


Buddhist Writings
on
Meditation and Daily Practice:
The Serene Reflection Meditation
Tradition.

Including the complete
Scripture of Brahma's Net.

Rev. Hubert Nearman, O.B.C.,
translator,

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INTRODUCTION.

During the past years I and members of the Community here have endeavoured to produce quality translations of those Scriptures and ceremonies that are used by the Sōtō Zen Buddhist Church; in *The Rules of the Sōtō Church (Sōtōshū Shūsei)* there is a list of names of all Scriptures used by it. Translations of these we have been working on for some time and, with the publication of this new book, many such translations are now finished. The listed works which we have not translated are already available in English from other sources; it is our hope to eventually be able to provide our own translations of these Scriptures as well. Of course it has always been true that the training of Sōtō Zen priests is a highly individual thing between that trainee, as disciple, and his master, however the Scriptures found here, and those others found in *Zen is Eternal Life*, *The Denkōroku or the Record of the Transmission of the Light*, *The Liturgy for the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives for the Laity* and *The Monastic Office* (all published by Shasta Abbey) are essential as the basic teachings of Sōtō Zen which is, in spite of some comments in popular works, a Buddhist denomination. It is also important that all such translations shall be in easily comprehensible

English; I sincerely hope that this and the other books published by Shasta Abbey are not found wanting in this respect. Owing to the state of my eyesight, I have given the job of editing this particular book to Rev. Daizui (Dr. MacPhillamy); the translation was done by Rev. Hubert (Dr. Nearman) with me as consultant along with Rev. Daizui. My very grateful thanks to both Rev. Daizui and Rev. Hubert, and to Rev. Meidō Tuttle for doing the immense labour of getting the work ready for printing.

Rev. P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett,
Shasta Abbey,
Mt. Shasta, California, 96067.

FOREWORD.

By way of introducing this book to the reader I would like to comment on three topics: the material translated, the translator, and the process of translation.

This book is a compendium of new translations of certain works regarded as fundamental texts in the Serene Reflection Buddhist Tradition. They are all to be found in the edition of the Buddhist Canon known as the Chinese *Tripitaka*. While this *Tripitaka* contains myriad texts, all of which are considered genuine voicings of the Dharma, over the thousands of years of Buddhist history certain works have proved particularly helpful and inspiring to those seeking to follow the Buddha's Way. Some of these works, such as the *Lotus Scripture* and the *Scripture of Brahma's Net*, are common to most Mahayana Buddhist traditions; others are particular to the Zen Tradition, such as the writings of the great Japanese masters Dōgen and Keizan and the aphoristic verses of various Chinese Ch'an masters. Yet even this most select list is not viewed as some final and ultimate statement of the Dharma, and many other works have, over time, found a particular niche in the hearts of those who follow the Way by practicing serene reflection meditation. In this

book, we have brought together a selection of shorter texts, which give a sampling of these various categories of Buddhist religious writings.

Buddhist Scriptures in general, and Zen texts in particular, are marked by a high degree of individuality in content, style, and approach: even 'stock' phrases and terms are often redefined by an author, who may give them surprising twists that clarify or deepen their spiritual meaning. At the same time, what they pass on to their intended reader in no way contradicts the fundamental Dharma, or Teaching, of the spiritual Source from which they arise. Thus, readers will find that some point which one text touches upon will be extensively explored in some other text, thereby forming a network that makes the works in this book interlocking and interrelated, the differences among the texts reflecting the skillful means of their various authors.

Concerning the translator, I believe that it is one of the duties of an editorial consultant to assure himself, and thus assure the reader, of the quality of the translator's work. I am pleased to say that throughout my collaboration with Rev. Hubert Nearman (Dr. Mark J Nearman) on this book I have been consistently impressed with his genuine concern for honest and accurate translation and with the uncompromising intellectual and spiritual integrity which he brings to the translation process. I have witnessed the extraordinary care and effort which he takes in considering not only the wording but also the context, style, and nuances of both the original and his translation in order to

convey the full meaning of the original to the reader. Further, he is willing to take whatever time is needed to research the meaning and significance of Chinese and Buddhist terminology to assure that the original is understood and conveyed as completely as possible. His reaction to my editorial comments and questions has also given me great confidence in the accuracy of his work, as he always checks them against the original text whenever the issue I have raised is a doubtful one. In sum, I can recommend Rev. Hubert's translations to the reader with full confidence, as fitting continuations to the tradition of excellence in translation established by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett in the works which we have published previously.

The process of translation is a topic which most of us who read a translated work are apt not to consider. After all, if we can be assured of the competence and integrity of the translator, why think about the issues which he or she must face in doing the work? In our consultations together, Rev. Hubert and I have had occasion to discuss these matters extensively, and I have found that considering them has substantially matured my understanding of both the Scriptures we have worked upon and of Buddhist translations in general. In the hope that the reader may experience a similar benefit, I should like to examine some of these issues here.

Needless to say, the fundamental task of translation is to attempt to render in one language what someone else is saying in another. Nevertheless, however simple this goal seems in its stating, the process by

which it is accomplished is far from simple. While some who are unfamiliar with the translation process may think that it is merely a matter of looking up words in, say, a Chinese-English dictionary, copying out the English equivalents, and then rearranging the English words to conform to English word order, such is hardly sufficient. First of all, as anyone who has looked in a dictionary of his own language discovers, most words, particularly those of common usage, often have several meanings, and a similar feature is to be found within Chinese-English dictionaries. Hence, a merely mechanical 'taking the first equivalent in the dictionary' can lead to gross distortions in a translation. Many of these lexical ambiguities, however, may disappear when the words occur in the context of some phrase or sentence. For instance, which of the several meanings of the word 'beam' is intended by a writer becomes clarified when occurring in some phrase, such as 'a beam of light' and 'the beam in the ceiling'.

While such sentential contexts may solve some aspects of meaning and intention, they do not necessarily solve all, for what 'the author is saying' is not simply a mouthing of a series of words but an attempt to communicate through the medium of language; what he communicates may include such things as experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, intentions, attitudes, values, findings, information, visions, and opinions. Whichever of these, or any other, are present in the original, they need to be conveyed through the translation if it is to be really true to 'what the author is saying'. The skill of a translator is measured

by his or her ability to convey not only the explicit, informational level of meaning but also the richer, intentional aspects of the original. The ultimate goal is to create a translation that will allow readers to have an experience as close as possible to that which they would have were they able to read the original version as it was intended for its particular audience in its time, place, politics and culture.

In order to approach this goal, it is essential, therefore, for the translator to identify accurately the nature of the material being translated, that is, in the present case, the religious and spiritual contexts. Unfortunately, this has not always been done when translations of Buddhist texts into Western languages have been undertaken. Focus on Buddhism among many Western scholars has stemmed from their primary interest in cultural, historical, linguistic, philosophical, Christian theological, or psychological questions, all of which have their scholarly and academic validity. However, when undertaking to translate Buddhist texts, some of these scholars have considered them for what significance they would have within the context of their specialty and have not always recognized the original nature and purpose of Buddhist writings. As a result, they have tried to determine what these texts would mean when considered simply as products of rational discursive thought, personal speculation, or sociopolitical polemics. Such, however, are not the basis from which Buddhist Scriptures arise.

Buddhism is founded upon Shakyamuni's personal spiritual training which led to His direct realizing of

His own Original Nature and what He found out by having that experience. Further, this experience is not considered one unique to Him but is the birthright of all sentient beings, since all, too, have Original Nature—indeed, they are Original Nature, as Great Master Dōgen has commented. How someone goes about preparing himself to have such a realization, how he is to live at one with Original Nature, and what he needs to do to be true to that realization are the primary topics of all Buddhist writings considered to be canonical. Because individuals are at various stages in this process and are coming to the task via different perspectives, Scriptures, to be efficacious, need to be expressed in ways accessible to a variety of personal approaches. Hence, the authors of Scriptural Dharma do not all express spiritual matters in exactly the same way, and yet, if theirs are genuine canonical works, they will have remained true to the Source and can be recognized as such by practitioners of Buddhism. For translators who are not Buddhists or have no interest in the practice of Buddhism, such matters are too often considered irrelevant or secondary. As a result, a work on meditational practices, for instance, may be translated by someone who has no direct experience with meditation and, therefore, can easily overlook the significant spiritual contexts.

It is also important not to go to another extreme by looking upon Buddhist writings as something akin to Western notions of Holy Writ. Because these writings give voice to the Dharma, it is quite proper for

Buddhists to regard them with respect, reverence, and gratitude, but not with blinding awe accompanied by a fear-based attachment to words.

It is equally important to refrain from distorting the material with one's own particular ideas and opinions about the nature of Buddhism: the translator and editors have taken particular care in their attempt to avoid this pitfall and we recommend to the reader to likewise be prepared to "be disturbed by the Truth", as Great Master Dōgen phrased it, when what a Scripture says does not fit neatly into our current notions about Buddhist training.

As the Buddha taught—and as the authors of the texts in this book attest to—the truth of Scripture lies in the proving of it for oneself through direct practice and experience. Each reader must, just as Shakyamuni Buddha did, prove for himself the validity of what the Scriptures teach: wise discernment and true faith, but not blind faith, is what is called for.

It has been the present translator's goal to keep to the Mahayana Buddhist tradition by translating the works from the standpoint of what they mean within the context of Buddhist practice and the experiences that arise from that practice. Hence, these translations are aimed at passing on Scriptural Dharma to the reader who is, to some extent, already personally familiar with Buddhist practice. As a consequence, they are not accompanied either by lengthy commentaries that attempt to explain or summarize the fundamentals of Buddhism (the texts themselves do that) or with footnotes intended to supply scholars with

detailed technical information. Only when it has seemed to the translator and the editors that some notation is essential to understanding a difficult or potentially confusing expression has an introduction or footnote been added. This has been done lest a reader unfamiliar with medieval Chinese inadvertently misunderstand an intention by assuming that some verbal expression has the same meaning now that it had in the original.

The approach employed in this book for translating Buddhist teachings can be traced back to Shakyamuni Buddha. He was once approached by two of His disciples who volunteered to translate His Teachings into Sanskrit, the learned language of Brahman priests and scholars, which, at the time, was accessible only to members of that highest of Indian castes. The Buddha admonished them not to do this but to translate the Teachings into the vernacular languages of those people whom these disciples would contact, since He did not wish His Teachings to lose their common accessibility. In the Mahayana Buddhist tradition the spirit of this advice was maintained but, as Buddhism spread to non-Indic cultures, it was clear that the problems of translating required scholarly skills which were maintained with integrity but which were not allowed to undermine the spiritual meaning of the texts. Thus, translations into Chinese and Tibetan were done by monks who were both trained in scholarship and committed to their spiritual practice, with the intent of not only rendering the intellectual content of the Scriptures accurately but also communicating the spirit

of the Teachings and maintaining the vibrancy of Their original expression. It is the editors' belief that the translator has remained true to this tradition in his preparing the translations found in this book.

The translator and editors are deeply grateful to those members of our monastic Community who read the manuscript. Many of their valuable suggestions were incorporated into the final version.

We pray that these translations will be of use to all those who truly seek the Truth.

Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy,
Second Editor.

TRANSLATOR'S GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

This book is a collection of translations of Scriptures and religious texts taken primarily from the Serene Reflection Meditation (Sōtō Zen) Church's list of Scriptures and other religious texts for daily use.* The basic source for these translations has been the *Taishō Gemban Daizōkyō*, the great compendium of Buddhist Scriptures and other religious writings in Chinese and Japanese, as republished in 1975. All the texts used were in Chinese, either as original works or as translations from Sanskrit. Several of them are central to the ceremonial not only of the Sōtō Tradition but also of other Mahayana Buddhist traditions as well.

Of the ten selections included, the first three are Chapters 14, 16, and 21 from the *Lotus Scripture*, which are recited during the year at special ceremonies. These, along with *The Scripture of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva*, which is recited as part of the daily

* As published in the 1970 edition of *Sōtōshū Shūsei*, edited by the Religious Studies Section (Tokyo: Sectarian Affairs Department, Sōtō Church), p. 198. An annotated copy of the full list is given on pp. xxv–xxx.

monastic office, are considered the four key chapters in the *Lotus Scripture*. The present translation is based on Kumārajīva's Chinese rendering of the Sanskrit, which the great Indian translator completed in 400 C.E.

Next is *The Scripture of Brahma's Net*, also based on Kumārajīva's rendering, which he completed around 406. The Mahayana understanding of the Precepts is based on this Scripture, and sections of the Scripture are recited twice a month in the monasteries of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives as well as in other Sōtō monasteries. The two Chinese introductions that appear before the text are also from the *Daizōkyō*. A translator's introduction and footnotes have been added to help clarify some important terms and concepts associated with this Scripture.

The remaining works cited in the Scriptures section of the basic list have either appeared in other publications of Shasta Abbey or are of book-length size. All these longer works are available in translations done primarily by scholars or by pious lay Buddhists.

Of works listed under Religious Prose Texts, only the *Instructions on How to Do Pure Meditation* (*Zazen Yojinki*) by Great Master Keizan Jōkin (1268–1325) is included here. Again, the remaining works in this category of the list have appeared either in previous Shasta Abbey publications or elsewhere.

Of the four poems listed under Aphoristic Poems, two are presented here in new translations. The first is *That Which Is Engraved upon the Heart That Trusts to the Eternal* (C. Hsin Hsin Ming; J. Shinjinmei) by

Great Master Chien-chih Seng-ts'an (J. Kanchi Sōsan), the Thirtieth Ancestor and the third ancestor in the Chinese line (d. 606). The second is *The Song That Attests to the Way* (C. *Cheng Tao Ko*; J. *Shōdōka*), by Great Master Yung-chia Hsüan-chüeh (J. Yōka Genkaku) (675–713).

The three remaining texts in the present book, while not included in the basic list, are nevertheless intimately connected with the Sōtō Tradition. The first, *The Scripture of the Buddha's Last Teachings*, is recited at special ceremonies during February. Kumārajīva's Chinese translation supplied the basic text.

Next, *The Scripture on Fully Perfected Enlightenment* has often been quoted by monks in the Zen Tradition. Unlike most other Scriptures (Sutras) in the Buddhist Canon, this is believed to have been composed originally in Chinese, and has been attributed to Buddhatrāta, an Indian monk of the late seventh century.

The final work, *Bodhidharma's Discourse on Pure Meditation* (C. *T'a-mo Kuan Hsin Lun*; J. *Daruma Kanjin Ron*), is believed by some scholars to be a transcription of a talk by Bodhidharma (flourished ca. 520), the Twenty-eighth Ancestor and the first ancestor in the Chinese line, who is credited in the Zen Tradition with introducing the practice of serene reflection meditation to China. The translation is based on a close reading of the oldest known version, one of probably the eighth century, found in the Tun Huang caves at the beginning of the twentieth century and

reprinted in the *Daizōkyō*. The original manuscript for this version, however, was missing the first few pages, which have been supplied from the closest of four other versions edited by D. T. Suzuki and published in Supplementary Volume 1 of his collected works, *Suzuki Daisetsu Zenshū*. Bodhidharma and Hui-k'o (J. Eka) are not specifically named in the Tun Huang version; references to them in the present translation are based on the text as it appears in the Korean edition of the Tripitaka.

The three chapters from the *Lotus Scripture*, the two poems—*That Which Is Engraved upon the Heart That Trusts to the Eternal* and *The Song That Attests to the Way*—and *The Scripture of the Buddha's Last Teachings* were edited by Rev. Master P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C., and follow British customs of spelling and punctuation. The remaining translations were edited by Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy, M.O.B.C., and employ American conventions of spelling and punctuation. However, commitment to the conventions of either system of punctuation has given way, at times, to usages that seem to us more effective for conveying the spiritual meaning, which does not derive from dualistic rationalism.

Three points the reader may find of use in reading the works in this book. First, they are all essentially 'dialogues' between Master and disciple, aimed at helping the disciple (and the reader) to practice Buddhism with understanding and wise discernment. The relationship between Master and disciple is of a spiritual nature, with the Master acting as 'a good spiritual

friend'. This relationship should not be confused with those found between academic lecturer and student or between professorial mentor and protégé, since the latter relationships are founded on a respect which is primarily intellectual in nature.

Second, Buddhism is fundamentally non-discriminatory, and it affirms that both male and female beings are equally capable of doing training and realizing their Original Nature. Classical Chinese, as a language system, is also gender neutral, linguistic discrimination only arising when there is a need to make a point of gender distinction. The English language, however, has not yet evolved a method acceptable to all readers which avoids the implication of gender when using third person singular pronominal forms. To remind the reader that women are not being excluded by constantly using some circumlocution, such as 'he or she', calls attention to an issue that does not arise in the Chinese original and would not have arisen in the intentions of the authors. It is therefore hoped that present-day readers will recognize that uses of so-called 'masculine forms' of pronouns when referring to 'someone' or 'a person who' are intended as gender neutral expressions and will not misunderstand such referents as indications of sexual discrimination in Buddhism.

Third, regarding terminology for That which is beyond the limitation of naming, as Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett said in her Introduction to *The Denkōroku* (Mount Shasta, California: Shasta Abbey Press, 1993, p. xvi),

The term 'Buddha' does not imply 'God' any more than do the terms 'It', 'Substance' and all the other terms we use such as 'Eternal' and 'Lord of the House'. 'It' and all the other terms should be understood as that which, within every fibre of our being, we know as That Which Is Unborn, Unchanging, Undying, Uncreated, frequently called It. The doctrines of karma and anatta should be understood from the viewpoint of It; in the case of the doctrine of karma this means 'No doer is there who does the deed nor is there one who feels the fruit' and, in the case of the doctrine of anatta, that there is no separate, egocentric self outside of the True 'I', or True Self, which is the Unborn, Undying, Uncreated, Unchanging. Unfortunately there have been many muddles, especially in the West, as a result of an indiscriminate proliferation of terms used for the indefinable Unborn, Undying, Uncreated, Unchanging, without their being directly connected up to what the terms 'Buddha', 'It' and the others above and throughout this book refer to. Some scholars have been so afraid to try and give any definition whatsoever that the whole fabric of what Buddhism is teaching becomes unravelled. One must understand that one must not be afraid of words and one must not become a slave to them. All of the terms above are used to describe It and can help us to

acquire the kaleidoscopic mind that can allow us to know It, in every sense of the word 'know', at all times.

An extensive, but by no means exhaustive, list of terms for the True Self as they occur in the writings in the present book would include 'Buddha Nature', 'the Truth', 'one's Original Face', 'the Unborn', 'the Eternal', 'That Which Is', 'The Lord of the House', 'Ultimate Reality', 'the Great Matter for which we train', 'True Self', 'the Other Shore', 'the True, Real Body', 'the True Mind', and 'the Mind Immaculate'.

Rev. Hubert Nearman.

SERENE REFLECTION MEDITATION CHURCH TEACHINGS.

The following are the Scriptures (Sutras), religious prose writings, and aphoristic poems of the Serene Reflection Meditation Church, with annotations as to location when translations can be found in Shasta Abbey publications:*

SCRIPTURES

Lotus Scripture

(C. *Fa-hua Ching*; J. *Hokke-kyō*)

Chapters 14, 16, and 21 in present book; verse section of Chapter 25 translated as *The Scripture of Avalokiteshwara Bodhisattva* in Liturgy (pp. 47–52) and Monastic Office (pp. 2–7) .

*Liturgy = *The Liturgy of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives for the Laity*, 2nd ed. rev., compiled by Rev. Master P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett (Mt. Shasta, California: Shasta Abbey Press, 1990).

Monastic Office = *The Monastic Office*, translated from the *Sōtō-Shū Gyōji Kihan (The Ceremonial Practices of the Sōtō Church)* by Rev. Hubert Nearman, O.B.C., with Rev. Master P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C., as consultant and editor (Mt. Shasta, California: Shasta Abbey Press, 1993).

Zen is Eternal Life = *Zen is Eternal Life*, 3rd ed. rev., by Rōshi P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett (Mt. Shasta, California: Shasta Abbey Press, 1987).

Avatamsaka Scripture

(C. *Hua-yen Ching*; J. *Kegon-kyō*)

The Prajnaparamita Scriptures

(C. *Pan-jo Ching*; J. *Hannya-gyō*)

A collection of five sutras, including what is considered the most succinct statement of the Teachings of this collection, *The Scripture That is the Heart of the Prajnaparamita*, translated as *The Scripture of Great Wisdom* in Liturgy (pp. 72–74) and Monastic Office (pp. 33–35).

Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Scripture

(C. *Wei-mo Ching*; J. *Yuima-gyō*)

Mahaparinirvana Scripture

(C. *Nieh-p'an Ching*; J. *Nehan-gyō*)

The Scripture of Brahma's Net

(C. *Fan-wang Ching*; J. *Bommō-kyō*)

In present book.

Kṣatigarba Scripture

(C. *Ti-ts'ang Ching*; J. *Jizō-gyō*)

Sweet Gate Scripture

(C. *Kan-lu Men*; J. *Kanromon*)

In Liturgy, pp. 164–165.

Various Invocations

These include

The Litany of the Great Compassionate One

In Liturgy, pp. 78–79, and Monastic Office, pp. 39–41.

The Shurangama Litany

In Monastic Office, pp. 56–72.

Invocation for the Removal of Disasters

In Liturgy, p. 266, and Monastic Office, pp. 113–114.

