *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (Translated by Artemus B. Engle)

²⁴ The eight precepts are revealed in the *Dhammika Sūtra: The Dharma Code of Conduct [for the Disciple]*

²⁵ A great bodhisattva being stands on the “terrace of enlightenment”—not yet fully enlightened, but standing close nearby

²⁶ As the mind awakens it becomes more and more connected to the ‘one and only’ Tathāgata, which is likened to a great wheel ~ with the hub representing Vajradhara (the dharmakāya) and the five dhyani wisdom buddhas (the samboghakāya); the circumference representing Vajrasattva (the nirmāṇakāya); and the thousand spokes representing the thousand buddhas of this Auspicious Eon who will embody upon the earth

²⁷ The three fires or poisons to be extinguished are greed (craving), hatred (aversion) and ignorance (delusion)

3. Having seen—this occurred to the head-anointed King Kshatriya: “Now indeed I have heard, that when the head-anointed King Kshatriya—by observing the fast day of the fifteenth day [of each lunar month], by bathing the head through observing the eight precepts, and having arrived at the supreme terrace of enlightenment—by fully completing all deeds, that when the divine Wheel Jewel reappears [having a thousand spokes, rim and hub], that he is to become a Wheel-Turning king! Indeed then, surely I’m now a Wheel-Turning king!” Now then, monks, the head-anointed King Kshatriya, having definitely risen above his attachments through his agreeable actions, having taken with his hand a golden vase, sprinkled a water dedication over the Wheel Jewel: “Go forth Wheel Jewel and continue in

existence—become the conquering Wheel Jewel!” Indeed, monks, that Wheel Jewel then moved in the **eastern direction** and the Wheel-Turning king followed behind together with his general and four-fold army (of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen). And now, monks, whatever region the Wheel Jewel found a true support (of followers) to abide within the Ārya holy state, the Wheel-Turning king approached together with his general and four-fold army. Moreover, monks, the Wheel-Turning king—who now, having approached these deviating kings of the eastern direction—called out to them in this way: “Never kill a living being, never take that which is not given, never behave desiring the sinful way of life, never be one who speaks falsely, never drink spirituous liquor, and purify and be frugal with what you have eaten!”²⁸ And monks, these kings of the eastern direction who had previously deviated [from the Dharma], now became subjects (vassal lords) of the Wheel-Turning king. Now monks, that Wheel Jewel then arose and having entered across the eastern ocean, proceeded in the **southern direction** and the Wheel-Turning king followed behind together with his general and four-fold army (of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen). And now, monks, whatever region the Wheel Jewel found a true support (of followers) to abide within the Ārya holy state, the Wheel-Turning king approached together with his general and four-fold army. Moreover, monks, the Wheel-Turning king—who now, having approached these deviating kings of the southern direction—called out to them in this way: “Never kill a living being, never take that which is not given, never behave desiring the sinful way of life, never be one who speaks falsely, never drink spirituous liquor, and purify and be frugal with what you have eaten!” And monks, these kings of the southern direction who had previously deviated [from the Dharma], now became subjects (vassal lords) of the Wheel-Turning king. Now monks, that Wheel Jewel then arose and having entered across the southern ocean, proceeded in the **western direction** and the Wheel-Turning king followed behind together with his general and four-fold army (of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen). And now, monks, whatever region the Wheel Jewel found a true support (of followers) to abide within the Ārya holy state, the Wheel-Turning king approached together with his general and four-fold army. Moreover, monks, the Wheel-Turning king—who now, having approached these deviating kings of the western direction—called out to them in this way: “Never kill a living being, never take that which is not given, never behave desiring the sinful way of life, never be one who speaks falsely, never drink spirituous liquor, and purify and be frugal with what you have eaten!” And monks, these kings of the western direction who had previously deviated [from the Dharma], now became subjects (vassal lords) of the Wheel-Turning king. Now monks, that Wheel Jewel then arose and having entered across the western ocean, proceeded in the **northern direction** and the Wheel-Turning king followed behind together with his general and four-fold army (of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen). And now, monks, whatever region the Wheel Jewel found a true support (of followers) to abide within the Ārya holy state, the Wheel-Turning king approached together with his general and four-fold army. Moreover, monks, the Wheel-Turning king—who now, having approached these deviating kings of the northern direction—called out to them in this way: “Never kill a living being, never take that which is not given, never behave desiring the sinful way of life, never be one who speaks falsely, never drink spirituous liquor, and purify and be frugal with what you have eaten!” And monks, these kings of the northern direction who had previously deviated [from the Dharma], now became subjects (vassal lords) of the Wheel-Turning king. Then monks, now that the Wheel Jewel had conquered the ignorance of the earth encompassed by the oceans, having returned to the royal city of the Wheel-Turning king through the gate of the inner city—before the Hall of Justice—methinks the Wheel Jewel that stood in the royal palace, stamped with eyes²⁹, appeared beautiful.