Invocation of Achalanatha, Invocation of Mahakala, Invocation of the Cosmic Buddha, and The Golden Bell that Rings but Once

In Liturgy, pp. 109–111, and Monastic Office, pp. 84–86.

(all of which are recited as part of the daily monastic office), plus the Litanies recited during various yearly festivals (some of which are in Liturgy, the remainder to appear in next edition of Liturgy) and the Invocations recited during special ceremonies such as the Festival of Feeding the Hungry Ghosts and some of the Ceremonies for the Opening of the Gate of the Ten Precepts.

RELIGIOUS PROSE WRITINGS

The Eye and Treasury of the True Law

(*Shōbōgenzō*),

by the Fifty-first Ancestor, Eihei Dōgen

Some sections in Zen is Eternal Life:

“Lecture on Training” (*Bendōwa*), pp. 139–154.

“Life and Death” (*Shōji*), pp. 163–165.

“The Theory of Time” (*Uji*), pp. 165–171.

“The Problem of Everyday Life” (*Genjō-kōan*), pp. 172–176.

A Record of Dōgen’s Informal Teachings and Poems
(*Eihei Kōroku*)

Rules for Meditation

(*Fukanzazengi*), by Dōgen

In Liturgy, pp. 97–100, and Monastic Office,
pp. 77–80.

Aspects of Meditation

(*Gakudō Yōjinshū*), by Dōgen

In Zen is Eternal Life, pp. 124–139.

Dōgen's Monastic Rules

(*Eihei Shingi*)

Some sections in Zen is Eternal Life:

“How Junior Priests Must Behave in the
Presence of Senior Priests” (*Taitaikohō*),
pp. 86–90.

“Trainees' Hall Rules” (*Shuryō-shingi*),
pp. 90–94.

“Meal-Time Regulations” (*Fushuku-hampō*),
pp. 95–111.

“How to Train in Buddhism” (*Bendōhō*),
pp. 111–124.

“Instructions to the Chief Cook”
(*Tenzo-kyōkun*), pp. 176–191.

The Record of the Transmission of the Light

(*Denkōroku*),

by the Fifty-fourth Ancestor, Keizan Jōkin

Published by Shasta Abbey Press, 1993.*

* Keizan Zenji, *The Denkōroku or The Record of the Transmission of the Light*, translated by Rev. Hubert Nearman, O.B.C., with an introduction by Rev. Master P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C., consultant and editor (Mt. Shasta, California: Shasta Abbey Press, 1993).

Instructions on How to Do Pure Meditation

(*Zazen Yojinki*), by Keizan

In present book.

Keizan's Monastic Rules

(*Keizan Shingi*)

What is Truly Meant by Training and Enlightenment

(*Shushōgi*), by Dōgen

In *Zen is Eternal Life*, pp. 155–163.

APHORISTIC POEMS

Sandōkai*

(C. *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*),

by the Thirty-fifth Ancestor, Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien

(J. Sekitō Kisen)

In *Liturgy*, pp. 59–61, and *Monastic Office*,
pp. 15–18.

The Most Excellent Mirror—Samādhi*

(C. *Pao-ching San-mei*; J. *Hōkyōzammai*),

by the Thirty-eighth Ancestor, Tung-shan Liang-chieh (J. Tōzan Ryōkai)

In *Liturgy*, pp. 61–65, and *Monastic Office*,
pp. 18–23.

***That Which Is Engraved upon the Heart That
Trusts to the Eternal***

(C. *Hsin Hsin Ming*; J. *Shinjinmei*),

by Chien-Chih Seng-ts'an (J. Kanchi Sōsan)

In present book.

* Same translation is used in the *Head Office Book of Ceremonies* at Sōji-ji.

The Song That Attests to the Way

(C. Cheng Tao Ko; J. Shōdōka),

by Yung-chia Hsüan-chüeh (J. Yōka Genkaku)

In present book.

Since the first printing of *Buddhist Writings* in 1994, Shasta Abbey Press has also published the first eleven chapters of a new translation of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*: Great Master Dōgen, *The Shōbōgenzō or The Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teachings*, Volume 1, translated by Rev. Hubert Nearman, F.O.B.C., with Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy, M.O.B.C., as consultant and editor (Mt. Shasta, California: Shasta Abbey Press, 1996).

SCRIPTURES.

Three Chapters
from the *Lotus Scripture*.

THE SCRIPTURE ON CONDUCT THAT EASES THE WAY.

The Highly Perfected Bodhisattva Manjusri, the Dharma Lord's disciple, then spoke to the Buddha, saying, "World-honoured One, Bodhisattvas such as these are rarely met with! Out of reverence for the Buddha, they have sworn a vow that, in evil times to come, they will protect, keep to, read, recite and expound this Discourse of Yours which is the blossoming of Your Teaching. World-honoured One, how are these Highly Perfected Bodhisattvas to preach on this Discourse of Yours in the evil times to come?"

The Buddha addressed Manjusri, "If any Highly Perfected Bodhisattva amongst you wishes to preach on this Discourse of Mine in the evil times to come, be steadfast in your devotion to four modes of conduct. As to the first of these, you should hold steadfast to a Bodhisattva's perspectives on practice and relationships so that you will be able to give voice to this Discourse of Mine to sentient beings. O Manjusri, what is this perspective on practice of a Highly Perfected Bodhisattva? When a Highly Perfected Bodhisattva abides in a state of patience and gratitude, is gentle and modest, is neither abrupt nor violent, stays unperturbed in heart and mind and, moreover, clings

to nothing yet views all things according to their true nature, does not strain in doing his practice or engage in discriminatory thinking—this is termed a Highly Perfected Bodhisattva's perspective on practice. What is a Highly Perfected Bodhisattva's perspective on relationships? A Highly Perfected Bodhisattva does not seek to be on intimate terms with rulers, their offspring, ministers, officials, non-Buddhists such as Brahman priests or Jain monks, creators of worldly literature, extollers of non-Buddhist writings, materialistic persons, hedonists and those who actively oppose them; he does not curry fellowship with those who engage in cruel or violent games involving knocking each other about or knocking each other down, with actors, dancers and any other type of stage entertainers; he does not take up with those who are amoral or rely on chance to steer their lives, with those engaged in evil industries such as raising pigs, sheep, fowl or goats for slaughter, hunting and fishing. Even so, whenever any such persons as these come to him on some occasion, he talks with them of the Dharma but with no expectations. He does not seek or encourage familiarity with monks or lay persons of either gender, who are only eager to hear his voice but not what he says, by meeting with them in his quarters, stopping them whilst out walking in order to socialize with them or lingering with them in the lecture hall; if, at some time, they come to him, he takes the opportunity to talk with them of the Dharma but with no expectations.

O Manjusri, a Highly Perfected Bodhisattva should also not talk of the Dharma with others whilst

displaying an appearance designed to arouse passionate thoughts in them nor take pleasure in looking upon them. When he enters the home of another, he does not seek to encourage any child, young person or widowed one, for instance, to become over familiar with him nor does he seek or encourage familiarity with any who may be equally vulnerable to some form of seduction. He does not enter the home of another by himself; if, for some reason, he must enter there alone, then he is wholehearted in his mindfulness of the Buddha. When talking about the Dharma to women, he does not flash his teeth, all smiles and grins, nor does he display his bare chest; since he does not seek or encourage any familiarity or intimacy for the sake of the Teaching, how much less for any other reason! He is also not eager to rear young pupils, novices or children, or eager to be with them as teacher, ever preferring meditation where, in seclusion, he may train and pacify his mind. O Manjusri, this is what is termed the first perspective on relationships.

Further, a Highly Perfected Bodhisattva views all things as void of any substantial self, seeing appearances as they really are, not topsy-turvy, moving, receding or spinning about; he sees it just as space is, without any substantiality, beyond the ability of any word or phrase to encapsulate, unborn, not coming forth or arising, nameless, beyond characterization, having no permanent existence, immeasurable, unbounded, unobstructed, unhindered, having 'existence' only through cause and effect produced by topsy-turvy thought: he constantly delights in viewing the

appearance of all things in this way. This is what is termed a Highly Perfected Bodhisattva's second perspective on relationships."

The World-honoured One, desiring to clarify the meaning of His Teaching, spoke thus in verse:

"If there be any Bodhisattva here who, in the evil days to come, with a heart free from fear and awe, desires to preach on this Discourse of Mine, you must hold to a Bodhisattva's perspectives on practice and relationships.

Be constant in keeping your distance from those who would rule and their offspring, ministers and officials, from those who play at brutal and dangerous games, are devoid of scruples or steer their lives by chance as well as from non-Buddhists such as Brahman priests.

Seek no friendship or companionship among those vain and conceited ones who avidly pursue the Lesser Course in their study of the Triple Canon, with Precept-breaking monks who are Arahants in name only, with monks who take joy in flirtatious laughter, with those who are deeply attached to all manner of craving or are seeking instant nirvana, as is common with lay folk; with none of these seek familiarity.

However, if such people, out of goodness of heart, come to you as a Bodhisattva to hear of the Buddha's Way, then, as a Bodhisattva with heart free from fear and awe and cherishing no expectations, you should speak with them on the Teaching.

Do not seek to entice into intimacy or close friendship such as are widowed, young or equally vulnerable to some form of seduction; do not keep company with butchers, meat-cutters, hunters or fishermen, for they slaughter and slay for gain; do not keep company with those who hawk meat for their living and those who parade and market people for sex; do not consort with such ones.

With violent and dangerous sports and all manner of frivolous games, as well as with dissolute people, you should not seek to involve yourself whatsoever.

You should not, in some screened-off place, talk about the Teaching alone with one of the opposite sex.

When you preach on the Dharma, take care to avoid making a joke of it.

When entering a village in quest of food, seek a monk to accompany you; if no monk is available, keep your mind wholeheartedly on the Buddha.

These, then, are what are called the perspectives on practice and relationships.

By maintaining these two perspectives you can teach with ease and contentment.

Further, when you do not act as if there were superior, middling and inferior Dharmas, or as though things were material or independent of cause, real or unreal, when you do not make such distinctions as 'This is a man' or 'This is a woman', and when you do not grasp after things, failing to recognize them because you do not discern them as desirable, this then is what is called a Bodhisattva's perspective on practice.

All that are called 'things' are void of self-existence, having no permanence, neither arising nor perishing: this is what wise ones call a Bodhisattva's perspective on relationships, whereas those whose views are topsy-turvy decide by discrimination whether all things exist or do not exist, are real or unreal, produced or not produced.

As for you, abide in seclusion, train and pacify your mind, dwelling peaceably in your meditation and immovable as Mount Sumeru, regarding all things as though they had no permanence, as if they were as insubstantial as space, lacking solidity, not arising or coming forth but motionless and unreceding, ever remaining in their oneness: this is what is called a Bodhisattva's perspective on relationships.

If there be any monk who, after My entering into eternal meditation, holds to these perspectives on practice and relationships, then, when he talks on this Discourse of Mine, he will have no timidity or weakness.

When this Bodhisattva at times enters the quiet of his room and, whilst holding properly to mindfulness, looks upon all things according to their true significance, let him then rise from his meditation and, for the sake of rulers of nations, their offspring and subjects, be they Brahmans and others, help turn their hearts around by clearly expounding and explaining this Discourse of Mine with a heart and mind at ease, free from timidity and weakness.

O Manjusri, this is what is called a Bodhisattva's being steadfast in the first means, for he will then be able, in future generations, to preach on this Discourse which is the blossoming of My Teaching.

O Manjusri, after My entering into eternal meditation, whoever of you desires to give voice to this Discourse of Mine in the degenerate period of the Dharma should abide in conduct that eases the way through appropriate speech. Whether orally passing on this Discourse of Mine from memory or reading It aloud, do not take pleasure in speaking of the shortcomings or errors of your predecessors, or of this Discourse of Mine, nor speak disrespectfully of other

Dharma masters, nor talk of the goodness, wickedness, merits or shortcomings of others, nor single out by name those who do not understand the Dharma and broadcast their mistakes or wickedness, nor by name praise and extol any for their admirable taste nor cultivate a resentful or jealous heart. By well training your heart and mind to be at ease and content, those who hear you will not misinterpret or twist your intentions. To those who raise objections or ask difficult questions, do not answer from the Teachings of the Lesser Vehicle but lucidly explain matters simply from Those of the Greater Vehicle that they may obtain all sorts of understanding.”

The World-honoured One, then desiring to reiterate the meaning of this, spoke thus in verse:

“A Bodhisattva ever delights, and is at ease, in giving voice to the Dharma; in a pure and clean place he spreads out his mat, anoints himself with sesame oil after having bathed away dust and dirt, puts on a fresh, clean robe so that he is completely clean within and without and then, calmly seated on his Dharma seat, he teaches according to how he is questioned.

Be there monks of either gender, lay disciples of either gender, rulers, their offspring and retainers or other people, he expounds the subtlest meanings to them all, ever with a gentle countenance.

If there is any objection or difficult question, he responds to it according to its meaning, elaborating and making distinctions through apt illustrations and parables.

By these skilful means he urges them all to give rise to their will to train so that, steadily advancing, they may penetrate the Buddha's Way.

Having rid himself of any tendencies to indolence and of any idle thoughts and fancies, he is free from all worry, grief and care and, with a tender and compassionate heart, proclaims the Dharma day and night; ever propounding the unsurpassed Teaching of the Way by varied illustrations and innumerable parables, he reveals It to sentient beings which causes them all to rejoice.

Of garments, bedding, drink, food, medicine and all such things he has no expectations; with singleness of mind he thinks only of the cause of his teaching the Dharma, vowing to complete the Buddha's Path by helping all others to do the same; this is his great reward, contentment and offering.

After My entering into eternal meditation, if there be any monk capable of proclaiming this Discourse which is the wondrous blossoming of My Teaching, his heart will be free from envy and rancour, from all irritations and obstacles and from sorrow

and depression as well as from the curses and slanders of others.

Further, he will be free from fear and dread of their adding the insult of injury from sword or cudgel; he will not be driven off for he is steadfast and at ease in his forbearance.

The wise one, in such ways as these, will train his mind so well, and be able to dwell so content and at ease, as I have already said, that the merits and virtues of this person are beyond any power to fully express in number or in illustration even were thousands upon thousands of kalpas to be given for the task.

O Manjusri, as to the third procedure which concerns right thought, any Highly Perfected Bodhisattva amongst you who, in the decadent ages to come when the Dharma will be on the brink of perishing, accepts and keeps to, reads and recites this Discourse of Mine, will not carry within the bosom an envious, suspicious or deceitful heart or slight and abuse fellow-students of the Buddha's Way by seeking out their excesses or shortcomings. If there be monks or lay disciples of either gender who seek to hear the Dharma but are not yet ready to follow It, seek to follow the Way but only for their own sakes or seek after the Bodhisattva's Way, you must not distress or vex them, causing them to doubt or feel regret by telling them, 'You are far removed from the Way and will never be able to attain any manner of understanding for you are nothing but

indulgent and idle people who are lax in the Way.' Moreover, do not indulge in chatter that treats the Dharma as a pastime, or enter into debates or quarrel over the Dharma. Instead, give rise to thoughts of great compassion for all sentient beings, to thoughts of how like benevolent parents the Tathagatas are and to thoughts of what great teachers the Bodhisattvas are. From the very depths of your heart ever revere and worship the great Bodhisattvas in all the Ten Quarters and, being in accord with the Dharma, give voice to It to all sentient beings alike without exceeding what they need or falling short of it.

O Manjusri, when such a Highly Perfected Bodhisattva amongst you, in the decadent age when the Dharma is on the verge of disappearing, has succeeded in this third mode of conduct that eases the way through appropriate thought and then gives voice to this Discourse of Mine, nothing will be able to disturb him. He will find good fellow-students who will read and recite this Discourse along with him and who after hearing It will be able to keep to It, after keeping to It will be able to recite It, after reciting It will be able to give voice to It, after giving voice to It will be able to copy or inspire others to copy It and make an offering of these copies of My Discourse in reverence, honour and praise of It."

The World-honoured One, then desiring to reiterate the meaning of this, spoke thus in verse:

"If you wish to give voice to this Discourse of
Mine, you should forsake all envy, anger

and pride and all thoughts arising from a suspicious, deceitful, twisted or dishonest heart, ever cultivating the practice of maintaining integrity.

Do not disparage others or, for amusement's sake, discuss the Teachings or lead others to doubt or regret by saying: 'You will never become Buddhas' but, as a disciple of the Buddha, when giving voice to the Dharma, be ever gentle, patient and compassionate with all, never cultivating thoughts of indulgence or idleness.

Toward the great Bodhisattvas in all the Ten Quarters who practice the Way out of pity for all beings cultivate a reverent mind by thinking, 'These are my great teachers'; for all World-honoured Buddhas engender thoughts of them as peerless parents and then, eliminating all feelings of pride and arrogance, give unobstructed voice to the Dharma.

Such is the third method: let the wise protect and guard it for wholehearted devotion to these practices in ease and contentment is revered by beings beyond count.

O Manjusri, any Highly Perfected Bodhisattva amongst you who, in the decadent ages to come when the Dharma has all but perished, preserves this Discourse which is the blossoming of My Teaching should cultivate a spirit of great compassion not only

toward lay disciples and monks but also toward those not yet upon the Bodhisattva path by holding this thought in mind, 'Such people as these have suffered a great loss for they have neither heard of, nor know about, nor are aware of, nor inquired into, nor believed in nor understood the Dharma which the Tathagata voiced through His use of skilful means and in accordance with what was suitable to the occasion. Although those people have not inquired into, nor believed in nor understood this Discourse of His, when I have attained Full and Perfect Enlightenment, wherever I may be, by means of my transcendental powers and my powers of wise discrimination and insight I will help lead them to find that Abiding Place within His Dharma.'

O Manjusri, any Highly Perfected Bodhisattva who, after My entering into eternal meditation, succeeds in this fourth mode of conduct which relates to appropriate resolve, will be free from error whenever he gives voice to this Dharma. Monks and lay disciples of both genders, rulers and their offspring, ministers and subjects, Brahmans and ordinary citizens amongst others will offer him their reverence, respect and praise; all the devas of space will continually follow and attend on him that they might hear the Dharma. Whether he is in some village, town or city or in some open place or forest, if someone comes desiring to raise an objection or put a difficult question to him the devas, day and night, will constantly guard and protect him for the sake of the Dharma so that he can make all who hear him rejoice because this Discourse of Mine is precisely what all past, present

and future Buddhas watch over and protect with their spiritual powers.

O Manjusri, for those in untold countries even the name and reputation of this Discourse which is the blossoming of My Teaching is unheard of; how much less is it possible for them to meet with It, accept It, keep to It, read It or recite It!

O Manjusri, take, by way of analogy, the example of a powerful and sage universal monarch whose chariot wheels roll everywhere, one who desires by dint of his awesome power and authority to have all realms submit themselves in allegiance to him but finds that there are petty rulers who will not comply with his will; so the universal monarch calls up his varied troops and goes forth to chastise them. When the monarch sees amongst his multitude of soldiers those who have distinguished themselves in battle, he straightway is greatly pleased and bestows rewards on them according to their merit by offering them fields, houses, villages, towns or cities, or giving them garments and personal ornaments, or presenting them with all kinds of treasures such as gold, silver, lapis lazuli, agate, carnelian, coral and amber as well as elephants, horses, chariots, carriages, servants of both genders and other people; only the bright pearl upon his top-knot does he not give away. And for what reason? Because only atop a ruler's head is this solitary jewel to be found and, were he to bestow it, all the monarch's household would undoubtedly be greatly astonished.

O Manjusri, I, as the Tathagata, am also like this. Although by dint of My powers of meditation and

insight I had attained the domain of the Dharma and ruled as lord over all Three Worlds, the lords of Mara were unwilling to yield in obedience to Me. When My wise and saintly generals joined in battle with them, those who meritoriously distinguished themselves likewise filled My heart with delight and, in the midst of My four hosts, I gave voice to various Scriptures, making their hearts rejoice, and bestowed upon them the many riches of the Dharma such as meditation, liberation from enslaving passions and the strength to realize Buddhahood from their undefiled roots. In addition, I gave them a city called Nirvana, saying that they could escape from their suffering there and thereby guided their hearts so that they all were filled with joy but I did not give them this Discourse which is the blossoming of My Teaching.

O Manjusri, just as the universal monarch, upon seeing amongst his soldiers one who has been extraordinary in distinguishing himself, feels his heart fill with such joy that now at last he bestows upon him the incredible pearl which so long has lain upon his topknot and which is not given to anyone rashly, so also is it with Me. When, as the great Lord of Dharma in the Three Worlds Who teaches all sentient beings how to turn their hearts around by being in accord with the Dharma, I see My wise and saintly host battling with great meritoriousness and loyalty against the demons of Mara who delude and threaten harm to the five skandhas, or who tempt and bedevil through defiling passions or who threaten death and annihilation, and observe how My troops eradicate the three poisons of

greed, hatred and delusion and leap beyond the Three Worlds by breaking through the ensnaring nets of Mara's minions, I, likewise, am greatly pleased and now give voice to this Discourse which is the blossoming of My Teaching, which is capable of helping all sentient beings to realize Buddhahood and which I have not yet proclaimed since there were so many in the world who were filled with rancour and animosity and had difficulty in believing in anything. O Manjusri, this Discourse is the foremost teaching of the Tathagatas and the most profound of all Discourses. I give It to you at last just as that powerful monarch at last gave the bright pearl that he has guarded for so long. O Manjusri, this Discourse which is the blossoming of My Teaching is the profound Treasure House of the Buddhas as Tathagatas, supreme above all other Scriptures. Long has been the time of darkness while It has been safe-guarded and not prematurely and rashly spread abroad; to-day for the first time I present It to you all."