²⁸ *Bhuñjathā* (Pali) means to “purify, cleanse and be frugal”; that being to purify food with a prayer/blessing

²⁹ *Akkhāhatam* (Pali) means *āhatam* “stamped” *akkhā* “that which has eyes”. This description of the Wheel Jewel (Chariot of Fire) being adorned/stamped with eyes is identical to Elijah’s description in the Book of Ezekiel (1:4): “the Spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels... As for their appearance, all four looked alike—as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went toward any of their four directions... And their whole body, with their back, their hands, their wings, and the wheels that the four had, were full of eyes all around.”

THE PRESENT DECLINE

4. Furthermore, monks, so did the second Wheel-Turning king... furthermore, monks, so did the third Wheel-Turning king... furthermore, monks, so did the fourth Wheel-Turning king... furthermore, monks, so did the fifth Wheel-Turning king... furthermore, monks, so did the sixth Wheel-Turning king... furthermore, monks, so did the seventh Wheel-Turning king, who after the elapse of many years, many centuries, many millennia, addressed a certain man: “Hello you there man, whenever you would see the divine Wheel Jewel draw back from its standing position and disappear, then inform me at once.” “Yes, devā!” Indeed, monks, this man promised the Wheel-Turning king. Now he saw, monks, after the elapse of many years, many centuries, and many millennia that the divine Wheel Jewel drew back from its standing position and disappeared. Because of having seen this, he then approached the Wheel-Turning king. Having approached the Wheel-Turning king, he then said: “Look, deva, you should know the divine Wheel Jewel has drawn back from its standing position and disappeared!” Now then, monks, the Wheel-Turning king sent for his foremost disciple, a young boy, and then he said: “My young boy, dear monk, it is said the divine Wheel Jewel has drawn back from its standing position and disappeared. Now, more than that, I have learned that when the divine Wheel Jewel has drawn back from its standing position and disappeared, the king who sets the Wheel turning, on account of it now [disappearing], this long-time king will cease to exist as one in this life. But now, after enjoying my human pleasures, it is now time to seek my divine pleasures. Come thou young boy, dear monk, take over and protect this earth surrounded by the oceans. As for myself, I will shave off the beard and hair of my head and cover with the clothing of the saffron robes and renounce the home life for the homeless state to become a monk thoroughly in the right way! Now then, monks, having thoroughly instructed the young boy, his foremost disciple, in kingship, the Wheel-Turning king shaved off his beard and hair of his head and covered with the clothing of the saffron robes and renounced the home life for the homeless state to become a monk. And indeed, seven days after the Royal Seer went forth to become a monk, the divine Wheel Jewel disappeared. Now then, monks, because of this a certain man approached the head-anointed Kshatriya King. Having approached the head-anointed Kshatriya King, he then said: “Look, deva, you should know the divine Wheel Jewel has disappeared! Now then, monks, the head-anointed King Kshatriya was upset the divine Wheel Jewel that existed had disappeared. Experiencing great sadness, he then, furthermore, did not approach the Royal Seer to ask about the continuous turning of the Wheel or the Ārya Bodhisattva code of conduct. He ruled the province just by his own knowledge and understanding—and that in ruling the province by his own knowledge and understanding, he did not join with that Ārya Bodhisattva code of conduct just as the kings of the past had done in ancient times, to keep the continuous turning of the Wheel in existence. Now then, monks, the assembly of privy councilors, a great number of treasurers, the royal bodyguards, the gatekeepers, and those whose living is made by charms and spells, assembled before King Kshatriya and then said: “Surely, deva, in ruling the province with just your own knowledge and understanding, you are not joining with that Ārya Bodhisattva code of conduct just as the kings of the past have done in ancient times, to keep the continuous turning of the Wheel in existence. Indeed, deva, there are those to be found, conquered—who worship [the Dharma] only—consisting of the assembly of privy councilors, a great number of treasurers, the royal bodyguards, the gatekeepers, and those

whose living is made by charms and spells as well as others, who remember the Ārya Bodhisattva code of conduct for the continuous turning of the Wheel. Come! Thou, deva, ask us about the Ārya Bodhisattva code of conduct for the continuous turning of the Wheel. When you ask us about that Ārya Bodhisattva code of conduct for the continuous turning of the Wheel, we will certainly explain this sāmā!”³⁰ Now, monks, having convened a meeting, King Kshatriya then asked the assembly of privy councilors, a great number of treasurers, the royal bodyguards, the gatekeepers, and those whose living is made by charms and spells about the Ārya Bodhisattva code of conduct for the continuous turning of the Wheel. Having been asked, they certainly did proceed to explain thoroughly the Ārya Bodhisattva code of conduct for the continuous turning of the Wheel. Thus, having heard the righteous path [according to the Dharma], he now arranged [as a ward] shelter and protection, however did not then distribute wealth to the destitute and the poor. In not distributing wealth to the destitute and the poor, poverty became rampant. With poverty having become rampant, a certain man stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given. And so the darkness began. Having been seized, he was presented before the head-anointed King Kshatriya: “This man, deva, stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given!” Thus spoken, monks, the head-anointed King Kshatriya then said to this man: “Look here thy man, is it really true you stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given?” “It is true, devā!” “On account of what?” “Because, deva, I have no livelihood!” Now, monks, the head-anointed King Kshatriya then distributed wealth to that man: “Look here thy man, use this wealth to live by on your own account, to feed and nourish your parents, to feed and nourish your honorable wife and children, and to engage in a business, promoting spiritual welfare to monks and Brahmins with right beneficial alms—which will cause you to establish a path to heaven, resulting in continued happiness in the next world!” “Yes, devā!” Indeed, monks, the man gave his promise to the head-anointed King Kshatriya. Now, monks, another man stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given. And so the darkness began. Having been seized, he was presented before the head-anointed King Kshatriya: “This man, deva, stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given!” Thus spoken, monks, the head-anointed King Kshatriya then said to this man: “Look here thy man, is it really true you stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given?” “It is true, devā!” “On account of what?” “Because, deva, I have no livelihood!” Now, monks, the head-anointed King Kshatriya then distributed wealth to that man: “Look here thy man, use this wealth to live by on your own account, to feed and nourish your parents, to feed and nourish your honorable wife and children, and to engage in a business, promoting spiritual welfare to monks and Brahmins with right beneficial alms—which will cause you to establish a path to heaven, resulting in continued happiness in the next world!” “Yes, devā!” Indeed, monks, the man gave his promise to the head-anointed King Kshatriya. Now, monks, the people of the earth began to hear: “Friend, we have been told that when those who steal a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given—the distribution of wealth from the king will come!” Having heard, this occurred to them: “Well now, perhaps we could steal a number of things from another person and reach out and take that which is not given!” Indeed then, monks, another man stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given. Thus beginning the darkness. Having been seized, he was presented before the head-anointed King Kshatriya: “This man, deva, stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given!” Thus spoken, monks, the head-anointed King Kshatriya then said to this man: “Look here thy man, is it really true you stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given?” “It is true, devā!” “On account of what?” “Because, deva, I have no livelihood!” Now then, monks, this occurred to the head-anointed King Kshatriya: “Surely, if I distribute wealth to the guilty, to whichever person steals a number of things from another

person—with the intention of taking this or that which is not given—this just so will increase that intention. Well now, with a sharpened axe I could curtail this man and destroy the roots and cut off his head at the shoulders!” Then indeed, monks, the head-anointed King Kshatriya commanded his men: “Certainly and on account of this, I say, fasten this man’s hands behind his back with a rope, with strong binding, to be imprisoned and close-shaven—and having done this, lead him by the sound of a harsh drum from street to street, from cross roads to cross roads through the southern gate, and having gone out into the southern city, proceed to curtail this man with a sharpened axe, destroying the roots as you cut off his head at the shoulders!” “Yes, devā!”

³⁰ *Sāmā* (Pali) means: Priyangu creeper, a medicinal plant. This part of the story denotes that when medicine (the Dharma) is given by an unqualified but well-meaning practitioner (such as the privy councilors... up to those whose living is made by charms and spells), instead of receiving the proper instruction from one who is qualified (such as the Royal Seer, who himself was a Wheel-Turner), then disastrous results may follow

5. Now, monks, these men assented to King Kshatriya and fastened the man’s hands behind his back with a rope, with strong binding, to be imprisoned and close-shaven—and having done this, they led him by the sound of a harsh drum from street to street, from cross roads to cross roads through the southern gate, and having gone out into the southern city, proceeded to curtail this man with a sharpened axe, destroying the roots as they cut off his head at the shoulders. Now, monks, the people of the earth began to hear: “Friend, we have been told that when those who steal a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given—the king proceeds to curtail them with a sharpened axe, destroying the roots by cutting off their head!” Having heard, this occurred to them: “Well now, perhaps we can make a sharp weapon, and with that sharp weapon to be made steal a number of things from others—taking that which is not given—and proceed to curtail them with a sharpened axe, destroying the roots as we cut off their heads!” Upon making sharp weapons, they used their sharp weapons they had made to raid and plunder villages, to raid and plunder market towns, to raid and plunder cities, and to raid and rob passersby on the roadway. Whoever they stole a number of things from—taking that which is not given—they proceeded to curtail them with a sharpened axe, destroying the roots as they cut off their head. Certainly in this way, monks, by not distributing wealth to the destitute and the poor, poverty became rampant; when poverty become rampant, taking that which is not given became rampant; when taking that which is not given became rampant, weapons became rampant; when weapons became rampant, killing became rampant; when killing became rampant, the lifespan of humans declined, and their appearance and beauty declined also. As their lifespan declined and appearance and beauty declined, the people of the earth who lived 80,000 years, bore descendants who lived to 40,000 years³¹. When people of the earth lived 40,000 years, monks, a certain man stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given. And so the darkness began. Having been seized, he was presented before the head-anointed King Kshatriya: “This man, deva, stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given!” Thus spoken, monks, the head-anointed King Kshatriya then said to this man: “Look here thy man, is it really true you stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given?” “Surely not, devā!” he spoke radiantly, telling a deliberate lie. Certainly in this way, monks, by not distributing wealth to the destitute and the poor, poverty became rampant; when poverty become rampant, taking that which is not given became rampant; when taking that which is not given became rampant, weapons became rampant; when weapons became rampant, killing became rampant; when killing became rampant, lying became rampant; when lying became rampant, the lifespan of humans declined, and their appearance and beauty declined also. As their lifespan declined and appearance and beauty declined, the people of the earth who lived 40,000 years, bore descendants who lived to 20,000 years. When