The World-honoured One, then desiring to clarify the meaning of this, spoke thus in verse:

"Ever act with patience and forbearance, and
with pity for all beings, for only then can
you give voice to a Discourse which the
Buddhas will extol.

In later ages to come, you who would keep
to this Discourse of Mine, be you layman,
monk or one not yet on the Bodhisattva
path, by all means cultivate compassion

by thinking, ‘Since those who do not hear, or have faith in this Discourse of His, will suffer a great loss, I, having realized the Buddha Way through skilful means, will expound this Dharma to them that they all may abide in It.’

Like a powerful monarch whose chariot wheels roll everywhere, one who, to his soldiers who are meritorious in battle, presents many rewards such as elephants, horses, chariots, carriages and ornaments to adorn their bodies, as well as fields, houses, villages and cities, or gives them raiment, various kinds of precious jewels, servants and wealth, joyfully bestowing all, but only on the one who is most valiant and strong and capable of the most difficult of deeds does the monarch take from his own head the lustrous pearl to give to him, so too is it with a Tathagata, Lord of all Dharmas, Whose great strength lies in His patience and His treasure Trove of enlightened wisdom.

Out of His great compassion and benevolence, and in keeping with the Dharma, He transforms the world.

Seeing all human beings suffering in torment and distress, and craving to find deliverance as they struggle against the demons of Mara, He gives voice to various Teachings for the sake of all these sentient beings

and, by the most skilful of means, proclaims the various Scriptures: once however He finally knows for sure that these beings have their full strength, then and only then, at last, does He offer this Flower of the Dharma to them just as the monarch took from his head the bright pearl as his gift.

This Discourse of Mine is the most precious among all the Scriptures; I have always guarded It, kept It safe and never revealed It rashly or too soon; now, indeed, this is the time to proclaim It to you all.

After My entering into eternal meditation, whoever seeks the Buddha's Way and desires peaceably and amicably to give voice to this Discourse of Mine should make himself intimate with the four modes of conduct as they have been given.

Whoever of you reads this Discourse completely, and attends to Its meaning, will be ever free from worry, grief, gloom, suffering and disease, of countenance bright and clear; you will not live in destitution, meanness or squalor; all sentient beings will delight to look upon you with a fondness they feel for one sainted or wise; the offspring of devas will be given you as ministers; swords and cudgels will not add their injury to you; things poisonous will leave you unharmed.

If any, from hatred or malice, would abuse you, their mouths will close up tight; fearless will you roam like the Lord of lions, the radiance of Your wisdom and insight will shine forth illumining like the sun.

When you dream, you will behold only things wondrous; you will see Tathagatas, seated upon their Lion Thrones of Meditation, as They give voice to the Dharma to the hosts of surrounding monks: you will behold nagas and spirits, asuras and others, in number as the sands of the Ganges, as they pay reverence with hands held in *gasshō*, and you will catch sight of yourself proclaiming the Dharma to them.

You will also behold Buddhas, Their bodies like burnished gold, emitting boundless rays of light which illumine all as, with voices melodious as Brahma's, They thunder forth the Dharma.

Whilst some Buddha gives voice to the Supreme Dharma to the fourfold host of disciples, you will see yourself in their midst extolling the Buddha with your hands in *gasshō*.

On hearing the Dharma, you will fill with joy and, making your offering, will receive the sacred invocations, you will give witness to the wisdom of never regressing.

The Buddha, knowing that in heart and mind you have penetrated deep into the Buddha's Way, will then predict your success in realizing Supreme and Perfect Enlightenment, saying, 'You, my good child, shall, in an age to come, obtain wisdom beyond measure by realizing the Great Way of the Buddha.

Your realm will be splendrous and immaculate, of breadth beyond compare; there you too will have your fourfold host of disciples who, with hands in gasshō, will listen to you proclaim the Dharma.'

You will also see yourself in some mountain grove putting the good Teachings into practice by proving for yourself what is real and what appearance and, deep in meditation, you will meet the Buddhas of all the Ten Quarters.

Like burnished gold are the bodies of these Buddhas, adorned with a hundred auspicious marks, for whoever, hearing the Dharma, gives voice to It for the sake of others, ever has good dreams like these.

Again, in a dream or vision, you will be transformed into a lord who forsakes palace, family and kin, as well as the most exquisite pleasures the five senses crave, to journey forth to the place of training at the foot of a Bodhi tree, there, seated on your Lion Throne of Meditation, you will seek the

Way until seven days pass and you realize what 'the Wisdom of the Buddhas' is.

Having thus succeeded to the Supreme Way, you will arise and, turning the Wheel of the Dharma, proclaim to the fourfold host of disciples My Teaching for thousands of myriads of kalpas.

After giving voice to the undefiled Wondrous Dharma and ferrying countless sentient beings to the Other Shore, you will then enter nirvana like a lamp ceasing to smoke when its flame is extinguished.

If any of you in the evil ages to come give your voice to this pre-eminent Dharma, you shall obtain a great bounty such as the merits here foretold."

THE SCRIPTURE ON THE IMMEASURABLE LIFE OF THE TATHAGATA.

The Buddha then told the Bodhisattvas and the whole assembly, “O all you good disciples, trust in and comprehend the Truth within My words.” He then repeated this to the great assembly, saying, “Have confidence in and discern the Truth within My words.” Yet again He admonished all the assembly to have faith in and comprehend the Truth within His, the Tathagata’s, words. The great host of Bodhisattvas, led by Maitreya, their hands in gasshō, then said to the Buddha, “O World-honoured One, we pray that You will explain this statement to us so that we may properly trust in and accept the Buddha’s Words.” Thus they spoke three times, repeating the words, ‘we pray that You will explain this statement to us so that we may properly trust in and accept the Buddha’s Words’.

Then the World-honoured One, aware that the Bodhisattvas, by having thrice repeated their request, would not cease in their resolve, addressed them, saying, “Listen carefully, all of you, to my profound and spiritually penetrating powers. In all the worlds, devas, men and asuras say that the present Shakyamuni

Buddha came forth from the palace of the Shakya clan and, seated in His training place of enlightenment not far from the city of Gaya, attained Perfect and Complete Enlightenment. However, My good disciples, in truth, immeasurable and limitless hundreds of thousands of millions of aeons have passed since I realized Buddhahood. As an analogy, consider the five hundred thousand million billion and more universes each of which is comprised of three thousand great thousand-fold worlds; suppose someone were to grind them all down to dust atoms and then travel eastward through five hundred thousand million billion lands, depositing in each but a single atom of this dust before proceeding on eastward in a similar manner until he had used up all those atoms of dust; do you think it possible, My good disciples, to envision and calculate the exact number of all those worlds?" Maitreya along with the Bodhisattvas and the others all said to the Buddha, "O World-honoured One, the number of those worlds would be immeasurable, limitless and beyond what can be reckoned or encompassed by the power of the mind. All the shravakas and pratyekabuddhas, even with their flawless intellects, would be unable to envision or comprehend the exact number. For us, too, who are abiding at the stage of non-regression, such a task is beyond our reach. O World-honoured One, such worlds would indeed be beyond measure and limitless."

Thereupon the Buddha, addressing this great assembly of Bodhisattvas, said, "O good disciples, I will now clarify the issue for you by expressing it in the following words. Suppose those worlds, both those

where an atom has been deposited and those where one has not, were pulverized into dust and each single atom of that dust counted as one aeon, then the time since I became Buddha still surpasses this number by hundreds of thousands of millions of billions of aeons beyond count. From that time forward I have constantly been giving voice to the Dharma and teaching others in this world of suffering how to turn their hearts around as well as guiding and benefiting sentient beings in other places in hundreds of thousands of millions of billions and more domains. O good disciples, during all this time I have ever talked of Buddhas such as Dipankara Buddha, who is the Buddha Who Lights the Lamp to Realization, and have also spoken of Their entering into nirvana; by My use of skilful means all these points have thus been made clear and distinct.

“O good disciples, whenever sentient beings have come to Me, I have scrutinized them with the eye of a Buddha, seeing the degree of their faith, the sharpness of their faculties and so forth. Then, according to the extent of their receptivity to being ferried across to the Other Shore, I have told to them, as seemed suitable, different names that I have gone by and the varying life span of each; moreover I have clearly stated that I am to enter nirvana. Also by various skilful means I have given voice to the profound and wondrous Dharma which is capable of causing the heart of a sentient being to radiate with joy.

“O good disciples, seeing how sentient beings desire lesser things so that their virtues are slim and

their defilements heavy, I, as the Tathagata, have declared for their sake that, whilst still young, I had left home to realize Perfect and Complete Enlightenment. However, since the time span from when I had actually achieved Buddhahood was ever so long, I have made certain statements in order, by such skilful means, to teach sentient beings how to turn their hearts around that they might enter the path to Buddhahood.

“O good disciples, all the Scriptures which I, as Tathagata, have proclaimed are for the liberation of sentient beings. Whether speaking of Myself or of others, whether referring to Myself or to others, whether referring to My own affairs or to those of others, whatever I say, and speak of, is all Truth, not empty speech. And for what reason? Because, as a Tathagata, I know and see the character of the Three Worlds as they really are: there is no birth or death in these worlds, no withdrawing from or coming forth into them; there is no ‘being in a world’ or ‘passing into extinction from a world’ for the Three Worlds are neither Reality nor some empty void, neither That Which Is nor different from It. Unlike the way the Three Worlds behold the Three Worlds, I, as a Tathagata, clearly see such things without error, free from mistaken views. Because sentient beings are distinct as to their various natures, various desires, various dispositions and activities, various recollections, notions and ideas, I, as a Tathagata, give voice to the Dharma in sundry ways, such as by stories and parables, from a desire to help them produce good roots. The work of a Buddha which I do I have never stopped doing even

for a moment. Thus it is that My life since I became Buddha in the very far distant past is of immeasurable aeons, constantly abiding and without extinction.

“O good disciples, the lifetime to which I succeeded by travelling the Bodhisattva Path is not even yet exhausted but will still be twice the past number of aeons. Yet now, even though the real I does not truly become extinct, I have declared, for convenience’ sake, that I will act as though I am extinct. In this skilful way I, as a Tathagata, teach sentient beings to turn their hearts around for, if a Buddha abides too long in the world, those of meagre virtue fail to cultivate good roots whilst those in great poverty or of lowly birth become attached to desires for wealth, sex, food and drink, fame or sleep; they are thereby caught in the meshes of yearning thoughts and distorted views. Were they to see a Tathagata as someone constantly present and never extinct, they would then become self-indulgent and unrestrained, cherishing satiety and indolence, unable to conceive of the notion of just how hard it is to meet a Buddha and to cultivate a reverent heart for such a One. Therefore, as a Tathagata, I have skilfully said, ‘O monks, know that the appearance of Buddhas in the world is indeed a rare event!’ since, in the course of countless hundreds of thousands of millions of aeons, those of meagre virtue may or may not succeed in seeing a Buddha; this is why I have said, ‘O monks, a Tathagata may rarely be met with!’ All those sentient beings, hearing such a statement, will undoubtedly conceive of the thought of how difficult it is to come by such an encounter and

cherish a fond desire to meet One, a thirst to know One, thereby sowing the seeds of good roots. Therefore, even though, as a Tathagata, I do not really become extinct, yet I speak of My becoming extinct. O good disciples, so that sentient beings may be ferried to the Other Shore, the Dharma of all Buddhas as Tathagatas is also always the same as this; It is all Truth, not vain or empty preachings.

“For the sake of analogy, imagine a good physician, one who is intelligent and perceptive, astute and caring, well-practised in the use of curatives, skilled in healing all sorts of ills. Say he has many sons, ten, twenty, even a hundred. Whilst he is away on business in distant parts, his sons, whom he has left behind, drink some poisonous drug which causes them to writhe in agony and become delirious as they roll upon the ground. At this moment their father returns home. Some of the sons who drank the poison have lost their senses and their powers of sound judgment whilst others still remain sensible. Upon seeing their father approaching in the distance the latter are all overjoyed and, reverently kneeling, greet him, saying, ‘How good it is that you have returned safely! In our foolishness, we have taken some poison by mistake. We beg you to help heal us and restore our lives.’ The father, seeing his sons in such pain and distress, trusts to prescribed methods and seeks for good medicinal herbs that are altogether perfect in colour, aroma and fine flavour. Then pounding, sifting and blending them, he has his sons take the mixture, saying to them, ‘This excellent medicine whose colour, aroma and fine

flavour are altogether perfect is ready for you to take, for straightway it will rid you of your pain and distress so that you will be troubled no more.' Those amongst his sons who have remained sensible, seeing how fine the colour and aroma of this excellent medicine are, take it immediately and are completely healed. The ones who have lost their senses and power of sound judgment, upon seeing their father come, are also delighted and, having greeted him, beg him to heal their distress, yet when he offers them the medicine, they are unwilling to take it. And for what reason? Because the poisonous tincture has penetrated deeply into them causing them to lose their senses and power of sound judgment. Despite the excellent colour and aroma of the medicine they say that it is distasteful to them. The father reflects thus, 'My heart goes out to these sons of mine; due to this poison their thinking has been turned all upside down. Although they are glad to see me and implore me to heal them, they are nevertheless unwilling to take such fine medicine as this. I must now devise some expedient means so that they will take this medicine.' Thus he speaks these words to them, 'You surely know that I am now worn out with old age and the time of my death is already at hand. This fine medicine I now leave here. You may take it without fear that it will not make you better.' Having given them these instructions, he departs again for a place some distance off and sends back a messenger to inform them, 'Your father is dead.' When those sons now hear that their father has died, their minds are sorely disturbed with grief and thus they reflect, 'If

our father were alive, he would take pity on us and be able to save and protect us but now he has forsaken us and died in some distant place. We have now lost our father and are orphaned, without anyone to rely on.’ Continually harbouring feelings of grief they finally come to their senses and, recognizing that the colour, aroma and flavour of the medicine is indeed fine, they forthwith take it and are cured of their poisonous illness. The father, hearing that his sons are fully recovered, endeavours to return home so that they may all see him. My good disciples, what do you think? Are there any of you who can bring yourself to say that this good physician has defiled the Precept against telling falsehoods?”

“No, World-honoured One!”

The Buddha then said, “I am also like this physician. Because immeasurable, limitless hundreds of thousands of millions of billions of aeons ago I became Buddha for the sake of all sentient beings, I have therefore used the power of my skilful means to declare that I must become extinct yet there is no one who can, with any resemblance to the Dharma, say that I have erred by speaking vain lies.”

The World-honoured One, then desiring to reiterate the Teaching’s meaning, spoke thus in verse:

“Since I have realized Buddhahood, the aeons
through which I have passed are immea-
surable hundreds of thousands of millions
of billions.

Continuously have I voiced the Dharma, teaching untold billions of beings how to turn their hearts around that they might enter the Buddha's path; to ferry these sentient beings to the Other Shore I reveal to them, by skilful means, My parinirvana yet truly I am not extinct but always abiding here giving voice to the Dharma.

I continue to abide in this world, using my spiritual powers to make confused creatures not see Me, though I am near, so that they may look on Me as extinct and make offerings to My relics, cherishing longing desires and giving rise to hearts thirsting for hope.

When these sentient beings in faith and humility, honest and forthright in manner, gentle in thought, wholeheartedly yearn to see the Buddha, not begrudging even their own lives, then I, with all the Sangha, appear together on the Divine Vulture Peak.

I then tell these sentient beings that I continue to abide here without extinction; by the power of my skilful methods I show myself as extinct, even though not extinct.

If in some other region there are beings reverent and with faith beseeching, again I am in their midst to proclaim the unsurpassed Dharma, though you who do not hear this will say that I am extinct.

When I behold sentient beings sunk in their suffering and distress, I do not show myself but set them all to look up in their thirsting and, when their hearts are filled with fervent longing, I then appear and proclaim the Dharma.

Such are my spiritually pervading powers that, throughout the boundless aeons, I abide on the Divine Vulture Peak as well as in every other dwelling place.

When sentient beings see, at kalpa's ending, the raging fires consuming all, tranquil will this realm of Mine be, ever filled with devas and humans in parks and groves, amongst towers and palaces bedecked with gems of every kind.

Under bejewelled trees, heavy with blossoms and fruit, may these beings take their delight and play, whilst devas beat their heavenly drums, ever making pleasing music, and showering down coral tree flowers upon the Buddha and His great assembly.

My Pure Land will not be destroyed, though sentient beings may see it as utterly consumed by fire, letting themselves be filled with grief and horror, distress and fear.

All these besmirched creatures pass through countless aeons, hearing not the name of the Triple Treasure due to their wretched karma.

Those who practise deeds of merit and are gentle, honest and forthright, all see Me in body and hear Me voice the Dharma.

At times for the sake of that assembly I tell them that a Buddha's life is immeasurable, then to those who, at long last, see a Buddha I say that a Buddha is rarely met.

Such is the power of My wisdom and intelligence that My light of insight shines forth beyond measure, my life of countless aeons is due to the karma of long practice and training.

You who have intelligence and wit, do not let doubts arise in this regard, but sever them from yourself and bring them forever to an end for the Buddha's Words are true, not something that is empty and vain.

Just as the physician who would cure his demented sons by clever and skilful methods proclaims his own death whilst, in fact, he is alive, and none can say he wilfully lies, I, too, being as a parent to this world, as one who helps all those in misery and affliction because of the topsy-turvy views of these ordinary people, say I am extinct, though I am truly alive.

I do this lest, by always seeing Me, they should beget hearts unrestrained and self-indulgent, be dissolute and only fixed upon the five forms of desire and thereby fall into evil ways.

I know at all times whether a sentient being
is treading the Path or walks in other
ways and, according to what needs to
be done to aid that one, voice Teachings
of various kinds, making for each this
my intention,

‘How may I help this being enter the
unsurpassed Way and quickly realize
Buddhahood?’”

THE MARVELLOUS SPIRITUAL POWERS OF THE TATHAGATA.

At that time all the Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas who had sprung up from the earth in numbers equal to the specks of dust in a great thousandfold world, wholeheartedly made *gasshō* before the Buddha and, looking up with reverence at His venerable countenance, told Him, “World-honoured One, after the Buddha’s parinirvana, we will give voice to this Scripture far and wide in whatever lands Your bodily transformations may exist as well as wherever they may have become extinct. Wherefore? Because we too wish to acquire for ourselves this genuine, pure, great Teaching so that we may accept and hold to It, study and recite It, understand and expound It, write It down and make copies of It as acts of respect for It.”

The World-honoured One then made manifest His great spiritual powers before the whole assembly which included Manjusri and untold hundreds of thousands of myriad millions of Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas who had long resided in the *Sahā* world along with both male and female monks and laity, devas and nagas, yakshas, gandharvas and asuras, garudas, kinnaras and mahoragas, humans and non-humans. He thrust forth His long, broad tongue until it reached up

to the realm of Brahma whilst every pore of His skin emitted infinite rays of light in hues beyond count, all completely illuminating everywhere in the worlds in all the ten quarters. All the various Buddhas seated upon lion thrones beneath all sorts of bejewelled trees also in similar fashion thrust forth Their long, broad tongues and emitted infinite rays of light. A full hundred thousand years elapsed whilst Shakyamuni Buddha and the various Buddhas beneath Their bejewelled trees were manifesting Their spiritual powers. They then drew back Their tongues and, simultaneously clearing Their throats, snapped Their fingers in unison. These two sounds reverberated through the worlds of the Buddhas in the ten quarters whilst the earth shook in six ways. Within those worlds the sentient beings, the devas and nagas, the yakshas, gandharvas and asuras, the garudas, kinnaras and mahoragas, as well as other humans and non-humans, all saw, due to the spiritual powers of the Buddha, the untold hundreds of thousands of myriad millions of Buddhas on Their lion thrones under the various sorts of bejewelled trees within this Sahā world and likewise saw Shakyamuni along with the Tathagata of Many Treasures seated upon lion thrones within the jewelled stupa. They also saw untold hundreds of thousands of myriad millions of Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas, as well as the four groups, monks and laity, male and female, who encircled Shakyamuni Buddha in reverence. When they had seen this, they were all filled with great delight, having found what they had not experienced before.

Then all the devas everywhere chanted with a great voice, “Beyond these untold and limitless hundreds of thousands of myriad millions of worlds there is a realm called Sahā. Within this realm is a Buddha named Shakyamuni. Now, for the sake of all the various Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas, he is giving voice to a Mahayana Scripture we call *The Lotus Blossom of the Wondrous Teaching*, a Teaching which gives guidance to Bodhisattvas and which Buddhas guard well and keep in mind. You should joyfully follow It deep within your hearts as well as pay homage and make offerings to Shakyamuni.”

When all those various sentient beings heard that voice coming from within space they made gasshō and, turning toward the Sahā world, spoke out in this manner, “Hail, Shakyamuni Buddha! Hail, Shakyamuni Buddha!” From afar they all strewed the Sahā world with flowers, incense, jewels, garlands, canopies and banners as well as various personal ornaments, marvellous treasures and wondrous objects. The things so strewn from all the ten quarters were like a gathering of clouds which transformed themselves into a jewelled canopy hovering above the place where the Buddhas were. From that moment intercourse among the worlds in the ten quarters was freed of all obstacles as if forming one single Buddha-land.