people of the earth lived 20,000 years, monks, a certain man stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given. A certain man in darkness³² then informed King Kshatriya: “A man having such-and-such a name, deva, stole a number of things from another person—taking that which is not given!” and so made a slanderous remark. Certainly in this way, monks, by not distributing wealth to the destitute and the poor, poverty became rampant; when poverty become rampant, taking that which is not given became rampant; when taking that which is not given became rampant, weapons became rampant; when weapons became rampant, killing became rampant; when killing became rampant, lying became rampant; when lying became rampant, slanderous speech became rampant; when slanderous speech became rampant, the lifespan of humans declined, and their appearance and beauty declined also. As their lifespan declined and appearance and beauty declined, the people of the earth who lived 20,000 years, bore descendants who lived to 10,000 years. When people of the earth lived 10,000 years, monks, some humans existed as beautiful and some humans were ugly. In truth those human beings who were ugly coveted those beautiful humans and had the conduct of meeting with another person’s wife. Certainly in this way, monks, by not distributing wealth to the destitute and the poor, poverty became rampant; when poverty become rampant, taking that which is not given became rampant; when taking that which is not given became rampant, weapons became rampant; when weapons became rampant, killing became rampant; when killing became rampant, lying became rampant; when lying became rampant, slanderous speech became rampant; when slanderous speech became rampant, sexual misconduct became rampant; when sexual misconduct became rampant, the lifespan of humans declined, and their appearance and beauty declined also. As their lifespan declined and appearance and beauty declined, the people of the earth who lived 10,000 years, bore descendants who lived to 5,000 years. When people of the earth lived 5,000 years, monks, two things became rampant—harsh (unkind) speech and frivolous (idle) talk. As these two things became rampant, the lifespan of humans declined, and their appearance and beauty declined also. As their lifespan declined and appearance and beauty declined, the people of the earth who lived 5,000 years, some bore descendants who lived to 2,500 years and some bore descendants who lived to 2,000 years. When people of the earth lived 2,500 years, monks, coveting and malevolence became rampant. When coveting and malevolence became rampant, the lifespan of humans declined, and their appearance and beauty declined also. As their lifespan declined and appearance and beauty declined, the people of the earth who lived 2,500 years, bore descendants who lived to 1,000 years. When people of the earth lived 1,000 years, monks, heretical views³³ became rampant. When heretical views became rampant, the lifespan of humans declined, and their appearance and beauty declined also. As their lifespan declined and appearance and beauty declined, the people of the earth who lived 1,000 years, bore descendants who lived to 500 years. When people of the earth lived 500 years, monks, three things became rampant—abnormal [lust], excessive [greed] and deviant [morality]. As these three things became thoroughly rampant, the lifespan of humans declined, and their appearance and beauty declined also. As their lifespan declined and appearance and beauty declined, the people of the earth who lived 500 years, some bore descendants who lived to 250 years and some bore descendants who lived to 200 years. When people of the earth lived 250 years, monks, these things were rampant—disrespect toward one’s mother and one’s father, disrespect toward homeless monks³⁴ and the holy life, and never paying respect toward one’s elders and the family. Certainly in this way, monks, by not distributing wealth to the destitute and the poor, poverty became rampant; when poverty become rampant, taking that which is not given became rampant; when taking that which is not given became rampant, weapons became rampant; when weapons became rampant, killing became rampant; when killing became rampant, lying became rampant; when lying became rampant, slanderous speech became rampant; when slanderous speech became rampant, sexual mis-

conduct became rampant; when sexual misconduct became rampant, two things became rampant—harsh (unkind) speech and frivolous (idle) talk; when these two things became rampant, coveting and malevolence became rampant; when coveting and malevolence became rampant, heretical views became rampant; when heretical views became rampant, three things became rampant—abnormal [lust], excessive [greed] and deviant [morality]; when these three things became thoroughly rampant, these things became rampant—disrespect toward one’s mother and one’s father, disrespect toward homeless monks and the holy life, and never paying respect toward one’s elders and the family. When these things become rampant, the lifespan of humans declined, and their appearance and beauty declined also. As their lifespan declined and appearance and beauty declined, the people of the earth who lived 250 years, bore descendants who lived to 100 years.

³¹ This decline in age [from 80,000 to 40,000 years] occurs over the period of many hundreds of thousands of years during a declining era or Ayu-Kalpa. An Ayu-Kalpa is made up of four time periods as follows: 1. Satya Yuga (or Golden Age), lasting 1,728,000 years, where humans are 36 feet high and live 80,000+ years, 2. Treta Yuga (or Silver Age), lasting 1,296,000 years, where humans are 24 feet high and live 10,000 years, 3. Dwapara Yuga (Bronze Age), lasting 864,000 years, where humans are 12 feet high and live 1,000 years, and 4. Kali Yuga (Iron Age), lasting 432,000 years, where humans are 6 feet high and live for 100 years, eventually declining to 10 years.

³² *Tamenam* (Pali) means: darkness, ignorance. *Tamenam aggahesium* means: “And so the darkness began.”

³³ Heretical views oppose the Dharma (God’s Reality), including skepticism, nihilism, eternalism and atheism

³⁴ *Asāmaññatā* (Pali) means: disrespect towards religious mendicant monks who are homeless with begging bowls. This word also means disrespect towards harmony in general; in other words, the deliberate creation of disharmony

THE FUTURE DECLINE

6. There will exist a time, monks, when these descendants of the people of the earth will be 10 years. When people of the earth live 10 years, monks, a girl of 5 years will be a woman of marriageable age. As the people of the earth live 10 years, monks, these tastes will disappear—ghee, butter, oil, honey, sugar (molasses) and salt. As the people of the earth live 10 years, monks, the foremost food will be grain. Just as now, monks, the foremost food is rice and meat; indeed in this very way, monks, when people of the earth live 10 years, the foremost food will be grain. As the people of the earth live 10 years, monks, the ten wholesome action paths will all completely have disappeared and the ten unwholesome action paths will indeed have shone through beyond all measure. As the people of the earth live 10 years, monks, they will never be wholesome and cause wholesome behavior. As the people of the earth live 10 years, monks, there will be those who disrespect one’s mother and one’s father, disrespect homeless monks and the holy life, and never pay respect toward one’s elders and the family—and these will be honored and praised. Just as now, monks, there is both honor and praise for respecting one’s mother and one’s father, respecting homeless monks and the holy life, and paying respect toward one’s elders and the family, indeed in this very way, monks, the people of the earth who live 10 years will be both honored and praised for disrespecting one’s mother and one’s father, disrespecting homeless monks and the holy life, and never paying respect toward one’s elders and the family. As the people of the earth live 10 years, monks, there will be no ‘mother’, or ‘aunt’ or ‘uncle’s wife’ or ‘teacher’s wife’ or ‘guru’s womenfolk’³⁵. This will cause an intermingling of the inhabitants of the world, just like wild goats, pigs, chickens, dogs and jackals. As the people of the earth live 10 years, monks, these humans will feel intense hatred for one another and there will be present an acute wish to cause injury, severe ill-will and excessive thoughts of murder. From mother to son and son to mother, father to son and son to father, brother to sister and sister to brother, there will be present intense hatred, an acute wish to cause injury, severe ill-will and excessive thoughts of

murder. Just as a huntsman, monks, having seen a wild animal, exists present an intense hatred, acute wish to cause injury, severe ill-will and excessive thoughts of murder; indeed in this very way, monks, when people of the earth live 10 years, these humans will feel intense hatred for one another and there will be present an acute wish to cause in-jury, severe ill-will and excessive thoughts of murder—[likewise] from mother to son and son to mother, father to son and son to father, brother to sister and sister to brother, there will be present intense hatred, an acute wish to cause injury, severe ill-will and excessive thoughts of murder. As the people of the earth live 10 years, monks, there will be a sword interval in-between kalpas, lasting 7 days³⁶. They will perceive one another as ‘other beasts’—producing to the fore sharp swords in their hands. When they see one another, they will use their sharp swords to deprive them of life, crying, “That person is a wild beast, that person is a wild beast!” Indeed also, monks, there will be a few humans who think in this way³⁷: “I hope nothing happens to us, or anyone... I hope nothing happens to myself, or anyone. Well then, we could enter a thicket of grass or a jungle thicket, or a thicket of trees or a hard to walk river passage, or a difficult to access mountain range—and nourish and support our life on the roots and fruits in the forest!” Having entered these thickets of grass or jungle thickets, or thickets of trees or hard to walk river passages, or difficult to access mountain ranges—the humans nourished and supported their life on the roots and fruits in the forest. By the elapse of 7 days, having gone forth from the thickets of grass, the jungle thickets, the thickets of trees, the hard to walk river passages, and the difficult to access mountain ranges, those who were of the same peaceful disposition embraced one another with a sigh of relief: “Hooray, friend, humans are alive; hooray, friend, humans are alive!”

³⁵ This denotes there will be no ‘concept’ of mother, aunt, uncle’s wife, teacher’s wife, guru’s womenfolk, etc.