The Buddha then addressed Him of Superior Practice along with the others in the great assembly of Bodhisattvas. “The spiritual powers of all Buddhas are similarly immeasurable and boundless, beyond conception or imagining. Were I, for the sake of entrusting

this Scripture to others, to expound Its merits and virtues for untold and limitless hundreds of thousands of myriad millions of aeons by means of these spiritual powers of Mine, I would still not be able to exhaust Its riches. In short, all the Teachings that I as a Tathagata possess, all the spiritual powers that I have at My disposal, all My unseen storehouses and all My extremely profound activities are expounded, revealed and explained in this Scripture. For this reason, after My parinirvana, you should wholeheartedly accept and hold to It, study and recite It, understand and expound It, write It down and make copies of It and, just as you preach It, so practice in accordance with It. If there is anyone in any land or country who accepts, holds to, studies, recites, understands, expounds, writes down, copies or practices It as he preaches It, be it in a place where Scripture books reside, or in a garden, or in a grove of trees, or under a tree, or in a monk's quarters, or in the lodging of a white-clad layman, or within the halls of the nobility, or on a mountain, or in a valley, or in an open plain, therein will a stupa be raised and an offering be made. And for what reason? Know that such a place is indeed a seat for enlightenment: in such places Buddhas find Complete and Perfect Enlightenment, in such places Buddhas turn the Wheel of the Dharma, in such places Buddhas enter parinirvana."

Then the World-honoured One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this once again, spoke thus in verse:

“Inconceivable are the good works that Buddhas do for the benefit of the world as They reside within Their great miraculous penetrating abilities, displaying Their immeasurable spiritual powers in order to gladden the hearts of sentient beings; Their tongues reach to Brahma’s heaven, Their bodies emit incalculable rays of light.

For the sake of those who seek the Buddha’s Way do They make manifest Their extraordinary activities: the sound of these Buddhas’ clearing Their throats and the sound of Their snapping Their fingers is heard everywhere throughout the lands in all the ten quarters, and the earth trembles in six ways.

After the Buddha’s parinirvana this Scripture will be preserved well; hence, the Buddhas all rejoice and display Their untold spiritual powers.

Because this Scripture has been passed on in trust, he who accepts and keeps to It will be offering his praise and adoration, for, even within immeasurable aeons, It will still remain inexhaustible.

The merits and virtues of such a person are as limitless and endless as space which knows no boundaries in all the ten quarters.

He who can keep to this Scripture is one who already beholds Me and beholds the Buddha of Many Treasures as well as all My

various bodily transformations; he also sees the Bodhisattvas whom I am instructing and converting this very day.

He who holds well to this Scripture causes not only Me but also My bodily transformations and the Buddha of Many Treasures in nirvana, all of Us, to be filled with delight; the Buddhas now present in the ten quarters, together with Those of past and future, behold Us and make offerings to Us as well as cause Us to be filled with delight.

The wondrous, unseen Teaching found by all Buddhas as They sat in Their place of enlightenment will surely also be found before long by him who holds well to this Scripture.

He who holds well to this Scripture shall, in all delight, endlessly expound the meanings of Its Teaching, along with Its terms and expressions; in doing so, he will be like the wind in the sky which is completely free of impediments.

After My parinirvana such a one shall understand this Scripture which the Buddha has expounded, together with Its karmic causes and conditions as well as their sequential order, and explain them, pursuing their meaning in accord with the Truth: just as the brightness of the light of sun and moon can make all darkness and obscurity

disappear, so such a one shall go through this world skilfully eradicating the darkness in sentient beings, such a one will teach countless Bodhisattvas finally to dwell in the One Vehicle.

Therefore, he who would be wise, hearing of the benefits of these merits and virtues, should, after My parinirvana, accept and hold to this Scripture; in doing so he will then be certain about the Buddha's Way and harbour doubts no more."

The Scripture of Brahma's Net.

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION.

The Scripture of Brahma's Net is in two parts. The first outlines various aspects that make up the foundation of Buddhist training, followed by an extended commentary on each aspect written from a spiritual perspective, in contrast to a philosophical or purely didactic one. The second is a primary source of the Buddhist Precepts as understood in the Mahayana tradition. Unlike the Precepts as described and elucidated in the Pali Canon, they are here clearly intended for Buddhists both in monastic and lay life. Because of the potential in any translation for misunderstanding to arise due not only to language differences but also to cultural differences, some comments on the meaning of the word 'Precept' and related terms as used in this Scripture are given below.

The term 'Precept' is an English rendering of a Chinese word which is used to translate the technical Buddhist Sanskrit term *pratimoksha*. This term, which is sometimes 'spelled out' in the Chinese text, does not mean 'rule' or 'law' but, rather, 'that which liberates', for this is the nature of the Precepts and how They function when They are kept to.

Precepts, according to the Scripture, are the conduct of Buddhas. Therefore, anyone who desires to

realize Buddhahood conforms his or her behavior to the Precepts. This is part of what is called 'the Bodhisattva Path to Buddhahood', the remaining steps of which are presented in the first half of *The Scripture of Brahma's Net*. Anyone who turns his or her heart around and deliberately takes any of these steps has, in effect, stepped onto the Bodhisattva Path and is, to that extent, a Bodhisattva. Hence, in the Scripture, the term 'Bodhisattva' sometimes refers to a person who has taken such a first step, at other times to one who has become a monk or, then again, to one who has reached the higher stages on the Path—one well advanced in training, commonly called in Mahayana Scriptures a Bodhisattva Mahasattva or, simply, a Mahasattva.

Whilst all the Ten Great Precepts have Their relevance to everyone who is on the Path, the Forty-eight Less Grave Precepts, as presented in this Scripture, may vary to some degree, now being more applicable to monks or to lay persons, now to both, now to those just beginning their training, now to those more seasoned.

Within the paragraphs on each of the Ten Great Precepts the comment concerning someone who has willfully gone against the Precept—namely, that such a person 'warrants exclusion'—is a rendering of another technical term: *pārājika*. Because of the seriousness of the intentional and wanton breaking of these Ten Precepts, anyone who does so has, in effect, removed himself from the Bodhisattva Path and excluded himself from the ranks of the

Disciples of Buddha. If the person is also a monk, such a breakage can be grounds for his or her removal from the monastic Sangha and return to lay life. However, because of a fundamental compassion within Mahayana Buddhist Teachings, not even someone who deliberately breaks Precepts is considered a pariah, someone to be judged, condemned, and forever cast out, for the door of *sange*—the recognition of what one has done, accompanied by true remorse and repentance—is always open. ‘Guilt’, ‘punishment’, and ‘sin’ are not Buddhist concepts.

The emphasis in the explanations of the Precepts is consistently on intentionality rather than on the drawing up of a series of rules and regulations to codify ‘acceptable or permissible behavior’. These explanatory passages are not concerned with whether actions find comfortable acceptance within prevailing social norms but whether the disciple has kept to the Precepts within his or her heart.

Similarly, the Scripture makes clear that being a Buddhist—that is, being on the Bodhisattva Path—is not simply a matter of formal membership in some Buddhist church or organization nor is it one of public avowal to ‘being a Buddhist’: it is the willingness to train, the willingness not just to ‘take the Precepts’ but also to accept and try to live by Them.

The paragraphs describing the Precepts often serve more to illustrate how a given Precept operates than fully outline all that It encompasses. In Kumārajīva’s original version, these paragraphs appear without number or title: this information has been added

by the present translator from other versions of the Scripture solely for easy reference.

These descriptive paragraphs are rich in metaphors which are used to exemplify how the Precepts operate. There have been times in the history of Buddhism when these metaphors have been taken literally by some whose zeal to keep the Precepts to the letter has led them to ascetic excesses. For instance, some have burned off their fingers or other parts of their bodies believing that they were following the Sixteenth Less Grave Precept which uses the phrase 'burning off body, arms, and fingers' as a metaphor—but not a guideline!—for commitment to ardent training; such misguided practices clearly contradict Shakyamuni's own Teaching that asceticism is spiritually counter-productive. In the present translation, such metaphors have been rendered in a manner which, it is hoped, makes their presence and intent so obvious that readers will not be readily misled into doing themselves or others bodily or spiritual harm.

Metaphoric phrases, passages, and other references intended to carry non-literal meaning are most easily recognized by their hyperbolic quality plus some absurdity in their literal meaning in context. That is, if taken on a literal level, they imply behavior that clearly contradicts other Precepts or a common-sensical understanding of language. It is unlikely, for example, that most English-speaking persons would take the phrase, 'working one's fingers to the bone', literally, but when the phrase is no longer commonplace or when translated into a language linguistically

unrelated to English, this figure of speech might invite misunderstanding among those prone to literal-mindedness.

In the present case, the 'burning of body' metaphor mentioned in the previous paragraph is probably based on a passage in the Healing Lord Chapter of the *Lotus Scripture*, in which the Healing Lord Bodhisattva, having anointed his body with precious ointments, 'sets it afire', and it continues to burn for myriad kalpas. After it has been consumed, the Bodhisattva, according to the passage, does the same with his arms, with a similar effect. Since this clearly contradicts what any human can literally do with his body, it is likely that the reference in that and the present Scripture is intended to carry metaphorical meaning. What that meaning is becomes explicit in the present Scripture.

Phrases intended to carry a non-literal meaning can, however, be of a more subtle nature, such as those analyzed in *Bodhidharma's Discourse on Pure Meditation*, pp. 368–378. Many other Great Masters have also written or spoken upon such non-literal meanings in Scriptures, including Dōgen and Keizan of the Zen Tradition and Tshong-kha-pa of the Tibetan Gelugs Tradition, to name but three.

Because judgmentalism is foreign to Buddhist practice, there have been times in the history of Buddhism when Scriptures dealing with the Vinaya—that is, the Precepts and Their implications—were not made available to any except those within the monastic Sangha, lest statements be taken out of context and

misunderstood, or applied judgmentally to one's own behavior or to that of others. It is our fervent prayer that the making of this translation available to the public will not foster such misuse.

CHINESE INTRODUCTIONS.

1. Unsigned Introduction.

This religious text is extremely profound, its principles not easy to grasp. Hence, when its subtleties are penetrated to the region of its most profound Source, a myriad Buddhist practices will arise from that Place where one dwells in deepest trust. This is why the Indian Dharma Master Kumārajīva recited and kept to this chapter, taking it to be the heart and chiefmost in the original Scripture, which consisted of sixty-one chapters in one hundred twelve fascicles.

Kumārajīva was not wont to follow the social majority and abstained from non-Buddhist studies whilst in Kapilavastu. In the third year of the Hung-shih era (401 C.E.), as a veritable wind of moral integrity and simplicity, he came east to the State of Ch'in where Yao-hsing was Lord. His Path was a match for that of hundreds of worldly rulers, so profound was his great teaching on Original Nature. At Ts'ao-t'ang Monastery, three thousand scholars gathered together with Kumārajīva to contemplate the more than fifty parts in the canon of the Greater and Lesser Vehicles. No sooner had he finished reciting the last part of *The Scripture of Brahma's Net* than Tao-yung, Tao-sheng,

and Seng-ying,* along with some three hundred persons, simultaneously accepted the Ten Bodhisattva Precepts. How could such spiritual benefits possibly be limited to just that occasion and not flow on for many kalpas? Thus it was that, with the help of Tao-yung, this one chapter on the foundations of training emerged as a separate Scripture. Since more than three hundred persons had recited this one chapter on that occasion, its eighty-one parts were therefore written down to circulate to later generations that they might keep to it, recite it, and impart it to others. We entreat all good men and women who are advanced in their studies and fond of the Way to vow not to let it pass into extinction in times to come so that all may see Maitreya's Naga-flower Tree when It blooms.

2. Introduction by the Monk Seng-chao†.

The canopy of *The Scripture of Brahma's Net* is comprised of the Subtle Principle of all things. As with all Scriptures, Its essential meaning and aim forms the pattern of Truth whereby the Greatest Sage explained matters; It supplies the stepping stones that make up a practitioner's correct path. Hence, It is the Tathagata's authoritative instruction. Even though the essential import of what is said is beyond measure, do not for that reason fail to put His instructive explanations into practice.

* Three of Kumārajīva's major disciples.

† Kumārajīva's foremost disciple.

This is why, when Yao-hsing, the Lord of Ch'in, let his consciousness penetrate into the full teaching, devas brought about numerous spiritual signs of this occurring. Although, with all majesty, he made his way through the four oceans that encircle Mount Sumeru, he was steeped in the ungraspability of thoughts. Even though storms blew down upon him from across the eight surrounding wildernesses, he grew calm by remaining outside the dust of deliberative thought. Therefore, in the third year of Hung-shih (401 C.E.) when the Indian Dharma Master Kumārajīva, a veritable wind of moral integrity and simplicity, came east, he was given the Lord's mandate and resided at Ts'ao-t'ang Monastery in the capital city of Ch'ang-an along with over three thousand monks versed in religious teachings.

Holding the Sanskrit version in his hands, Kumārajīva orally translated and explained the more than fifty parts of the text which comprise just *The Scripture of Brahma's Net*. This chapter on the Bodhisattvic Foundations of Training is the tenth among the sixty-one chapters in one hundred twenty fascicles of the original Sanskrit text. As it, in particular, makes clear the basis of the spiritual deeds and practices of a Bodhisattva, Tao-yung, Tao-sheng, and Seng-ying, along with some three hundred persons, took the Bodhisattvic Precepts on that occasion, each considering it as the Scripture's heart and chiefmost section as they recited it aloud. With the intent of Master and disciple being in accord, the eighty-one sections were respectfully written down as a separate Scripture consisting

of a single chapter for circulation to the public, with the desire to help those sincerely aspiring to Buddhahood. Because people will realize the Subtle Principle by following these footsteps, we pray that those in later times will likewise listen to and heed this Scripture.

**THE SCRIPTURE OF BRAHMA'S NET
WHEREIN VAIROCHANA BUDDHA
EXPLAINS FOR BODHISATTVAS
THE FOUNDATIONS OF TRAINING
AND THE PRECEPTS.**

*Translated from the Chinese
of Kumārajīva.*

**PART ONE:
ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF TRAINING.**

At the time when Shakyamuni Buddha, whilst in the Fourth Region of the Meditational Heavens, was residing in the palace of the deva king Maheshvara along with the immeasurably great deva king Brahma and millions upon millions of Bodhisattvas, He spoke of the various aspects of the Dharma regarding the Foundations of Training which Vairochana proclaims whilst enthroned upon His lotus pedestal which contains all worlds within it. On this occasion, Shakyamuni's whole being glowed with the light from His discerning wisdom. This light shone forth from the palace of the deva king, reaching all the worlds contained within the lotus pedestal. All sentient beings living in all those worlds looked at each other with delight and joy, but as they could not yet grasp what the cause of this radiance was or what brought it about,

they all gave rise to misgivings, and the innumerable devas also felt apprehensive.

At that moment the Bodhisattva known as the Lord Whose Light Blossoms Forth to Penetrate the Deepest and Most Subtle Truths, having emerged from his samadhi in the great and splendrous light, arose from within the assembly and, through the spiritual powers of the Buddha, poured forth a radiance in the form of a white cloud, brilliant as a diamond, in order to illumine all those worlds. The whole multitude of Bodhisattvas came and gathered within it to ask, in different ways but with the same intention, what caused this radiance. Shakyamuni Buddha then respectfully welcomed all this great multitude from these worlds within the lotus pedestal and led them back to the palace that glistened with millions upon millions of purple-hued diamond lights. There they beheld Vairochana Buddha seated upon His lotus pedestal which glittered brightly with thousands upon millions of lotus flowers. After Shakyamuni Buddha and the whole assembly had simultaneously prostrated themselves in homage at the feet of Vairochana Buddha, Shakyamuni asked, "How can all sentient beings of earth and sky within those universes attain the path of the Ten Stages of a Bodhisattva? What signs do Bodhisattvas display when they are about to realize the fruition of Buddhahood? Amongst the multiplicity of aspects that have their origin in the absolute Buddha Nature, pray explain in detail what the seeds of all Bodhisattvas are."

Vairochana Buddha was immediately filled with great joy. He manifested in space the true nature of His

light—the Original Samadhi of His eternally abiding Dharma Body which had become Buddha—and spoke thus to the assembly, “All you disciples of the Buddha, listen carefully, reflect well on My words, and put them into practice. Already for incalculable hundreds of kalpas I have put into practice the Foundations of Training and made them My guide. I began by renouncing everything of a worldly nature and perfected Myself to that highest degree of complete and perfect knowledge called samyak-sambodhi, whereupon I received the title of Vairochana, the One Who Is the Source of the Luminosity. I reside within the ocean of all the worlds contained within the lotus pedestal. This pedestal is comprised of a thousand petals, with each petal containing a universe, so that there are a thousand universes in all. I transform Myself into a thousand Shakyamunis to occupy these thousand universes. The universe on each petal contains, in turn, ten billion Mount Sumerus, ten billion suns and moons, ten billion sets of four continents including ten billion Jambudvipas, each with its Shakya Bodhisattva seated beneath a Bodhi tree. Whilst each of these Shakyamunis gives voice to those Foundations of Training for Bodhisattvas which you have just asked about, each of the other nine hundred and ninety-nine Shakyamunis gives rise to ten billion Shakyamunis who, in turn, do the same. Each Buddha on the thousand petals is a transformation of Myself whilst the ten billion Shakyamunis are, in turn, transformations of these thousand Buddhas. I am the source of all of Them; hence, I am called

Vairochana Buddha, the Buddha Who Is the Source of the Luminosity.”

Then Vairochana Buddha, enthroned upon His lotus pedestal which contains all worlds, responded in detail to what the ten billion Shakyamunis of the thousand Shakyamunis had asked concerning the various aspects of the Foundations of Training, saying, “Buddhas know that, within a disciple’s patience and equanimity born from his resolute faith, the Ten Decisions will point him toward the fruition of Buddhahood, namely, his decision

1. to renounce everything worldly,
2. to observe the Precepts,
3. to practice equanimity,
4. to make a diligent effort,
5. to concentrate his mind through meditation,
6. to cultivate wise discernment,
7. to be resolute,
8. to be protective of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,
9. to be bright-minded, and
10. to strive toward That Which is the Highest.

Buddhas know that, as the disciple awakens to the patience and equanimity born from holding firm to the Teachings by living in accord with the Ten Decisions, the Ten Attitudes which nourish the heart will point him toward the fruition of Buddhahood, namely, the attitude of

1. kindliness and benevolence,
2. mercy and compassion,
3. joyfulness,
4. willingness to give up worldly things,
5. charitableness,
6. delight in speaking about what is truly good,
7. kindness and generosity in helping others,
8. amicableness,
9. concentration and confidence, and
10. wise discernment.

Buddhas know that, as the disciple awakens to the patience and equanimity born from steadfast practice by living in accord with the Ten Nourishing Attitudes, the Ten Commitments which are as indestructible as a diamond will point him toward the fruition of Buddhahood, namely, his commitment to

1. unshakable faith,
2. mindfulness,
3. devotion to transferring merit,
4. spiritual insight,
5. a spiritually upright and aspiring heart,
6. no retrogressing to worldliness,
7. the spirit of the Mahayana ideal,
8. non-attachment,
9. discerning wisdom, and
10. a confident and steady mind.

Buddhas know that, as the disciple awakens to the patience and equanimity born from his resolute goodness by living in accord with the Ten Commitments,

the Ten Bodhisattva Stages will point him toward the fruition of Buddhahood, namely, the stage

1. when his Buddha Nature functions with impartiality,
2. when his Buddha Nature has the keenest sense of discriminative wisdom,
3. when the light of his Buddha Nature is clear and bright,
4. when his Buddha Nature sees things as they really are,
5. when the wisdom of his Buddha Nature illuminates,
6. when the lotus of his Buddha Nature is radiant in its blossoming,
7. when his Buddha Nature is complete in its perfections,
8. when his Buddha Nature speaks with the lion's roar of a Buddha,
9. when his Buddha Nature is adorned with lotuses, and
10. when his Buddha Nature enters the realm of Buddhas.

When I was first a Bodhisattva, I made these forty points of the Teaching the foundations for my realizing Buddhahood. All sentient beings who, likewise, enter into the Ten Decisions, Ten Nourishing Attitudes, Ten Commitments, and Ten Stages will realize for themselves the same outcome, be liberated from their defiling passions, and be beyond characterization, complete in themselves and ever-abiding. Their Ten

Faculties of Perfect Knowledge,* their eighteen attributes of Buddhahood,† their Dharma Body, and

* Namely, (1) knowing how to distinguish right from wrong, (2) knowing the karmas of all sentient beings of past, present, and future and their outcomes, (3) knowing all forms of meditation, (4) knowing the superior and inferior capacities of all sentient beings, (5) knowing what sentient beings desire and think, (6) knowing the different levels of existence of sentient beings, (7) knowing the results of various methods of practice, (8) knowing the transmigratory states of all sentient beings and the courses of karma they follow, (9) knowing the past lives of all sentient beings and the nirvanic state of non-defilement, and (10) knowing how to convert all evil passions.