³⁶ This 7-day sword interval indicates the brief period of time “in-between” the end of and the beginning of an antah-kalpa (lasting 8.64 million years). The Buddha refers to this period as *satthantarakappo* (Pali), which means: *satth* (sword) *antara* (in-between) *kappo* (kalpa). As there are three interpretations of the length of an antah-kalpa, one lasting 8.64 million years (Srimad Bhagavatam 3.11.19), another 24,000 years (the Laws of Manu) and another by the Brahma Kumaris as 10,000 years, I asked God during a deep meditation which was correct. Prior to me having calculated the total of 8.64 million years, I was given the figure 4.3 million years for one descending arc (or half of the antah-kalpa)

³⁷ As the consciousness of the average human being will be extremely low during this time, God sends a number of individuals with a higher state of consciousness to repopulate the earth and cause an upward trend in consciousness

THE DHARMA RETURNS

7. Now then, monks, it will occur to these humans in this way: “Indeed, by undertaking such unwholesome things, we have attained the far-reaching destruction of our relatives. So instead we should act wholesomely. What thing is a wholesome action? Well now, we should abstain here and now from this unwholesome thing of taking the life of another living being, and having accepted, keep this as our custom!” Having accepted here and now, abstaining from this unwholesome thing of taking the life of another living being—they did keep this as their custom. And by the undertaking of this wholesome thing, their lifespan increased and appearance and beauty increased. As their lifespan increased and appearance and beauty increased, the people of the earth who lived 10 years, bore descendants who lived to 20 years. Now then, monks, it will occur to these humans in this way: “Indeed, by undertaking wholesome things, our lifespan increased and appearance and beauty increased. Well now, we should abstain from taking that which is not given... abstain from sexual misconduct... abstain from lying... abstain from slanderous speech... abstain from harsh (unkind) speech... abstain from frivolous (idle) talk... renounce coveting... renounce malevolence... renounce heretical views... renounce three things—abnormal [lust], excessive [greed] and deviant [morality]... and further-

more, we should be respecting our mother, respecting our father, respecting homeless monks, respecting the holy life, and paying respect toward our elders and the family—and having accepted these wholesome things, here and now, keep this as our custom!” And they *will* be respecting their mother, respecting their father, respecting homeless monks, respecting the holy life, and paying respect toward their elders and the family—and having accepted these wholesome things, here and now, they did keep this as their custom. And by the undertaking of these wholesome things, their lifespan increased and appearance and beauty increased. As their lifespan increased and appearance and beauty increased, the people of the earth who lived 20 years, bore descendants who lived to 40 years... people of the earth who lived 40 years, bore descendants who lived to 80 years... people of the earth who lived 80 years, bore descendants who lived to 160 years... people of the earth who lived 160 years, bore descendants who lived to 320 years... people of the earth who lived 320 years, bore descendants who lived to 640 years... people of the earth who lived 640 years, bore descendants who lived to 2,000 years... people of the earth who lived 2,000 years, bore descendants who lived to 4,000 years... people of the earth who lived 4,000 years, bore descendants who lived to 8,000 years... people of the earth who lived 8,000 years, bore descendants who lived to 20,000 years... people of the earth who lived 20,000 years, bore descendants who lived to 40,000 years... people of the earth who lived 40,000 years, bore descendants who lived to 80,000 years... and when people of the earth live to 80,000 years, monks, a girl of 500 years will be a woman of marriageable age. When people of the earth live 80,000 years, monks, three afflictions will be present—longing, hunger and old age. As the people of the earth live 80,000 years, monks, in this Jambudvīpa world, they will be spiritually powerful and prosperous—a chicken’s flight between villages, market towns and the royal city. As the people of the earth live 80,000 years, monks, methinks this Jambudvīpa world will be filled with humans without ending, just as a forest of reeds or a forest of rushes. As the people of the earth live 80,000 years, monks, this royal city of Benares will be named Ketumatī³⁸, with the people of the earth strewn over as a great multitude, psychically powerful and prosperous and having plenty of food to eat. As the people of the earth live 80,000 years, monks, there will be 84,000 cities in this Jambudvīpa world with the royal city Ketumatī as its capital. As the people of the earth live 80,000 years, monks, a king will arise in the royal city of Ketumatī named Saṅkha, a Wheel-Turner, a lawful and righteous king, victorious over the four corners of the earth—having obtained in his country a secure and stable realm, he is endowed with the seven royal jewels. These seven jewels will be as follows, that is to say—the Wheel Jewel, the Elephant Jewel, the Horse Jewel, the Gem Jewel, the Woman Jewel, the Lord Protector Jewel, and the seventh, the Spiritual Advisor Jewel. Indeed, and to this, he will have more than a thousand disciples, valiant and heroic in form, who overcome enemy armies. Having conquered this earth encompassed by the oceans, peacefully and righteously [by the Law of Dharma], he inhabits the life of a householder. As the people of the earth live 80,000 years, monks, an Arhat, a Bhagavān, a perfectly Enlightened One named Maitreya will arise in the world—blessed and endowed with special wisdom and virtue, knowing the universe and second to none, the most excellent tamer of man, a teacher of gods and the people of the earth—and a Buddha-Bhagavān. Just as I am now, having arisen in the world—an Arhat, a Bhagavān, a perfectly Enlightened One, blessed and endowed with special wisdom and virtue, knowing the universe and second to none, the most excellent tamer of man, a teacher of gods and the people of the earth—and a Buddha-Bhagavān. Having realized spontaneously through direct Knowledge, he makes known this world with its devas, the forces of Māra, the Brahma world, the monks and Brahmins, and this generation with its gods and the people of the earth; just as I do now, make known this world with its devas, the forces of Māra, the Brahma world, the monks and Brahmins, and this generation with its gods and the people of the earth. He expounds all these things fully and completely in the spirit and in the letter—beautiful in the beginning,

beautiful in the middle and beautiful in the end—revealing clearly the duties and practices of a disciple of the Dharma; just as I do now, expound all these things fully and completely in the spirit and in the letter—beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle and beautiful in the end—revealing clearly the duties and practices of a disciple of the Dharma. He keeps on going before a Saṅgha of thousands of monks; just as I do now, keep on going before a Saṅgha of hundreds of monks. Now then, monks, the king who is named Saṅkha—he will resurrect the palace of King Mahā Panāda³⁹. And having raised the palace and dwelt within, will give it away to the monks, the Brahmins, the traveling beggars, the wayfarers and the paupers; and having given this gift will come into the presence of Maitreya—an Arhat, Bhagavān and perfectly Enlightened One—and having shaven off the beard and hair of his head and covered with the clothing of the saffron robes and renounced the home life for the homeless state, will go forth to become a monk. In going forth to become a monk in this way, he will be sent to dwell as a recluse, far removed and alone, and after a short time of abiding vigilantly and ardently—having renounced the home life for the homeless state for the sake of being a disciple of the clan and fully unsurpassed—had a vision just so of the duties and practices of a disciple of the Dharma ~ and having realized spontaneously through direct Knowledge the Truth, entered therein and abided.

³⁸ *Ketumatī* (Pali) means: *wisdom* (mati) + *ray of light* (ketu), i.e. The City of Wisdom of God's Ray of Light

³⁹ This palace was an ancient relic, having submerged into the Ganges River upon the death of King Mahā

THE BUDDHA CONCLUDES

8. Monks, be unto yourself an island, be unto yourself a refuge with no other refuge. Let the Dharma be your island, with the Dharma as your refuge, and with no other refuge. And how does a monk abide with the Dharma as his island, with the Dharma as his refuge, with no other refuge? Here, a monk [having put aside craving and aversion for the world] abides fervently, wholly aware and mindful, observing the body as the body... [having put aside craving and aversion for the world] abides fervently, wholly aware and mindful, observing the feelings as the feelings... [having put aside craving and aversion for the world] abides fervently, wholly aware and mindful, observing the mind as the mind ... [having put aside craving and aversion for the world] abides fervently, wholly aware and mindful, observing the dharmas as the dharmas. That is how a monk abides within himself as an island, with himself as a refuge, with no other refuge. Monks, keep your field for action to the sphere of activity of our departed ones. In keeping your field for action to the sphere of activity of our departed ones, your lifespan will increase, and also your appearance and beauty will increase, and also your happiness will increase, and also your wealth will increase, and also your power will increase. And what, monks, is **lifespan** for a monk? In this world, monks, a monk possessed with the intention of concentration (samādhi) and right effort on the 'conditioned'⁴⁰—cultivates the basis of spiritual power; possessed with the exertion of concentration (samādhi) and right effort on the 'conditioned'—cultivates the basis of spiritual power; possessed with the heart and mind of concentration (samādhi) and right effort on the 'conditioned'—cultivates the basis of spiritual power; possessed with the contemplative and reflective focus of concentration (samādhi) and right effort on the 'conditioned'—cultivates the basis of spiritual power. He who practices frequently cultivating these four bases of spiritual power—so desiring—can abide for a kalpa (eon) or the remainder of a kalpa. Now this, monks, is lifespan for a monk. And what, monks, is **appearance and beauty** for a monk? In this world, monks, a monk behaves according to the Sīla Precepts⁴¹, abiding restrained in this foremost restraint, undertaking his practice in a suitable place, and realizing the danger, abstains from even the slightest—and having accepted—learns