† Namely, (1) their being free from errors and faults, (2) their using speech without fault, (3) their being ever mindful, (4) their being always composed and collected in mind, (5) their seeing the Oneness in all, (6) their equanimity not being due to a want of judgment, (7) their self-sacrificing will and resolution never faltering, (8) their unceasing desire to save others, (9) their unflagging zeal therein, (10) their unfailing intention thereto, (11) their unfailing wisdom in carrying it out, (12) their unflagging powers of deliverance, (13) all their bodily actions being preceded by and continuing in accordance with perfect knowledge, (14) all their words and utterances being preceded by and continuing in accordance with perfect knowledge, (15) all their thoughts being preceded by and continuing in accordance with perfect knowledge, (16) their absolute and infallible knowledge and insight into the past, (17) their absolute and infallible knowledge and insight into the present, and (18) their absolute and infallible knowledge and insight into the future.

their Wisdom Body will all be complete in their perfection.”

Then, as Vairochana Buddha sat upon His glittering lotus pedestal which contains all worlds, from amongst the Buddhas seated on the thousand petals of His pedestal as well as the hundred thousand myriad Buddhas and all the Buddhas in all worlds, a Bodhisattva known as Lord of the Glorious Lotus Light Who Is the Bodhisattva of the Great Light of Wisdom rose from his seat and spoke thus to Vairochana Buddha, “World-honored Buddha, you have presented in detail the attributes of the Ten Decisions, the Ten Nourishing Attitudes, the Ten Commitments, and the Ten Stages, but we are still unable to grasp the meaning contained within each of these terms. We pray that you will graciously elucidate these for us. We earnestly request that, in addition to the hundreds of insights of the Tathagatas which we have already heard, You make clear for us the Gates to all the wisdom within the Diamond Treasure House, wondrous to the extreme.”

Vairochana Buddha then said, “You, the thousand Buddhas, listen attentively. To begin with, you have inquired about the meaning contained within the Ten Decisions.

“First, when a disciple of the Buddha turns his heart toward renunciation, he detaches himself from everything physical—native land, city, town, fields, home, gold, silver, bright jewels, men, women, his own body—as well as from everything immaterial and without physical form or attributes, such as

thoughts, feelings, sensations, and judgments. This is necessary because the disciple's false ego has incorrectly assumed that it knows how things are all brought together. Caught up in the twelve links in the chain of dependent origination, this 'lord and master' has fabricated the illusion of personal, permanent 'selves', which it asserts are all of a piece, not subject to disintegration, and intangible, each having its own set of twelve internal and external sense fields, eighteen sensory realms (which are comprised of the six senses, their objects, and their perceptions) as well as five skandhas. It regards all such 'beings' as existing independent of 'I and mine' and treats them, erroneously, as 'separate beings'. If the disciple does not concern himself with the question of whether all such things are within or outside himself but, as a Bodhisattva* new to training, treats them at this time as a false understanding of what he sees before his very eyes, he will therefore be deliberately turning away from the contents of his discriminatory mind to enter the samadhi wherein self and other are seen as void of any permanent substance.

"Second, when a disciple of the Buddha turns his heart toward observing the Precepts, should he not accept every single one of the Ten Great Precepts, he will be lacking in the Dharma which is voiced by Masters. The disciple should not amass deceit, theft, erroneous views, and similar things, but be benevolent,

* Please see the Translator's Introduction to this Scripture (p. 50) for the special use of the term 'Bodhisattva'.

good, free of defilements, straightforward, correct in his views, willing to practice renunciation, and bright-minded, amongst other attributes, for it is the essential nature of these Ten Precepts to rein in and bring to a halt the eight topsy-turvy views which treat the nature of all things as separate from the Immaculacy of the One Path.

“Third, when a disciple of the Buddha turns his heart toward equanimity, he has the essence of a wise discernment which is beyond description. To maintain equanimity in the face of the illusion that ‘all things are unreal’—which is to maintain equanimity in all situations—is called the equanimity of the Unborn and Uncreated on the path to no rebirth. Indeed, all situations can be referred to as forms of ‘maintaining equanimity as though you were in suffering’.

“The countless practices which you undertake, one after the other, are called ‘maintaining equanimity’. There is no clinging, no hitting out, no heart of rage filled with swords and cudgels, for all are the Absolute One, just as there is no procession of separate events, one after the other, since Reality has but a single aspect. There is no ‘being beyond characteristics’ and there is That which is beyond having characteristics and which does not lack the characteristics of even what you call ‘mind’. Conviction is beyond recognition by the discriminatory mind and its cognitive processes. Hence, whether the disciple is arising, abiding, moving, or stopping, he unties the bonds of the false ego; when all things are thus liberated, the characteristics of his equanimity will be indiscernible.

“Fourth, when a disciple of the Buddha turns his heart toward diligent effort, whilst he maintains a respectful demeanor at all times whether walking, standing, sitting, or reclining, he surmounts what is unreal and false by understanding the true nature of things; by scaling the mountain of the Absolute he sees that all that others may assert to be real or unreal are but provisional views. The ‘Great Earth’ as well as ‘blue, yellow, red, and white’ are all comprehended, including the nature of the wisdom of the Triple Treasure. All his faith advances the Way. That which is ‘empty’ of a permanent substance, unborn, uncreated, and beyond the wisest discernment, is revealed as the Immaculacy of Emptiness,* so that he comprehends the so-called ‘things’ of worldly truth and does so without giving rise to the notion of two different modes of being. When the disciple adds a mind emptied of all conceptual thoughts, he penetrates through to his share of good roots.

“Fifth, when a disciple of the Buddha turns his heart toward meditation, his tranquillity and cessation of defiling passions will be beyond description. At that time he, as a person beyond characterization, enters

* When ‘Emptiness’ or the ‘Immaculacy of Emptiness’ occurs, it should be recognised as that state of being in the Unborn, Undying, Uncreated, Unchanging; ‘emptiness’ refers to that which is usually thought of as emptiness, which can lead to grave misunderstandings of emptiness such as nihilism together with its opposite, erroneous methods of meditation requiring a person to ‘empt’ his mind, et cetera. Emptiness, as with Mind, is unceasing Spirituality. [JK]

into the Immaculacy of Emptiness. Sentient beings whose minds are intent on the Way do not see conditions as separate from the Way; as a result, their practices are beyond description or measure, and the samadhi of their minds is measureless. Ordinary people, as well as saintly ones, are quite capable of entering samadhi; their Original Nature is in accord with them all since they are using their powers of meditation.

“However, when someone accepts what the false ego fabricates, his sight binds him to everything because this is the karmic consequence of whatever is hindering him or distorting his view; restless winds stir his heart so that he is not tranquil, and he treats the eight topsy-turvy views—all of which conceal the unreality of their nihilism—as though they were not products of causality. When he sees with the eyes of pure discerning wisdom, all this false understanding is destroyed in an instant, the defilements which affect him within the three temporal worlds are erased completely by his meditation, and he gives birth to all that is good.

“Sixth, when a disciple of the Buddha turns his heart toward cultivating wise discernment, he does not regard the Immaculacy of Emptiness and discriminative wisdom as independent of each other. Although the intellect refers to this wisdom as ‘the mind’ and then erroneously calls it ‘lord and master’ when it treats all things as being discrete, nevertheless, when associated with the Way, this wise discernment is the very thing that perceives the sameness of all things, produces spiritual effects by engaging in training, awakens one to that which sanctifies by

abandoning the mundane, and gives rise to happiness and felicity through eradicating defilements. When the mind is completely free of its bonds, that mind is the functioning of Original Nature, and all is seen as eternal bliss and immaculacy.

“Since defiling passions make discriminative wisdom unclear, the disciple should use his discriminative wisdom for the sake of the principal matter for which he trains; by putting into practice its wise discernment, he penetrates the indescribable Ultimate until he enters the Whole Truth of the Middle Way. The ignorance arising from those defiling passions hinders discriminative wisdom which, when associated with the Way, has no visible characteristics, does not come or go, is not subject to conditions, is free from defilement, is apart from the eight topsy-turvy views, and knows no birth or extinction. The bright flame of this discriminative wisdom makes luminous that which is joyful and as unbounded as space, because the spiritual powers which transform all by their skillful means make use of this discerning function in accord with the Infinite Wisdom of Original Nature.

“Seventh, when a disciple of the Buddha turns his heart toward being resolute and his resolve is great, he will seek what all have sought for and, because he engages in training as an effect of this resolve, he will link his resolute heart with the resolute hearts of others in a continuous sequence and within a hundred kalpas realize Buddhahood and eradicate his defilements. He will seek and search until he reaches Original Nature, the Unborn, the Immaculacy of Emptiness. He will

vow to look and look until he enters the luminosity of his meditation, is liberated by his seeking heart from untold bonds of illusion, and accomplishes untold wondrous acts by means of this searching heart.

“Since the immeasurable merits and virtues of enlightenment are the basis for his seeking, let him first give rise to a searching heart within which he trains in the Way. Since his deeds will then be filled with resolve, he will easily realize the fruits of Buddhahood. Beholding the Middle Way within the Truth, he will see that It is neither a dazzling reflection nor a shadow, that It is not something which delimits, and that It is not nothing. Should he give rise to judgments and opinions, these will not be the products of that discerning wisdom which unties bonds, since true resolve is of Original Nature, which is the source and basis of all genuinely resolute spiritual actions.

“Eighth, when a disciple of the Buddha turns his heart toward being protective, he is protective of the Triple Treasure and of all meritorious spiritual qualities and does not let the eight topsy-turvy opinions of non-Buddhists or any malicious or perverse views interfere with his true faith. He destroys the fetters that self has forged and sees to it that no new bonds are created. He thoroughly penetrates the two modes of Truth—namely, the Dharma and the direct experiencing of enlightenment—by looking into the heart and mind which are right before his very eyes. By protecting what is fundamental, he gives his protection in unimaginable ways. He is protective of the Immaculacy of Emptiness, which is uncreated and beyond

characterization, so that, with a heart linked to wise discernment, he may enter the Unborn. He illumines with the rays of his direct knowing both the path to the Immaculacy of Emptiness and the path to the wisdom that discerns this Immaculacy, thereby guarding over them so that others can see how to enter that Immaculacy which is the Truth.

“Were someone to engage in false discriminations on the basis of his illusions and what those illusions give rise to, it will be for such a one as if there were nothing at all. As a result, he will treat the Original Nature of things as though It were something fragmented and scattered so that Its integrity is left unprotected for him, and he will look upon the Dharma in the same way.

“Ninth, when a disciple of the Buddha turns his heart toward being bright-minded, upon seeing others filled with gladness, he always gives rise to a delight and joy which extends to all things. Even if this luminous Immaculacy of Emptiness were not permeating all the functionings and activities of his everyday life, this does not mean that It is not existing in quietude within him. His great gladness spontaneously captivates others and turns their hearts around so that they realize the Dharma and see the dark and fleeting nature of things. His impartiality and equanimity is the same as the state wherein the mind contemplates all things as products of mind. Hearing much of the meritorious spiritual qualities of the deeds of all Buddhas, he has a joyful and bright-minded wisdom that is beyond description. His mind

and its functioning abide in mindfulness and peaceful luminosity, whilst his gladdened heart has an affinity with all things.

“Tenth, when a disciple of the Buddha turns his heart toward That Which is the Highest, he is one who has superior wisdom. Once he has eradicated all anger and other defilements which arise from the doubting and fearful self when it sees the egoless wheels of karma turning, it is as though he were at the summit. He sees the links in the chain of dependent origination and, having seen them, is as though he were at the summit, for within the world of things, causality reigns; the solitary path to the One within the many is peerless and supreme, as though it went to a summit which is as the crown of a person's head.

“When the sixty-two views of the worldly illusory self see a birth and an extinction of the five skandhas, the ‘lord and master’ of this ‘soul’ moves and twists, bends and stretches. He who does not create these views, foster them, submit to them, or act in accord with them will not be caught in their fetters, and this person, at that moment, will enter the treasured path to the Immaculacy of Emptiness. By neither looking at conditions nor looking for their absence, each and every sentient being, one after the other, will abide in the meditation of that highest samadhi wherein all is tranquil and defiling passions are extinct.

“Starting down the road to the six realms of existence, the false ego, which is erroneously thought to be permanent and real, constantly sees the eight topsy-turvy views arising, but if the disciple can

ascend to the Gate to the unequaled Dharma, he will not undergo any of the eight difficult situations wherein a Buddha is not encountered or the Triple Treasure is not heard of, nor will he sustain the fruits of illusion. Just the same as any sentient being, whether coming or going, sitting or standing, he should train himself in eradicating his defilements, rid himself of the ten wrongful acts which go against the Precepts, and beget the ten good ones which keep to the Precepts.

“A Bodhisattva who enters the Way through correct meditation, correct understanding, and correct actions will succeed in seeing the Truth right before his very eyes. He will not receive the fruits from the six realms of existence since, without fail, he will not regress from being within one of the various stages of his Buddha Nature on Its way to Buddhahood. He will continue on, birth after birth, until he enters the family of the Buddhas, for he does not depart from true faith.”

Having explained extensively the various aspects of the preceding Ten Lights of Heaven, Vairochana Buddha said, “You, the thousand Buddhas, listen attentively, for you have asked about the Ten Attitudes which nourish and sustain a disciple’s heart.

“First, when a disciple of the Buddha nourishes an attitude of kindness and benevolence and always acts from that attitude, he has produced cause for rejoicing. From a suitable perspective on what brings joy within his selfless wisdom, he penetrates into the Dharma wherein the Greater Course teaches that feelings, thoughts, sensations, consciousness, and form

have no birth, no abiding, no perishing, and are as illusions and transformations: 'the One in the many are not two'. Thus all his practices perfect the Wheel of the Dharma.

"By turning his heart around and bearing all things, he is able to produce true faith and not follow Mara's delusory teachings. Further, he is able to help all sentient beings realize the delightful fruits of benevolence—for the fruits of wickedness are fallacy, foolishness, and darkest ignorance—and help them attain the samadhi that arises from realizing the insubstantiality of all things.

"Second, when a disciple of the Buddha nourishes a merciful and compassionate attitude and employs a compassion which is totally empty of all self and beyond description, then, conditioned by that compassion, he practices the Way in order to eradicate all his own suffering and produce a wisdom which sees what is fundamental within the immeasurable suffering of all sentient beings. He does not kill what produces life, suppress what gives rise to the Dharma, or become attached to what causes or contributes to the arising of a false self. Thus, by his always behaving in ways that do not kill, steal, or lust after, no sentient being has cause to be vexed with him. Further, by his having given rise to a resolve to realize enlightenment, he sees all things as aspects of Reality within the voidness of non-substantiality. As a result, from within the deeds that arise from his inherited karmic nature comes forth a mind that wisely understands what the Eightfold Path is.

“Wherever he may be within the six types of close family relationships, the six misfortunate circumstances for devoting oneself to the Buddha’s Teachings, or the three grades of friendliness and hatred, he partakes of the wisdom of being at ease and derives joy amongst the conditions from past wrongdoings regardless of what type of being he may be. When the all-acceptance of karmic consequences makes itself manifest, his singular pleasure in seeing self and other with non-discrimination for all sentient beings will give rise in him to great compassion.

“Third, when a disciple of the Buddha nourishes a heart that is joyful and bright-minded and his mind has reached the moment when it is joyful and willing because it has realized the non-arising of all things, his understanding of the Eightfold Path (wherein his inherent karmic nature is seen as the One in the many and the many in the One) will be totally devoid of self, so that his bright heart is not attached to ‘I’ and ‘mine’. Here cause and effect do not collect together to form aggregates as they emerge and disappear within the three periods of past, present, and future; here all entities realize the Absolute which is the Immaculacy of Emptiness, and their creation of introspective meditation delights all sentient beings.

“Having awakened to the non-substantiality of all things, this disciple enters the Eightfold Path and abandons wicked-acting companions to seek good ones and to proclaim our fine and loving Way. He helps sentient beings enter the family of the Buddha’s Dharma and, within the Dharma, continually fosters

and awakens delight and joy in others so that they may enter amidst the company of the Buddhas. Further, he helps all these sentient beings enter into true faith by abandoning their perverted views, putting behind them the suffering which has arisen from the six realms of existence, and cultivating a joyful and bright-minded attitude.

“Fourth, when a disciple of the Buddha nourishes a heart that is willing to give up worldly things and continually begets an attitude of renunciation, he will be as empty space in accordance with the Teaching on Emptiness as That which is uncreated and beyond characterization. Whether amidst what is good or wicked, seen or unseen, defiling or blessing, he illumines all equally and impartially. His is a heart wherein there is no sense of ‘I’ and ‘they’; the unfathomableness of the Buddha Nature of self and others is, for him, the great renunciation which extends beyond his own being—body, flesh, hands, and feet—as well as beyond man and woman, town and nation; whilst his unborn Self Nature continues to practice this renunciation, he lets go of all as though they were phantasms and apparitions or as something ungraspable and ever-changing, like flowing water or a lamp’s flame.

“Fifth, when a disciple of the Buddha nourishes an attitude of charitableness, he can accept all sentient beings by means of his charitable heart. His giving of body, speech, mind, goods, and Dharma as his alms teaches and guides all sentient beings. What is within himself and outside himself—such as nations, cities,

men, women, fields, and home—are all aspects of the Absolute, so that he has reached a point where he no longer has consciousness of anything being ‘alms’. The received and the given, both within and outside, are beyond the relationship of cause and effect, beyond gathering something in or giving something away. His actions are free and without any conscious effort, since it is his intrinsic Buddha Nature that gives out the alms. All we can see of such a one is but a residue from previous deeds.

“Sixth, when a disciple of the Buddha nourishes a heart that delights in speaking about what is truly good, he enters into the samadhi in which his Buddha Nature is given speech. The Supreme Truth is the language of the Dharma’s meaning, for all true speech accords with the One Word and is in harmony with all sentient beings since this disciple’s heart and mind hold no anger or disputatiousness.

“The wisdom which realizes that all things are interdependent and lack independent reality, being itself unconditional, always produces feelings of affection within a disciple, for when his attitudes and deeds comply with the intentions of Buddha, they will also be in accord with the true intentions of all other persons. Hence, such a disciple teaches sentient beings by using the language of the wise and holy Dharma and generates good roots by always acting with such a heart.

“Seventh, when a disciple of the Buddha nourishes a heart that acts to benefit and aid others, at the moment when his heart is bountiful in its giving kindly

help, the Gates to the Dharma are all emblazoned with tongues of fire. As he employs the wise and discerning path upon which True Wisdom travels far and wide, he realizes the seven riches of meditative practice. Those who receive his bounty have their lives benefited, as they too enter the samadhi of helping and benefiting others. He is completely open in all his actions of body, speech, and mind, thereby making the Great Earth tremble and shake. All that he does to encourage others to enter the various manifestations of Emptiness, the various sorts of paths, and the various types of middle ways earn him merit, ease, and contentment, as he makes his appearance in the six realms of existence. The matter of the existence of immeasurable suffering is not considered a misfortune, for his simply being useful to others is a benefit and a blessing.

“Eighth, when a disciple of the Buddha nourishes an attitude of amicableness, he identifies with the ‘Void’ within the Dharma of the Unborn through his knowledge of the essence of the Way and treats his life as inseparable from that of any other through his knowledge of egolessness. Being void of self, he treats all things as though they have a similar appearance—like things seem in the tundra—for they are ever being born, abiding, and perishing, since it is the characteristic of worldly things to continuously flow and turn about, readily manifesting karma in the form of untold bodies and minds which, all alike, enter the six realms of existence. Because the disciple knows that this ‘being void of self’ is identical with the Unborn (just as the false self is the same as non-existence)

and therefore adapts himself to whatever situation is at hand, he enters the samadhi of sharing the Dharma impartially with all others.

“Ninth, when a disciple of the Buddha nourishes a heart empty of self and also attends to the mind of meditation, his wise discernment, which derives from his ever-vigilant meditation, will attest to the Immaculacy of Emptiness, whilst his heart and mind grow hushed and serene. He will not be troubled by, or spun about in, the realms of mental discrimination and form where things are thought of as having a self.

“Because things are always shifting this way and that, now appearing, now sinking out of sight, this disciple continually enters the ten modes of contemplation for penetrating into hundreds of samadhis in order to make the falsity of these ‘selves’ apparent by means of his single-minded wisdom. He realizes that all such false ‘selves’, whether within or without, are the seeds of future sentient beings who will not be tied to each other or go their separate ways but will collect together and give rise to the making of karma beyond measure.

“Tenth, when a disciple of the Buddha nourishes an attitude of wise discernment, he fashions a heart that looks from the viewpoint of True Wisdom, as he observes the fetters forged by those holding on to perverse views, to their bondage to sorrow and gloom, and to their underlying lack of certainty. Because patient spiritual progress and true emptiness of self are the same, they are apart from ‘skandhas’, apart from ‘realms of existence’, apart from ‘awakening to

Truth', apart from 'sentient beings', and are in accord with the One Fundamental Truth; hence, they are apart from cause and effect as well as from 'the things of the three temporal worlds'.

"When this disciple's wise and discerning nature becomes aware of 'sentient beings', he sees that they are not the One Fundamental Truth nor are they simply 'cause and effect' or 'things in the three temporal worlds'; when the nature of his wise discernment becomes aware of That which is radiant, and the One Flame burns bright, he sees It as though space and does not try to take hold of It. The skillful means of this wise discernment produce a heart which preserves and protects itself. This heart enters the Way and awakens to the ungraspability of the boundlessness of Emptiness, which springs from the Heart of the Unborn.

"The preceding articles by the Radiant Lord of the Thousand Oceans have given voice to the Gates that illumine hundreds of Teachings on the heart."