to train himself in this moral code of conduct. Now this, monks, is appearance and beauty for a monk. And what, monks, is **happiness** for a monk? In this world, monks, a monk separated from sensual desire and separated from unwholesome things, accompanied by reasoning and contemplation—abides within the first meditation, calm and detached, and easily experiences rapture. In this world, a monk suppressing reasoning and contemplation with one-pointed concentration [free from thought]—abides within the second meditation, having stilled and calmed his inner thoughts by not reasoning and contemplating, and easily experiences the rapture of samādhi. With the desire for rapture waning after abiding in the resignation of the reflecting mind—he abides within the third meditation, having calmed the mental body and because of that perceives Higher Knowledge and easily understands, declaring “Resign the active mind to dwell within at ease!” Having previously abandoned pleasure and displeasure and overcome joy and suffering—he abides within the fourth meditation, having calmed and purified the mind to a state of equanimity [neither pleasant nor unpleasant], with both now extinguished. Now this, monks, is happiness for a monk. And what, monks, is **wealth** for a monk? In this world, monks, a monk who abides filled and endowed with the heart and mind of benevolence toward a certain enemy, likewise a second, likewise a third, likewise a fourth, identifying all beings as Himself, above and below, across and everywhere, filled and endowed with the heart and mind of benevolence toward the entire world [free from hate and free from the path of malevolence], develops greatly and abides with unlimited abundance. In this world, monks, a monk who abides filled and endowed with the heart and mind of compassion toward a certain enemy, likewise a second, likewise a third, likewise a fourth, identifying all beings as Himself, above and below, across and everywhere, filled and endowed with the heart and mind of compassion toward the entire world [free from hate and free from the path of malevolence], develops greatly and abides with unlimited abundance. In this world, monks, a monk who abides filled and endowed with the heart and mind of loving kindness toward a certain enemy, likewise a second, likewise a third, likewise a fourth, identifying all beings as Himself, above and below, across and everywhere, filled and endowed with the heart and mind of loving kindness toward the entire world [free from hate and free from the path of malevolence], develops greatly and abides with unlimited abundance. In this world, monks, a monk who abides filled and endowed with the heart and mind of equanimity toward a certain enemy, likewise a second, likewise a third, likewise a fourth, identifying all beings as Himself, above and below, across and everywhere, filled and endowed with the heart and mind of equanimity toward the entire world [free from hate and free from the path of malevolence], develops greatly and abides with unlimited abundance. Now this, monks, is wealth for a monk. And what, monks, is **power** for a monk? In this world, monks, a monk who has liberated the mind through the deliverance of wisdom and is free from the outflows, and having destroyed the outflows, realizes spontaneously through direct Knowledge the Truth, enters therein and abides. Now this, monks, is power for a monk. In this way, monks, I know of no other single power as this, monks, in which to overcome evil—that being, the forces of Māra. On account of undertaking this wholesome Dharma, monks, your merit—in this way—will grow.” Thus did the Bhagavān declare. Delighted, these monks rejoiced at the spoken word of the Bhagavān.

⁴⁰ *Padhāna* (Pali) means: “right effort” and is made up of four basis, including (1) restraint of sensory desire, (2) abandonment of sinful thoughts, (3) regular practice of meditation, and (4) morality (guarding one’s character) in relation to the “conditioned” (*saṅkhāra*)

⁴¹ The Sīla Precepts are the eight precepts outlined in the Khammika Sūtra



TRIKĀYA SŪTRA: THE THREE BODIES

Translation by Buddhavacana Translation Group under the supervision of 84000



1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas! 1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling on Vulture Peak Mountain in Rājgrha. He was accompanied by his entire retinue, by immeasurable, countless bodhisattvas, and by gods and nāgas. They paid respect to the Blessed One and made offerings to him. 1.3 At that time, the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, who was sitting among the retinue, rose from his seat and asked, “Has the Blessed One a body?” The Blessed One replied, “Kṣitigarbha, the Blessed One, the Tathāgata, has three bodies: a dharmakāya, a saṃbhogakāya and a nirmāṇakāya. Son of a noble family, the three bodies of the Tathāgata are these: the pure nature is the dharmakāya, pure meditative absorption is the saṃbhogakāya, and pure conduct is the nirmāṇakāya of all buddhas. 1.4 “Son of a noble family, the dharmakāya of the Tathāgata consists in the fact that he has no nature, just like the sky. His saṃbhogakāya consists in the fact that he comes forth, just like a cloud. His nirmāṇakāya consists in the activity of all the buddhas, the fact that it soaks everything, just like rain.” 1.5 The bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha then asked the Blessed One, “How should one view this explanation on the three bodies of the Blessed One?” The Blessed One answered the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, “Son of a noble family, you should view the three bodies of the Tathāgata in the following way. The dharmakāya should be viewed as that which is the essence of the Tathāgata. The saṃbhogakāya should be viewed as that which is the essence of the bodhisattvas. The nirmāṇakāya should be viewed as that which is the essence of ordinary beings who conduct themselves devotedly. 1.6 “Son of a noble family, the dharmakāya remains the same nature for all the buddhas. The saṃbhogakāya remains the same meditative absorption for all the buddhas. The nirmāṇakāya remains the same awakened activity for all the buddhas.” Son of a noble family, the basis-of-all in its pure state is mirror-like wisdom, the dharmakāya. The afflicted mind in its pure state is the wisdom of equality. Mental cognition in its pure state is discriminating wisdom, the saṃbhogakāya. The five sense cognitions in their pure state are all-accomplishing wisdom, the nirmāṇakāya.” 1.7 The bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha then exclaimed to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, the noble Dharma that I have heard from the Blessed One is excellent, Sugata, really excellent! The Blessed One then declared, “Son of a noble family, whoever fully upholds this Dharma discourse of the Blessed One will obtain merit that is immeasurable, inexpressible, incalculable and unfathomable.” 1.8 When the Blessed One had spoken, the world, including the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the teachings of the Blessed One.

1.9 *This concludes the Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra, “The Three Bodies.”*