Vairochana Buddha then said, "You, the thousand Buddhas of these oceans, have asked about the Ten Commitments which are the indestructible seeds of Buddhahood.

"First, when a disciple of the Buddha commits his heart to faith, in all his practices he takes faith as the chiefmost, the foundation for his many virtues, and does not give rise in his heart to the perverted views of non-Buddhists, for these views are what we call attachments. By not persisting in the actions which such bonds as these produce, the disciple will enter

into the Dharma that is empty and beyond cause. Since the three positions of 'liberation', 'independence of any characteristics', and 'absence of both the Absolute and the unconditioned' do not exist, there is no 'not being born', there is no 'being born without abiding' or 'abiding without perishing', and perishing has no existence, since in all things there is absence of any permanent nature.

"Worldly truth is as different from the wisdom of the Supreme Truth as utter extinction is from Emptiness. The pure emptiness of form is similar to the pure emptiness of mind, wherein the mind holds all things as space does, nor does it differ from all minds holding all things as space does. Therefore, the disciple's faith in faith is tranquil and free of all defiling passions. There is no 'combining of essential elements' nor is there any substantive 'thing' on which to rely. This is why we call the 'lord and master' the 'illusory ego', for in the three temporal worlds it falsely supposes a self with its possessions. That which does not go about accumulating attributes is called faith beyond characterization.

"Second, when a disciple of the Buddha commits his heart to mindfulness, he practices mindfulness. He is constantly awake to the six thoughts (which dwell upon Buddha, Sangha, Dharma, the Precepts, alms-giving, and the ultimate heaven-like joy of Buddhahood) to the extent of always giving the Supreme Truth as his alms. He is not attached to emptiness or free from it. The phases of birth, abiding, and perishing are unmoving, neither coming nor

going; at the same time, depending on what he has received as the result of past karma, his transferring of merit to any composite being, world, or cosmos penetrates to the very Wisdom of Ultimate Reality.

“His discerning wisdom having discerned Discerning Wisdom, he, bit by bit, conveys all beings to tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions by whatever vehicle. The tongues of fire, blazing up, are impermanent; the Sparkling, Brilliant Light is the Unborn. The birth of the Unborn does not arise. Turning and shifting is the path to Emptiness: transforming what went before, transforming what comes after, transforming, ever transforming, shifting and changing. Changing and changing, turning and shifting, transforming all at the same time and in the same place; the blazing tongues of fire, the One in all, being born and perishing, existing simultaneously at each instant; the already transformed and the not yet transformed transform, ever becoming: the experience of each single sensation is like this.

“Third, when a disciple of the Buddha commits his heart to transferring merit, then, in his wise understanding of Emptiness in the True Teaching, the highest Emptiness—Nirvana—blazes forth as Truth. Karma's path binds us to the objects of our senses; the name of the Middle Way through this world of causality is Truth. Were we to give a name to that lord which is the false self-nature of things, it would be called worldly truth. From these two types of truth, the disciple deeply penetrates into the Void and finds that there is no coming or going. Illusion and its

conversion receive their fruits and they are beyond comprehension. Thus, on the deepest level, his heart is liberated.

“Fourth, when a disciple of the Buddha commits his heart to spiritual insight, he patiently yields to, and does good for, the Buddha Nature in all things. The Buddha Nature by Its very nature is beyond the fetters of passion, beyond the speculations of the discriminatory mind; It knows no hindrances and is beyond being bound to, or free from, anything. It penetrates all things, penetrates all meaning, penetrates all language, and penetrates all the teachings that help others to turn their hearts around. The three temporal worlds are rooted in cause and effect; the roots of sentient beings lie in their deeds. The Absolute is beyond causality, beyond integration or dissolution. It has no ‘true function’, no ‘purpose’, no use for naming things, and continually finds uses for all types of emptiness; as the Emptiness of emptiness, It shines forth and penetrates all types of emptiness. Hence It is called ‘the Emptiness that penetrates all things’ and this Emptiness of emptiness, That Which Is, is ungraspable.

“Fifth, when a disciple of the Buddha commits his heart to being spiritually upright and aspiring, he directly illuminates any holding onto, or relying upon, a so-called ‘permanent self’ and he thereby penetrates into the wisdom that is unborn. Ignorance and its ‘permanent self’ are void of any substantiality, whether within the mind or outside in the world of phenomenal ‘things’, both of which are also void of substantiality; the heart which threads its way through

the emptiness within and the emptiness without embraces so-called 'existing' and so-called 'not existing', and does so without destroying the seed of the Way.

"The disciple, free of defiling passions, penetrates the Middle Way with a single flash of insight and then teaches sentient beings in all the ten quarters how to turn their hearts around. He turns all sentient beings around so that all enter the Immaculacy of Emptiness, which is perfect and complete spiritual knowledge; the true nature of Buddha Nature truly acts from the Immaculacy of Emptiness. The ego lord of the three temporal worlds may fashion his fetters, but they do not adhere.

"Sixth, when a disciple of the Buddha commits his heart to not regressing, he does not enter the level on which ordinary, everyday, non-Buddhists operate and therefore does not give rise to all sorts of views which lead to long-term attachments. Moreover, he does not give rise to a false self (which gives the appearance of being something constant and continuous within cause and effect) and thereby enter into the karma of the three temporal worlds. Also, as his deeds are empty of self, he does not put down roots anywhere. Because his actions are integrated with his training, he does not regress in his behavior; because he is aware that nirvana and samsara are not two different states, he does not regress from his mindfulness. His emptiness of self produces the wisdom of meditative insight which sees the continuity of the Absolute, whilst his heart, which travels in the Vehicle of Mahayana, enters That which is beyond duality. The absolute and supreme purity

within his ever-boundless heart creates an absolute and peerless illumination from which he does not regress.

“Seventh, when a disciple of the Buddha commits his heart solely to the Mahayana ideal and has completely let go of any thought of ‘all is void’, the intention behind all his deeds is called the One Vehicle, which conveys him to the wisdom that knows that all is Void. The vehicle of his spiritual knowledge, as well as the vehicle of his practice, is his wise understanding of the Vehicle. The vehicle which he spontaneously employs in his heart of hearts he entrusts to all sentient beings and ferries them across the river of the three temporal worlds, the river of bondage, and the river of birth and extinction.

“Those who practice the Way ride in the Vehicle, which they can employ to carry others. Their heart, which is the vehicle of wise understanding, crosses and enters the sea of the Buddhas. Therefore, since all sentient beings have not yet attained the use of the Wisdom of Emptiness, the term ‘Mahayana’ does not simply denote ‘the Great Vehicle’ but also ‘the Vehicle that gets sentient beings across the sea of suffering’.

“Eighth, when a disciple of the Buddha commits his heart to non-attachment, he allows his mind to let go of its perceptions: this is liberation, and it illumines the incomparable Prajnaparamita. All karma that arises from delusion and defiling passions, as well as all things in the three temporal worlds, are the One Truth of the Absolute, and they act from the Emptiness of the Unborn. Because the disciple himself knows that he can realize Buddhahood, that all Buddhas teach that

we are all equal, that all who are good and wise learn that we are all alike, and that all are the same as the Emptiness of the Unborn, his heart is therefore said to be beyond characterization.

“Ninth, when a disciple of the Buddha commits his heart to the wisdom which discerns That Which Is, incalculable universes neither form nor are brought into life. Life gives rise to defiling passions, but they do not bind him. All the Gates to the Dharma, all the paths which the wise travel, all the teachings which the good and holy behold: whatever exists is also like this.

“All Dharmas by which Buddhas teach, through their skillful means, to turn the hearts of others around, we all collect together within our hearts, whilst non-Buddhists employ our achievements for their disputatious reasoning and topsy-turvy contemplations. By seeing the difference between delusion and the conversion of his heart, as well as between what is spoken by demons and what by Buddhas, the disciple enters the place of the two modes of Truth—namely, of Dharma and direct realizing of enlightenment—which are neither one and the same nor two different Truths. The five skandhas, the eighteen sensory elements, and the twelve internal and external fields of the senses have no real existence; the wise discernment of this is a light which shatters the darkness of delusion, a light which shines forth from the Buddha Nature and penetrates all things.

“Tenth, when a disciple of the Buddha commits his heart to being indestructible in its confidence, he enters the wisdom of the stage of the good and wise

and approaches the level of total liberation. The foremost Gate to realizing the Way is the heart of bright Bodhi, which maintains its equanimity in the face of defiling passions and remains in accord with the Immaculacy of Emptiness, so that even Mara's eight demons cannot destroy it.

"All those who have realized the Truth Transmit It to their disciples, as all the Buddhas exhort the disciple to continue on the Way. Entering the samadhi of Transmitted Truth, he lets loose a brilliant light from his body which illumines the Buddha Lands in all the ten quarters. He enters the spirit of a Buddha's way of doing things; at will, he now emerges, now disappears, setting the thousand great universes to shaking. With a heart in the stage of impartiality, he is without peer and is not different from others, but not because he has some intellectual understanding of the path to meditating on the Middle Way. By means of his powers of samadhi he therefore sees within the Light untold realms of Buddhas, Who emerge for the sake of giving voice to the Dharma. At that moment he then realizes the samadhi of Transmitted Truth and climbs toward the stage where his impartiality will be as open space.

"Full and complete are his good and wise actions, which come from the Dharma Gate that holds all. He has found the Middle Way between the wise discernment of the emptiness of all that is without and the emptiness of all that is within, and this Way is beyond characterization as It shines forth. Therefore, by his extinction of all characteristics, he reaches the

Dharma Gate to the samadhi which is indestructible as a diamond and he enters the Gate to all actions. He enters the stage where his impartiality is like open space, which is just as the Buddha's wide-ranging discourses are in the *Lotus Scripture*."

Vairochana Buddha then said, "You, the thousand Buddhas, have asked what the Ten Stages signify.

"First, when a disciple of the Buddha is at the Bodhisattva stage where his Buddha Nature displays the wisdom of impartiality, the Truth transforms all his actions and the radiance of his blossoming lotus is full and complete. He has the four heavenly fruits of being prudent in conduct, creative in motivating others, responsible in behavior, and adaptable; he also has the ten wondrous spiritual powers, the ten epithets denoting the titles of a Buddha, and the eighteen characteristics of a Buddha. Residing in the Buddha's Pure Land, he makes untold great vows. His discourse is able, fearless, and bold, so that we can all comprehend, and realize the Truth of, his discussions and reasonings as well as his actions. Having given birth to a family of Buddhas, he sits within this stage which his Buddha Nature is manifesting. In short, since he does not receive the effects that ordinary, everyday, non-Buddhists experience due to all their frustrations, his contentment and joy are great.

"From his one Buddha Land, he enters untold Buddha Lands; from the single kalpa of his life, he enters untold kalpas. He turns inexpressible Dharmas into expressive Teachings. Whether reaching outside or reflecting within, he sees all things; whether going

back into the past or moving forward into the future, he sees all things. He is continuously awake to the two modes of Truth—the Dharma and the direct realization of enlightenment—as he abides within the Great Matter for which we train. By means of his singular wisdom and intelligence, he understands the sequence of the Ten Stages, proclaiming them one by one to sentient beings, whilst his heart and mind continually remain within the Middle Way. By means of his singular wisdom and intelligence, he understands the various natures of the ten types of wrongful behavior* which give rise to the twelve links in the chain of dependent origination, whilst he always remains upon the path of goodness. By means of his singular wisdom and intelligence, he sees the existence and non-existence in all things. By means of his singular wisdom and intelligence, he knows how to enter the ten types of meditation, travel the thirty-seven paths that lead to Buddhahood, and manifest himself in all the six realms of physical existence. By means of his singular wisdom and intelligence, he is familiar with the outer appearances of all forms in the ten quarters and with how thoughts, having arisen, relate to forms conditioned by karma, whilst his heart and mind remain free of bondage to them. His brilliant radiance illumines all things, for this is his unborn wisdom, which abides unperturbed in the faith that all things are empty of substantiality and which manifests here

* That is, behavior contrary to the Ten Great Precepts, as presented in Part Two of this Scripture.

and now right before one's eyes. All stages from the First and Second up to the realm of Buddhahood, as well as those in between, are at one and the same time the Gates to all Dharmas, and behave accordingly. In short, he emanates a resolve which is the Treasure House within the sea of the merits and virtues of the stage of impartiality. He is as a single drop in the vast ocean, something which even those who are not monks discern and approve of.

“Second, when a disciple of the Buddha is at the Bodhisattva stage where his Buddha Nature has the keenest sense of discriminative wisdom, it permeates pure, clear, and bright through all his good deeds. This discerning wisdom, which bestows the joy of its benevolence and compassion on all, is the source of all his meritorious spiritual qualities.

“From the very moment when this disciple beholds this great immaculate wisdom permeating his understanding of how to apply skillful means, he sees that all sentient beings have minds capable of comprehending the First Noble Truth, for there is none for whom suffering does not exist. The consciousness born within the conditions of all the misery and distress brought on by ‘the swords and cudgels’ of being in one of the three evil realms of existence is synonymous with this Noble Truth that suffering exists.

“This suffering is of three types—namely, that due to impermanency, that arising from physical pain, and that arising from mental pain due to some loss or deprivation. The condition of ‘suffering due to impermanency’ refers to the awareness arising from

within inner and outer conditions which the physical 'body' skandha experiences as a result of the jabs and blows from 'the swords and cudgels' of being alive. This is just like one's first becoming aware of his body. The condition of 'suffering arising from physical pain' is the consequence of the thought-consciousness which follows upon what the body-consciousnesses have connected with; it experiences the phenomena of bodily wounds and bruises from these 'swords and cudgels': heavy indeed is the suffering from this kind of pain. The condition of 'suffering from mental pain due to loss or deprivation' is the product of the two mental skandhas—sensations and volitions—when they are faced with the physical skandha amidst its decay and dissolution. These three types of awareness—body, sensations, and volitions—produce, in turn, a third mental skandha: feelings, which comprise the emotional suffering arising from the sensing and trying to willfully elude physical pain.

“Since all conscious sentient beings witness these three kinds of suffering giving rise to the causes and effects that produce immeasurable misery and distress, I, Vairocana, amidst these suffering beings, entered the samadhi of the path of teaching others how to turn their hearts around. Manifesting all manner of bodily forms within the six realms of existence, I have utilized My ten kinds of abilities at discourse to give voice to the Gates to various Teachings and speak of 'the consciousness of suffering', the conditions of suffering, and the 'swords and cudgels', which are the instruments of those conditions.

“What I call ‘the consciousness of suffering’ may be described as follows: when the wounds and bruises to the body, which is predisposed to awareness of pain, proclaim the body’s immanent destruction, an awareness arises amongst the internal and external sensations of those beings who are attached to ‘objects outside’ and ‘contents within the mind’; this awareness, in turn, produces ‘an awareness of consciousness, feelings, and sensations’, and it is this that I designate as ‘the consciousness of suffering’.

“Because sentient beings act on the basis of discriminating ‘outer things’ and ‘inner thoughts and feelings’, their minds lay hold of physical forms. When their minds come in contact with vexations and experience the three poisons of delusion, greed, and hate, the sufferings arising from experiencing and trying to elude pain are created. When the consciousness, conditioned by the mind, first becomes aware of conditions through the senses, this is called ‘the awareness of suffering’.

“The consciousness in which the mind lets the mind feel sensations is one ‘awake to sensations’. When it has not yet experienced the three poisons, this is called ‘suffering due to impermanency’.

“When sensations press in, or urge on, they bring about moments of awareness that resemble sparks being struck from a flint. In body and mind, thought after thought arises and perishes as the body breaks down, decays, and undergoes change. Consciousness enters into conditions of disintegration as these conditions come together and then disperse; the heart

is miserable, the mind is distressed. Once there is remembrance of pain, conditions contaminate and bind the mind, and the mind does not give them up. This is 'the suffering which arises from awareness of the impermanence of all things', which is the Noble Truth that all beings suffer in the three temporal worlds.

"Further, untold minds, beholding the accumulation of their ignorance, create all manner of karma. The cause of karmic continuity is connected with the continuity of memory and sensations; this is called the Noble Truth that the cause of suffering lies in the defiling passions and the karma they create.

"When the heart and mind are on the Path of Wisdom, where right views liberate one from the unreality of what is unreal, I call this the Noble Eight-fold Path. This Path of Wisdom brings to an end the karmic consequences of actions by bringing their causes to an end. The disciple's immaculate solitary radiance is his Buddha Nature; the tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions of this wondrous wisdom of his is the Fundamental Truth. The varieties of his wise discernment, being perfect, are called 'the roots of Buddhahood'.

"All his wise discernments arise naturally from the Immaculacy of Emptiness and enter him as insights. First of all, these are his good deeds and practices. Second, on account of his insights, he gives up all attachment to desires and, by practicing the immaculacy of complete impartiality, discards them. No longer forming a relationship with them, he regards the immateriality of all things as a function of mind,

thinking, 'When I behold the lands in all the ten quarters, they are all old lands which my bodies from ancient times have made use of. The water of the four great oceans is the elemental water of my being; the fire during the eon when all is consumed will be the elemental fire which my ancient bodies formerly made use of. All the winds that circle the universes are my vital energy which I formerly made use of. I have now entered into this stage, and my Dharma Body is complete and perfect as I discard my former bodies. In short, I will not receive again my former impure body which was made up of allotments of the four elements.' This is the perfection of all varieties of renunciation. Third, he continues on, thinking, 'I have beheld what turns the hearts of all sentient beings around and will bestow true joy on humans and devas: the joy of the Ten Stages, the joy of departing from fear of the ten types of wrongful behavior, the joy of realizing the samadhi of the wondrous blossoming, even up to the joy of Buddhahood.' In this way what is beheld is the perfection of all varieties of benevolence.

"At that moment, the disciple, residing within this stage, is free of delusion, craving, and hate, for he has entered the spiritual knowing of the fundamental truth of impartiality, which is the basis of all his deeds and practices. Wandering freely through all the worlds of the Buddhas, he manifests himself, transforming into untold Dharma bodies, just as is spoken of to all sentient beings in the chapters of the divine *Lotus Scripture*.

"Third, when a disciple of the Buddha is at the Bodhisattva stage where his Buddha Nature is clear

and bright, by means of the wise spiritual knowledge which his samadhi has released, he understands all the words, phrasings, and poetic cadences within the twelve categories of the Canon, which are the Gates to the Buddha Dharma in the three temporal worlds. The Buddha's discourses on the Dharma in prose, His discourses in verse, His predictions of Buddhahood for His disciples, His lengthy expositions of Truth, His poems, His impromptu addresses on the Dharma, His rules and Precepts which He promulgated in response to questions, His allegories, His stories of His former lives, His stories of the former lives of His disciples, His stories of wondrous occurrences, and His narratives of the effects of past karma on someone's present state—all these are the topics of the Dharma, the divisions of Its fundamental meaning.

“Within these words, phrasings, and cadences, He speaks of all things in the phenomenal worlds. For example, the thoughts which stream into existence, one after the other, first emerge from the storehouse of consciousness. The four great elements expand them into physical forms with mental states and processes, which are called the six types of existence. Within the senses of a sentient being arises true awareness; not yet divided into pain and pleasure, it is called the consciousness of sensation. When it becomes aware of pain and pleasure, this consciousness is spoken of in terms of the three sensations of pain, pleasure, and freedom from both. This sentient being is constantly aware of feelings of attachment in abundance; he already craves his personal viewpoint,

his non-Buddhist notions of appropriate behavior, and his dualistic sense of good and bad. The beginning of consciousness he calls 'birth'; the end of consciousness he calls 'death'. Examining all these various fruits of the causes of suffering is the Middle Way amidst the activities of heart and mind.

"Because for a long time now I have parted company with these causes, I have no personal sense of self. I have awakened to My radiant and wondrous spiritual powers and have complete control over My modes of discourse. The actions of My heart and mind are void of self, so that during any kalpa I appear within the Buddha Lands in all the ten quarters transformed, and then transform again and again during a hundred kalpas and a thousand kalpas. Amongst the peoples of nations, I nourish wondrous spiritual powers; they bow in respect before the Buddhas and, having inquired of Me, embrace My words of Dharma.

"Further, I manifest bodily in the six realms of existence. Within a single sound, I give voice to untold varieties of Dharma, and each individual sentient being through his own thoughts can hear the Dharma that his heart longs for, which is the sound of the Four Fundamental Truths concerning suffering, impermanence, and no permanent, substantive 'I'. The peoples of these nations are not alike; their bodies and minds are different and constantly changing so that, when the disciple within this radiant stage of wondrous blossoming opens up (to the discernment and approval even of those who are not monks), he is as one giving voice to a thousand varieties of samadhis,

which are the Dharma Gates that let loose the various Dharmas for others to behold.

“Fourth, when a disciple of the Buddha is at the Bodhisattva stage where his Buddha Nature sees things as they really are, that is, sees That which is Truth blazing up within the mundane, he sees that things are neither ceasing nor eternal but now born, now abiding, now perishing—one life, one time, one existence, but since their sources are different, they differ in how they manifest and differ in their consequences. The Middle Way of causality is beyond the absolute and the relative, beyond good and bad, beyond being an ordinary being and being a Buddha; hence, the realm of Buddha and the realm of the mundane are one and the same. The name for this is the Truth of the world.

“In the study of this path of wisdom there is no absolute way nor is there a choice of ways. The various modes of contemplation of the profound doctrine of Buddhism are what is called ‘speaking of the intentions and deeds of Buddha by first awakening to the Cause of contemplation’. Awakening to faith, awakening to reflectiveness, awakening to stillness, awakening to what is superior, awakening to mindfulness, awakening to wise discernment, awakening to insight, awakening to ‘Ah!’,* awakening

* That is, the direct experiencing of That which goes beyond what any discursive word can encompass. The term ‘Ah!’ renders Kumārajīva’s use of a Chinese expletive, which he has apparently employed to startle the reader into going beyond the limitations of discursive thought.

to contentment, awakening to renunciation—these are the various paths to skillful means.

“When the disciple’s heart and mind awaken to the fruits of contemplation, he abides within meditation. Shimmering, shimmering, his heart sees Truth, and his mind meditates within Its unbounded Immaculacy. When he gives rise to mindfulness and meditation, he penetrates into a contemplation on his intentions, which begets a desire to help all sentient beings. In conformity with the methods and teachings of the Way, he transforms himself and is reborn. This is called the patience born from the enjoyment of Dharma, the patience born from abiding in It, the patience born of direct experience of It, the patience born of tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions.

“Therefore, the Buddhas, being within the samadhi in which They awaken to the brilliant radiance of the blossoming flower, reveal untold Buddhas, Who Transmit the Truth to Their disciples as They proclaim the Dharma as with one voice. Their disciples by the hundreds of thousands give rise to the intention to realize Buddhahood, without departing from their meditation. By abiding in their meditation, they taste blissful meditation; cleaving to meditation, longing for meditation, they abide in meditation for a single kalpa or a thousand kalpas. Seeing the Buddhas upon Their lotus seats giving voice to a hundred Gates to the Dharma, they make as their offering their listening to, and heeding, the Dharma, as they abide in meditation the whole kalpa of their lives.

“When the Buddhas within the radiance are Transmitting the Truth to Their disciples, the disciples give rise to signs of various forms of meditation springing forth, to signs of progress, to signs of ever going on. As a consequence, they do not sink down into the sea of birth and death, nor do they regress, fall into wicked ways, or remain where they are.

“The Teachings from the samadhi of Transmitting the Truth surpass contentment and patience. Long since has such a disciple exhausted his karma without anything remaining to be reborn, so that he penetrates into all Buddha Lands and practices untold varieties of meritorious spiritual qualities. All his deeds are radiant as he awakens to excellent methods and skillful means. Through his teaching he turns the hearts of all sentient beings around so that he can bring them to see the unceasing bliss and the Immaculacy of Self which is the Nature of a Buddha.

“The one who is born and abides within this stage goes forth to turn the hearts of others around. His Dharma Gates gradually become more and more profound; his wisdom obtained through his contemplation (which is as a wondrous blossoming flower) penetrates the Middle Way of Buddha Nature. All the varieties of his Dharma Gates are perfect and sound; they are, moreover, as brilliant and indestructible as diamonds. These ways of his, surpassing sun and moon, have clarified the Matter for which we train.

“Fifth, when a disciple of the Buddha is at the Bodhisattva stage where the wisdom of his Buddha

Nature illumines all, his Teachings have the Ten Abilities born from Truth, whereby he gives rise to the practice of all merits and virtues. Through his skillful means (which arise from his singular discerning wisdom of these Ten Abilities) he has full knowledge of

1. how to distinguish between spiritually right and wrong actions;
2. what karma good and bad actions create;
3. what all the desires, yearnings, and aspirations of beings in the six realms of existence are, and what fruits those desires produce;
4. how to distinguish differences amongst the natures of those in the six realms of existence;
5. how the good and bad roots of each person differ from each other;
6. what all types of meditation are, including the correct, the perverted, and the counterfeit;
7. how all causality carries within itself both cause and effect, so that when the effect is attained it bears the root of its cause with it;
8. how to use his five kinds of spiritual vision—intelligent vision, vision that glows with the Buddha light, vision that sees beyond birth and death, vision that is free of obstacles, and vision that understands all things—by which he knows what all things are and how all things are produced;
9. what the former existences of each and every one are in the events of the past hundred kalpas; and

10. how to liberate all sentient beings by extinguishing their defiling passions and eliminating ignorance from all their perceptions and sensations.

According to the type of wisdom which arises from these Ten Abilities of his, he knows the causes and effects of his own training as well as how all sentient beings discern causes and effects and individually use their bodies, speech, and minds to mistake Pure Lands for evil lands and evil lands for lands filled with wondrous sounds of music. He knows how they are able to turn good around and make it into something evil and turn evil around and make it into something good: what is form, for them, is not form, and That which is beyond form is, for them, a form; they take what is male to be female and what is female to be male; they take the six realms of existence not to be the six realms of existence, and what are not the six realms they take to be the six realms; and so they go on up to the point where the very elements of earth, water, fire, and wind are not for them earth, water, fire, and wind.

“At such moments, by means of his great powers with skillful means when following where all sentient beings are leading, this disciple sees That which is beyond their conception. Since those in lower Bodhi-sattva stages do not readily grasp the matter of ‘raising the foot and lowering the foot’,* this disciple employs

* That is, ‘the always going on to Buddhahood’ with light and darkness following each other as steps in walking.

his great bright discerning wisdom to gradually elevate their thoughts, and its brilliance and radiance are immeasurable, immeasurable! His Dharma Gates, beyond description and inexpressible, are, in their present manifestation, simply the results of his previous practice.

“Sixth, when a disciple of the Buddha is at the Bodhisattva stage where the lotus of his Buddha Nature is radiant in its blossoming, he is able to use ten varieties of wisdom, which his wondrous spiritual powers open up, in order to point out to all sentient beings within all worlds various types of transformations:

1. By means of the wisdom which his spiritual eye has revealed, he knows from observing his own stream of thoughts that, within the lands of the three temporal worlds, all physical forms are comprised of atoms of dust, that the ‘bodies’ of sentient beings in the six realms of existence are the product of their stream of thoughts, and that the gross form of each and every body is comprised of smaller forms made up of even tinier dust particles.
2. By means of the wisdom from his spiritual ear, he knows that the sounds of pain and pleasure from sentient beings in all six realms at all times throughout the ten quarters do not lack in either sound or voice but are, indeed, ‘the voice of all things’.
3. By means of the wisdom from his spiritual body, he knows that all forms are comprised

of a material and a non-material form whose appearance is neither that of a male nor that of a female, that a single thought contains every land within the three temporal worlds of the ten quarters for the length of a kalpa, and that the very dust motes within both large and small lands are themselves 'bodies'.

4. By means of the wisdom from his spiritual views of others, he knows that what are going through the hearts and minds of all sentient beings within the six realms of existence at all times everywhere are matters concerned with such dualities as pain and pleasure, good and bad.
5. By means of the wisdom from his own spiritual humanity, he knows that all sentient beings within all lands everywhere at all times will receive from past lives pain and pleasure in their present life, and he knows what kinds of lives are apt to unfold for each and every one of them for a hundred kalpas.*
6. By means of the wisdom from his own spiritual liberation, he knows that sentient beings in the three temporal worlds within the ten quarters will be liberated by cutting themselves free from all defiling passions, and,

* This ability to 'see' future lives refers to the development of a Bodhisattva Mahasattva's so-called 'Divine Eye' by which things, events, and karmic consequences are viewed from a much broader perspective; it does not imply that lives are 'predestined'.

whether these passions be few or many, every last one of them will be eliminated by some stage, be it the First or the Tenth.

7. By means of the wisdom from his own spiritually stable mind, he knows that the minds of sentient beings within the lands in the three temporal worlds of the ten quarters may be soundly rooted and stable, or changeable and unstable, or beyond a matter of stability and instability, and that his samadhis which contain the methods to assist others in meditating are to be numbered in the hundreds.
8. By means of the wisdom from his own spiritual insight, he knows that, in heart and mind, all sentient beings in all the six realms of existence have already become Buddhas and have not yet become Buddhas, for he also knows what It is within the Hearts of the Buddhas in the ten quarters that gives voice to the Dharma.
9. By means of the wisdom from his own spiritual mindfulness, he knows which life amongst the lives which all sentient beings receive within the greater and smaller kalpas of a hundred kalpas or a thousand kalpas will be long or short, sooner or later.
10. By means of the wisdom of his own spiritual vows, he knows each and every deed, practice, resolve, and vow of the wise and virtuous amongst all sentient beings, at which of the Ten Bodhisattva Stages they are, and which

of the Thirty Attitudes have arisen in them as their hearts turn toward Buddhahood; he also knows that, whether people are pursuing pain or pleasure or whether they are benefiting or injuring others, they are all pursuing the Ten Vows of Samantabhadra* and that all their hundreds of thousands of great vows of whatever sort are perfect and complete.

When a disciple is abiding within this stage, then, from within the brightness of his ten wondrous spiritual powers, he manifests untold separate uses for his body, mind, and speech as he gives voice to this stage's meritorious spiritual qualities, which hundreds of millions of kalpas will not be able to completely exhaust. Thus, in short, what Shakyamuni disclosed through the brightness arising from His various spiritual powers is like a great discourse on what He had beheld within the twelve links in the chain of dependent origination.

* Namely, (1) to bow in gratitude, paying homage to all Buddhas, (2) to give praise to Tathagatas, Who are the manifestation of That Which Is, (3) to make offerings of one's training to all Buddhas, (4) to admit to the spiritual hindrances created by one's karma-producing deeds and, with remorse, amend one's life, (5) to rejoice in the meritorious spiritual attainments of others, (6) to ask for the turning of the Wheel of the Dharma, (7) to beseech the Buddha to remain in the world, (8) to continually pursue Buddhist studies, (9) to accommodate all sentient beings for their own benefit, and (10) to transfer the merit of one's practice and training to all sentient beings.

“Seventh, when a disciple of the Buddha is at the Bodhisattva stage where his Buddha Nature is complete in its perfections, he enters into that Dharma which is comprised of the various forms of discerning wisdom of the eighteen Arahants. What those in lower Bodhisattva stages do not share with him are a body which is beyond committing transgressions arising from defiling passions, a manner of speech which is free of any defilement from uses of language, and a mind which is beyond lapses in mindfulness. He has parted company with the eight distractions of gain and loss, fame and disgrace, praise and ridicule, elation and sorrow. Amidst all things he practices renunciation by continually remaining in samadhi. He is at the stage where he exhibits six kinds of perfection in wisdom. Furthermore, from this wisdom he produces at this stage six types of spiritually perfected knowledge:

1. Because he no longer accepts habitual bondage to the three realms of sensuous desire, form, and beyond form, all his yearnings have been satisfied.
2. Because what he sought through all his meritorious spiritual qualities and all Dharma Gates is fully realized, his zealous heart is perfected.
3. Because in all spiritual matters, in all temporal matters, and in all matters of being a sentient being he makes use of his realization of ‘one moment within wholeheartedness’, his mindful heart is perfected, a characteristic of the two modes of Truth.

4. Because he sees that sentient beings in the six realms of existence are all merely insubstantial things, his intelligence and wise discernment are perfected.
5. Because he knows that amongst all—those who are beginning to put the Ten Attitudes into practice up to all Buddhas—he is one who is free from bondage to desires and from compulsive clinging to habits, his liberation is perfected.
6. Because, like all sentient beings, he knows that, as My disciples, he himself and others are free from defiling passions and beyond the habits arising from those passions, he knows through his spiritual knowledge that his liberation of self and others from the six realms of existence is perfected.

When this disciple has entered into these six forms of fully perfected spiritual knowledge, he will give rise to even greater spiritual knowledge; his body will comply with, and bow to, the spiritual intentions and practices of sentient beings in the six realms of existence; his speech will discourse on, and give voice to, untold varieties of Gates to the Dharma. By his very pointing out the Dharma to all sentient beings, he is complying with and bowing to the spiritual intentions and practices of all sentient beings.

“Continually penetrating into samadhi, he transforms with his spiritual blossoming the empty space wherein the great earth moves, thus skillfully helping sentient beings to put their spiritual intentions into

practice. He uses the perfection of his great brilliance to see the Buddhas Who emerged in the world within all past kalpas and to point out the spiritual intentions within the hearts of all sentient beings. He uses his spiritual knowledge, which is beyond any craving, to see all Buddhas now within all lands in the ten quarters and to see what is going on in the hearts and minds of all sentient beings. He uses his knowledge of marvelous spiritual powers to see the emerging of all Buddhas into the world during all future kalpas.

“Because, by following these Buddhas, all sentient beings will find the Way as they hearken to the disciple’s voicing of the Dharma, he abides amongst those eighteen Arahants, his heart and mind in samadhi. He beholds that the forms of the dust motes in the three realms of sensuous desires, form, and beyond form are My body of old, for all sentient beings are My parents and now enter within this Bodhisattva stage. All meritorious spiritual qualities, all spiritual radiance, all Teachings on what Buddhas do up through the Eighth and Ninth Stages of Bodhisattvahood are types of Gates to the Dharma: because we all have already entered the Way, we turn the Wheel of the Dharma by appearing within all Buddha Lands as those who are becoming Buddhas and realizing Buddhahood; by pointing out how to enter the Way, eradicate all defiling passions, and ferry others across to the Other Shore, we transform and turn around the errors of others within all the lands of past, present, and future.

“Eighth, when a disciple of the Buddha is at the Bodhisattva stage where his Buddha Nature speaks

with the Lion's roar, he enters the samadhi of the Dharma Lord's rank, for his spiritual knowledge is that of a Buddha. Because his samadhi is that of the Buddha's lion-like roar, flowering brilliance and sounds from past and present arise within it and continually enter his mind as being the ten types of Gates to the great bright meditation on True Emptiness. His spiritual discernings of that True Emptiness are referred to as

1. the Gate to wise discernment of 'no self within',
2. the Gate to wise discernment of 'no self without',
3. the Gate to wise discernment of the unreality of the phenomenal,
4. the Gate to wise discernment of the immateriality of That which is transcendent,
5. the Gate to wise discernment of the insubstantiality of the nature of all things,
6. the Gate to wise discernment of beginninglessness,
7. the Gate to wise discernment of the Emptiness of Universal Oneness,
8. the Gate to wise discernment of the unreality of nihilistic emptiness,
9. the Gate to wise discernment of the unreality of eternalistic non-emptiness, and
10. the Gate to wise discernment of the unreality of an emptiness that is neither nihilistic nor eternalistic.

Such are the Gates to True Emptiness.

“Those on lower Bodhisattva stages do not directly know this stage where the disciple’s impartiality is as boundless space, for his wise knowledge of the principles of wondrous spiritual powers is indescribable and beyond expression. Understanding the uniqueness and particularity of the streams of thoughts of all beings by means of his knowledge of single-mindedness, he enters into untold Buddha Lands so that he may take counsel before each and every Buddha in order to receive His Teachings. Turning the Wheel of the Dharma, he would ferry all sentient beings to the Other Shore; dispensing the medicine of the Dharma, he would bestow It upon all sentient beings as a gift of alms. He is a great teacher and master of the Dharma, a great leader and guide who counteracts and frustrates the four demons of Mara.

“As the transformations of his Dharma Body enter the Buddha realms, the Buddhas, as well as the Bodhisattvas of the Ninth and Tenth Stages, all of Whom are within these realms in great number, sustain and nurture this Dharma Body of his. Hundreds of thousands are his Gates to the dharanis; hundreds of thousands are his Gates to the samadhis; hundreds of thousands are his diamond Gates into the mandalas; hundreds of thousands are his Gates to the wondrous spiritual powers; hundreds of thousands are his Gates to liberation. Within such hundreds of thousands of Gates to the impartiality that is as boundless space is his practice of the Great Lord Vairochana’s ‘one moment within wholeheartedness’. He says that what is called ‘time’ is not time, and That which is beyond

time, he says, is what time is. He says that That which is beyond the Way is the Way, and the Way, he says, is beyond ways. He says that That which is not 'sentient beings in the six realms of existence' is what sentient beings in the six realms of existence are, and the sentient beings in the six realms of existence, he says, are not what 'sentient beings in the six realms of existence' really are. He says that what is not a 'Buddha' is Buddha, and Buddha, he says, is That which is not 'a Buddha'.

"By entering into the samadhi from which emerges the Buddha Nature of all Buddhas, he illuminates what has turned back, illuminates what conforms, illuminates what is reversed, illuminates what is past, illuminates the future, illuminates causes, illuminates effects, illuminates space, illuminates what exists in space, illuminates the foremost Truth of the meaning of the Middle Way. This spiritual knowledge of his is what only those in the Eighth Stage can attest to.

"What those in lower Bodhisattva stages have not reached is That which is unmoving, unattainable, non-emerging, non-penetrating, unborn, unperishing. The various Gates to the Dharma at this stage are untold and immeasurable, inexpressible and beyond description. Now, by means of his spiritual knowledge, the disciple at this stage discloses matters concerning hundreds of thousands of thoughts, which even those who are not monks discern and approve of. He already is spending time amongst the Arahants.

"Ninth, when a disciple of the Buddha is at the Bodhisattva stage where his Buddha Nature is adorned

with flowers by the Buddhas, he endlessly goes in and out of the Tathagata's samadhi and the regal meditation of the sovereign lord Vairochana, which he does by means of his dignified Buddha-like deportment when walking, standing, sitting, and reclining. Over hundreds of billions of years within the three thousand worlds in the ten quarters with their hundreds of millions of sets of four continents, he becomes Buddha each time he turns the Wheel of the Dharma, until that moment of his own realizing of nirvana, which is the end of his rebirths and his total freedom from suffering.

“Because all his deeds as a Buddha make use of ‘the single moment within wholeheartedness’, they reveal to all sentient beings his eighty favorable signs and his thirty-two major auspicious marks; the joy from his freedom from delusion is as unbounded as empty space. The splendor of these radiant marks and signs of his, which arise from his immeasurable great compassion, is beyond that of devas, beyond that of humans, indeed beyond that of any in the six realms of existence. Being ‘outside’ of all things, he continually travels the six realms of existence, where he displays untold physical bodies, untold manners of speech, and untold intentions. Giving voice to untold Gates to the Dharma, he skillfully transforms the demon realms so that, as these realms enter the Buddha realm, the Buddha realm penetrates the demon realms. Further, he transforms all perspectives so that, as they enter the Buddha's perspective, the Buddha's perspective penetrates into all perspectives; as the Buddha Nature

permeates the nature of sentient beings, the nature of sentient beings enters into oneness with the Buddha Nature.

“At this level a radiant, sparkling luminosity—Wisdom’s light of discernment—appears as brilliant tongues of flame blazing upwards. Pristine and unstained is the One Transcendent Path which he fearlessly treads to the ten immeasurable powers, the eighteen distinctive characteristics of a Buddha, liberation, and nirvana. He takes all sentient beings to be his father, mother, brother, and sister, and for their sakes he voices the Dharma for as much time as is needed for them to realize the fruits of the Way. For the sake of all sentient beings he reveals all lands and looks upon each person as a father or mother would. Maras and non-Buddhists, as well, he looks upon as a father or mother would. Whilst residing within this stage, he rises up to the region of the Vajra Jewel from the region of birth and death. By holding to a single thought within his mind, he reveals the Matter for which we train, skillfully transforming himself in order to enter immeasurable realms of untold sentient beings. In short, he speaks as though he were but a single drop in the ocean.

“Tenth, when a disciple of the Buddha is at the Bodhisattva stage where his Buddha Nature enters the realm of Buddhas, he continues to empty the Emptiness of that Great Discerning Wisdom until It is emptied even of emptiness, until It is like the Nature of Unfathomable Space. His impartial spiritual knowledge has the nature of a Tathagata, and his ten

meritorious spiritual qualities are perfected. His immaculate Purity, liberated from all attachments, is, in Its transcendence of all conditions, the same as the Nature of the One in All Things. The One of his Spiritual Body, which is vacant of boundaries, is the same as the Nature of All Things. Hence he is called Tathagata, the One Who Comes Forth from That Which Is.

“In compliance with the Four Noble Truths and the two modes of Truth, he has brought to an end the region where samsara’s wheel of birth and death spins round. His nurturing of the Dharma is in no way different from his Dharma Body. Thus he is called Arahant, One Worthy of Alms.

“Everywhere he shelters all things within all universes. His saintly liberated wisdom of right knowledge knows the roots of all things and of all sentient beings. Thus he is Samyak-sambuddha, the Fully Enlightened, All-knowing One.

“When, with bright mind, he puts into practice the fruits of Buddhahood, they are Perfection. Thus he is Vidyacharana-sampanna, the One Perfect in Bright Wisdom and Practice.

“Skillfully departing from the Buddha Dharma of the three temporal worlds, his Dharma is nevertheless the same as that of previous Buddhas, so that there is nothing wrong with the period when Buddha Dharma has departed and nothing wrong with the period when It again comes. Thus he is called Sugata, the Well-gone One Who Has Attained Full Liberation.

“When this disciple puts these superior virtues of his into practice, he enters into the world to teach sentient beings to turn their hearts around, and he helps sentient beings to liberate themselves from all their fetters and bonds. Thus he is called Lokavid, the Liberation of the World.

“When this disciple, who stands above all things, awakens to the awe-inspiring spiritual powers of the Buddhas, the forms his methods take for the sake of liberation of the world are just like the deeds of a Buddha Mahasattva. Thus he is called Anuttara, the Unsurpassed One.

“Since he brings the passions of all sentient beings under control, he is called Purusha-damyasarathi, Tamer of Humans.

“Because he teaches all sentient beings amongst the devas and humans how to turn their hearts around so that they consult with him and receive his words of Dharma, he is therefore Shasta-deva-manushyanam, He Who Is Teacher of Devas and Humans.

“Since his profound insights into the unequalled Buddha Nature, which is the wondrous Ultimate Principle, are always great and whole, all sentient beings willingly bow down in reverence to him. Thus he is Buddha-lokanatha, the Awakened World-honored One.

“Because humans in all worlds consult him, as well as receive and follow his Teaching, this is the stage of his Buddhahood. Because this is the place where all Arahants enter amongst the Buddhas, it is called the stage of the realm of Buddhas.”

At this time, as Vairochana sat upon His jeweled lotus blossom, all were filled with great joy as He gave them the prophecy of their ultimate realization of Buddhahood, whilst Transmitting the Truth to them. Alike in their views and understandings, the Bodhisattvas, with differing voices but in one accord, were unequaled in their praise of Vairochana. All at once all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas within the hundreds of millions of universes gathered about Him like thick clouds. They asked Him to turn the indescribable Wheel of the Dharma and open the Gate to the Dharma which leads and guides from within the Treasure House which encompasses all, like space. At this stage Vairochana had inexpressibly rare and wondrous types of Gates to the Dharma for them, including the Gate to the dharanis and the Gate to the samadhi of the Three Incomparable Insights.* Those who were on the lower Bodhisattvic stages or were ordinary, everyday, persons did not yet know about all these Teachings, for only the immeasurable bodies, speech, and minds of Buddhas are capable of fully exploring this Treasure House to Its foundations. As is said within the various heavens of light and sound, the Ten Forms of Fearlessness and the Way of the Buddhas are identical.

* Namely, (1) the knowledge of past lives of self and others, (2) the knowledge of the outcome of the lives of self and others, and (3) the knowledge of all miseries in present lives, along with the ability to remove the defiling passions which are their root cause.

PART TWO: ON THE PRECEPTS.

Having explained in detail to the multitude assembled there the Foundations of Training which are part of the Dharma Gates innumerable as the sands of a hundred thousand Ganges, Vairochana Buddha then said, “The Foundations of Training have been expounded by all the Buddhas of the past, are expounded by the Buddhas of the present, and will be expounded by all the Buddhas of the future. All Bodhisattvas in the three worlds have studied them, are studying them, and will study them. I myself, Vairochana Buddha, have put them into practice during a hundred kalpas, which is why I am now called Vairochana Buddha. Go forth, O Ye Buddhas, and pass on what I have said; open up for all sentient beings the pathway to the Foundations of Training.” A radiance then emanated from Vairochana Buddha as He sat on His lion throne of shimmering celestial light atop His lotus pedestal which contains all worlds, and He said to the Buddhas seated upon the thousand lotus petals, “Take the aspects of My Teaching on the Foundations of Training and pass them on to the ten billion Shakyamunis, so that through Them they will reach all sentient beings who will forthwith proclaim them. Receive them, preserve them, read them, recite them, and wholeheartedly put them into practice.”

The Buddhas seated on the thousand lotus petals and the ten billion Shakyamunis then rose from Their brilliant lion thrones in the worlds within the lotus pedestal and took Their leave. As They were retiring, each radiated from His being an inconceivable and indescribable light which transformed itself into an untold number of Buddhas Who, all together, made offerings to Vairochana Buddha of an immeasurable number of blue, yellow, red, and white flowers, which symbolize Their offering of the flowering of Their meditation, mindfulness, diligence, and faith. In return They were given the various aspects which He had preached on the Foundations of Training. All then disappeared into the worlds contained within the lotus pedestal and entered into the samadhi of the glorious lotus light, in which Their Buddha Nature is as immaculate as Emptiness. They then returned beneath the Bodhi tree in Their own Jambudvipa world, where They emerged from this samadhi and took Their places on the diamond seats of the thousand Lords of Light; within Their wondrously radiant halls, They spoke to oceans of disciples in the ten worlds. After that, They arose from Their seats and went to the palace of the sovereign Shakra (who is Indra, Lord of the Thirty-two Trayastrimsha Heavens), where they spoke on the Ten Periods in the development of a Bodhisattva's wisdom. They then visited the realm of Lord Yama, where They spoke on the Ten Necessary Activities done for the welfare of others. They then went on to the fourth deva world (the Tushita Heaven), where They spoke on the Ten Ways of Transferring Merit, to the

fifth deva world (the Nirmanarati Heaven), where They spoke on the Ten Forms of Meditative Contemplation, and to the sixth deva world (the Paranirmita-Vashavartin Heaven), where They spoke on the Ten Stages. They then arrived at the First Meditative Region, where They gave instruction on the Ten Commitments. They then successively visited the Second and Third Meditative Regions, giving instruction on the Ten Forms of Patience and Equanimity in the former and the Ten Bodhisattvic Vows in the latter. Finally they went to the Fourth Meditative Region and entered the palace of the deva king Maheshvara, where They spoke on aspects of the Teachings on the Foundations of Training, as originally proclaimed by Vairochana Buddha to the worlds contained within His lotus pedestal. The remaining ten billion Shakyamunis did the same and spoke without the slightest deviation on these aspects for the present-day kalpa.

At that time, Shakyamuni Buddha, after having first appeared in the world contained in the lotus pedestal, came east and entered the palace of the heavenly lord, where He gave voice to the *Scripture on the Maras Who Allow Themselves to be Converted*. He had been reborn in the southern continent of Jambudvīpa in the city of Kapilavastu. His mother was called Maya ('She Who Is the Divine Power within Illusion') and His father was surnamed Shuddhodana ('He Who Is Pure as White Rice'); He was named Siddhartha ('He Who Is the Realization of All Aims'). He had left home to be a spiritual mendicant and, after seven years, whilst in His thirties, had realized enlightenment, and

was called Shakyamuni Buddha ('The Wise One of the Shakya Clan, the Awakened One'). He had then taken His place on the diamond throne in the Bodhimandala, where He had realized the true meaning of nirvana and was Lord of the Glorious Lotus Light. He had then gone to the palace of the deva king Maheshvara to teach about the Ten Abodes. It was at that time that He espied the net curtains of the great deva king Brahma, which led him to say, "The innumerable worlds are like the openings in a net; each world is different from the other ones, and the differences are immeasurable. It is the same with the Gates to the Buddha's Teaching. This is the eight thousandth time I have come into this world to take My place on the diamond throne as Lord of the Glorious Lotus Light for the sake of this world of suffering."

At the palace of the deva king Maheshvara, He concisely explained the aspects of the teaching on the Foundations of Training to the great multitude assembled there. Afterwards, He descended from the palace of the deva king to the continent of Jambudvipa and sat Himself under the Bodhi tree. There, for the sake of all sentient beings on this earth, however worldly or ignorant they might be, He gave voice to the radiance of the Precepts imbedded within the Foundations of Training of our own Vairochana Buddha, those Precepts which are continually recited within a heart that has given rise to the intent to realize Buddhahood:—

"These Precepts of the Light That Is Precious as Diamonds are fundamental to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the seeds of Buddha Nature. All sentient beings

have Buddha Nature. Consequently, all their intentions, perceptions, desires, and attitudes, as well as all the passions and feelings connected with them, are encompassed within the Precepts of Buddha Nature. Since, of necessity, there is always causality, so there is always, of necessity, an ever-abiding embodiment of Truth; this is why the Ten Liberating Precepts appeared in the world. These are the Precepts of the Dharma that all sentient beings receive, that they may keep to them. I will reiterate these ten inexhaustible Precepts of the Treasure House for the sake of the multitude here assembled, since these Precepts are intended for all sentient beings, whose Self-nature is, from the first, immaculate.

“I, the Vairochana of the present,
Am enthroned on My lotus pedestal.
All around Me, seated on a thousand flowers,
Are the thousand Shakyamunis
 who appear time after time.
Every flower supports ten billion kingdoms
And each kingdom has its Shakyamuni,
Each seated under a Bodhi tree,
Who all at once
 realizes the Way to Buddhahood.
The same holds true
 for the other billions of Shakyamunis,
Who are also Vairochana Himself.

The billions of Shakyamunis,
Each welcoming multitudes of beings
 countless as particles of dust,

Gather together and come hither
 To hear Me recite the Precepts of Buddha.
 Immediately the Gates of Sweet Dew open,
 Whereupon the billions of Shakyamunis
 Return to their Bodhimandalas,
 Where each, seated under a Bodhi tree,
 Recites My—the Master's—Precepts,
 Both the Ten Great
 and the Forty-eight Less Grave Ones.

These Precepts have the clarity and brightness
 of sun and moon
 And resemble a necklace of pearls.
 Countless as particles of dust
 are the legions of Bodhisattvas
 Who, by means of these Precepts,
 have realized True Wisdom.
 Just as Vairochana recited them,
 So I Myself recite them as well.
 O ye Bodhisattvas who are new to training,
 Receive the Precepts and keep to them.
 Having taken the Precepts unto yourself,
 Pass them on to all sentient beings.
 Listen with care to My true recitation
 Of the Treasure House of Precepts
 within the Teachings of all Buddhas,
 For these Precepts are what We call
 the Great Pratimokshas,
 that is, the Great Liberators.

O ye great multitude, have the faith
 to scrutinize your hearts,

For you will become Buddha
Just as I have already become Buddha;
Always keep your faith like this.
When all the various Precepts
are complete within yourself,
All creatures endowed with a heart
Must then receive the Precepts of the Buddhas.
Once all sentient beings receive the Precepts,
They will enter at once the rank of the Buddhas.
Since this rank is the same
as that of the Great Enlightened One,
All will truly be disciples of the Buddhas.
O ye great multitude, with deepest reverence
Listen wholeheartedly
to what I am about to recite.”

At this moment, Shakyamuni Buddha took up His place under the Bodhi tree where he had realized Supreme Wisdom and, forthwith, formulated the Bodhisattva Precepts by which we honor, and are dutiful to, parents, teachers, the Sangha, and the Triple Treasure, for by honoring and being dutiful, we attain the Teaching of the Way. ‘Dutiful’ means ‘to be dutiful to the Precepts’ and is another name for controlling craving through self-restraint.

No sooner had the Buddha begun to speak than an immeasurable light poured forth from His mouth. At the same time, the assembly of ten billion Bodhisattvas, the lords of the eighteen Brahma worlds and the six worlds of sensual desire, as well as the rulers of the sixteen great empires of India, all with hands

in *gasshō*,* listened wholeheartedly to the Buddha's recitation of the Mahayana Precepts of all Buddhas. The Buddha then said to the Bodhisattvas, "I Myself recite fortnightly the Teachings and Precepts of the Buddhas; you, too, as Bodhisattvas, must awaken your aspiration for enlightenment and recite them. You must do so as Bodhisattvas who are making the Ten Decisions, or cultivating the Ten Nourishing Attitudes, or making the Ten Commitments, or treading the Ten Stages. The Light of the Precepts radiates from My mouth, for It has Its reason for being and is not without cause. Its radiance is not blue, yellow, red, white, or black; It is formless and beyond conception, is neither real nor unreal, is without origin and without any use or profit from a worldly view, yet It is the Source of all the Buddhas and the Foundation of all the Bodhisattvas and disciples of the Buddha within the great assembly. O ye disciples of the Buddha, this is why you must accept and observe these Precepts, read and recite them, and train yourselves well in following them. Disciples of the Buddha, listen carefully! When someone receives the Precepts of the Buddhas—be it a monarch, a prince, someone in authority such as a prime minister, a monk of either gender, a lord in one of the eighteen Brahma worlds or in one of the six worlds of sensual desire, a person of the ordinary

* A gesture of respect and reverence in which the hands are held in front of one, with palms and fingers touching, and fingers pointing upwards.

world, a eunuch, a licentious man, a dissolute woman, a slave of either gender, one of the eight classes of demons, ghosts, and spirits, a guardian deity, or an animal which has taken human form—such a one deserves the title of ‘most immaculate’, provided that he understands the words of his Dharma Master and takes all the Precepts completely.”

The Buddha also said to the disciples of the Buddha, “There are Ten Precepts dealing with serious offenses. If someone who, upon receiving these Bodhisattvic Precepts, fails to recite them aloud, such a one is not a Bodhisattva or a seed that will produce a Buddha. I Myself recited the Precepts in this way. Since all Bodhisattvas have applied themselves to the Precepts in the past, apply themselves in the present, and will do so in the future, so must you practice these Precepts of the Bodhisattvas, which I have already mentioned to you, follow them with a respectful heart, and hold them aloft.”

FIRST PRECEPT:

On killing.

The Buddha said, “Disciples of the Buddha, should you yourself kill, willfully cause another to kill, encourage someone to kill, extol killing, take pleasure in seeing killing take place, deliberately wish someone dead, intentionally cause death, supply the instruments or means for killing, cut off a life even when sanctioned by law, that is, participate in any way in killing, you are committing a serious offense warranting

exclusion.* Pray, do not intentionally kill anything whatsoever which has life. As a Bodhisattva, awaken within yourself a heart that is unending in its mercy and compassion, respect and dutifulness, and use your skillful means to help and protect all sentient beings. Hence, should you act from a selfish, indulgent, or reckless heart and thereby intentionally and willingly take a life, you are a Bodhisattva who is committing a serious offense warranting exclusion.

SECOND PRECEPT:

On stealing.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you yourself steal, willfully cause another to steal, encourage someone to steal, participate in or abet thievery, extortion, or swindling, or participate in any way in such behavior, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion. Pray, do not steal what belonged to departed ones or what has already been stolen by thieves. Do not intentionally steal anything belonging to someone else, be it even a needle or a blade of grass. As a Bodhisattva, produce from your Buddha Nature a heart that is respectful and dutiful, merciful and benevolent. Always help beings to cultivate good fortune and joy. If, on the contrary, should you steal the goods and possessions of another, you are a Bodhisattva who is committing a serious offense warranting exclusion.

* For the meaning of ‘warranting exclusion’, see the Translator’s Introduction to this Scripture, pp. 50–51.

THIRD PRECEPT:

On entertaining lustfulness.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you give yourself over to lustfulness,* willfully cause another to engage in lustful practices, encourage someone to do so, or participate in any way in such behavior, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion. Pray, do not willingly and knowingly give yourself over to lust for anyone. Should you participate in lustful or licentious behavior involving a human, an animal, a deva, a dead person, or a spirit, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion. As a Bodhisattva, cultivate a respectful and dutiful heart in order to rescue all sentient beings, ferry them to the Other Shore, and purify humanity. If, on the contrary, should you deliberately set in motion, or be the instigator of, anyone’s lust—not excluding your mother, daughter, sister, or anyone else closely related to you, or even an animal—and act in a dissolute manner, thereby revealing your lack of benevolence or compassion, you are a Bodhisattva who is committing a serious offense warranting exclusion.

* That is, the deliberate encouragement of sexually-related sensual greed which uses others to satisfy that greed. It is implicit that standards for laity and monks differ on this Precept; the requirement of monastic celibacy has been made explicit within most Mahayana traditions from the days of the earliest Mahayana Vinaya writings. What is intended here is to encourage the lay reader to find the Middle Way between a puritanical fear and a libertine greed.

FOURTH PRECEPT:

On speaking contrary to the truth.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you speak contrary to the truth, willfully lead another to lie, encourage others to lie or boast, or participate in any way in lying or boasting, should you pretend to have seen what you have not seen or pretend not to have seen what you have seen, or should you express something contrary to the truth by some indication of your body or mind, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion. As a Bodhisattva, continually give rise to true words and true views both within yourself and within all sentient beings. If, on the contrary, should you stir up false words, false notions, or false deeds within another, you are a Bodhisattva who is committing a serious offense warranting exclusion.

FIFTH PRECEPT:

On trafficking in intoxicants.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you yourself traffic in intoxicants,* encourage or force others to do so, abet such trade, or participate in any way in such behavior, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion. Pray, do not intentionally trade

* That is, the marketing and profiteering in substances whose purpose is to befuddle the mind and dull moral discernment. The term ‘intoxicants’ encompasses not only alcoholic beverages and, by extension, physically and mentally harmful chemical substances but also, figuratively,

in any intoxicant whatsoever, for indeed, intoxicants cause or occasion inappropriate and defiling actions. As a Bodhisattva, give rise to the clear light of wisdom within all sentient beings. If, on the contrary, should you encourage or arouse the spirit of depravity within others, you are a Bodhisattva who is committing a serious offense warranting exclusion.

SIXTH PRECEPT:

**On speaking disparagingly of other Buddhists
or gossiping about their actions that seem
contrary to the Precepts.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you yourself speak disparagingly or engage in gossip about the actions of any Bodhisattva who is a monk or lay Buddhist of either gender, encourage someone else to do so, abet such libel or gossip, or participate in any way in such behavior, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion. As a Bodhisattva, should you hear a wicked person who is a non-Buddhist or a follower of the Lesser Course speak of those who are within the Buddha Dharma as not following the Teachings or the Vinaya, you should always give rise to a compassionate heart in order to instruct and convert this wicked one and to cause the faith and virtues of Mahayana to arise in this person. If, on the contrary, as a Bodhisattva, should you yourself gossip or

‘the wine of delusion’. However, it does not refer to legitimate medicinal uses of drugs. The personal use of intoxicants is discussed in the Second Less Grave Precept.

speak disparagingly about actions amongst those within the Buddha Dharma which seem contrary to the Precepts, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion.*

SEVENTH PRECEPT:

On praising oneself and demeaning others.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you vaunt yourself and demean others, encourage another to do so, lend your assistance in devaluing or denigrating others,

* This Precept is an excellent example of the need for applying wise discernment in interpreting intent. The underlying principle points to the refraining from derogatory speech which tends to undermine people's trust in the Sangha, whether such speech arises from personal ambition, judgmental indignation, illusions of moral superiority or any other selfish motivation. On the other hand, the opposite mistake of lying about, or covering up, wrongdoing by other Buddhists, which has sometimes been interpreted as being required by this Precept, would also be contrary to the spirit of the Precept—as well as to both the Fourth Precept on speaking contrary to the truth and the Fifth Less Grave Precept on appropriate exhortation of wrongdoers—since such an action would likewise tend to undermine trust in the Sangha. This is an example of how the practical application of any Precept requires attention both to the spirit of the particular Precept concerned and to the other Precepts as well. It is also an example of the need to apply the Precepts from the position of the Source from which they come, and of the necessity to do the best one can and then be willing to take the karmic consequences thereof.

or participate in any way in such behavior, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion. Instead, for the sake of all sentient beings, as a Bodhisattva, patiently accept the insults and criticisms of others; see what may be wicked within your own deeds and what is good within those of others. If, on the contrary, should you boast of your own virtues whilst concealing the good qualities of others so that they end up being denigrated and disparaged, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion.

EIGHTH PRECEPT:

On being mean with wealth or Dharma.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you be avaricious and mean in giving, encourage or foster avarice in another, promote stinginess, or participate in any way in such behavior, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion. As a Bodhisattva, should you encounter a poor and destitute being who has come to beggary, in accord with your predecessors, pray find wise and appropriate ways for supplying him with what he needs. If, on the contrary, as a Bodhisattva, should you be unwilling to part with even a small coin of money, a needle, or a blade of grass due to your meanness and contempt, or should you not offer someone who is searching for the Dharma even a sentence from the Teaching, a verse, or a tiny bit of the Dharma but instead revile, insult, or abuse the person, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion.

NINTH PRECEPT:**On feeding anger and hardheartedness.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you maintain anger against someone, encourage another to nourish hatred, deliberately stir up anger, or participate in any way in such behavior, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion. As a Bodhisattva, pray cultivate in all beings the roots of goodness as well as the absence of controversy and disputatiousness. Continually awaken in yourself a compassionate heart, as well as respect and dutifulness. If, on the contrary, should you start to revile, insult, or abuse another being—even were it a most wicked one—or, worse still, if in your anger you should strike another with your hand, a stick, or a sword, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion. The same holds true should you not let go of your anger after the person you are dealing with has apologized and expressed his regrets in mild words.

TENTH PRECEPT:**On speaking ill of the Three Treasures.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you speak ill of, or vilify, the Three Treasures, encourage another to do so, willfully lend yourself in any way to such wicked speech, or participate in any way in such behavior, you are committing a serious offense warranting exclusion. When a Bodhisattva hears a non-Buddhist out of ignorance or any person out of

wickedness utter only so much as a single word against the Buddhas, this pierces his heart as though it were stabbed three hundred times with a sword. How much worse if, instead of cultivating faith, respect, and dutifulness, you should let malignant words come forth from your own mouth or make yourself the accomplice of wicked-acting people and those with spiritually perverted views by joining in their wicked speech! Such a Bodhisattva is committing a serious offense warranting exclusion.

“You who are in a position to train yourselves in all manner of kindness, apply these Ten Precepts of the Bodhisattvas to yourselves and do not act contrary to a single one amongst them in even the slightest way, let alone all ten! Whilst acting contrary to them, you will not be able to cultivate within yourself the Bodhi-mind. Such a one then loses his ranking as an imperial ruler, a universal spiritual leader who rolls the Wheel of the Law, or a monk of either gender. He wanders away from the Ten Decisions, the Ten Nourishing Attitudes, the Ten Commitments, and the Ten Stages. In short, he loses the continually wondrous fruits of his Buddha Nature and will fall into the three lower states of rebirth, unable for two or three kalpas to hear the name of father or mother, let alone mention of the Triple Treasure. Therefore, take great care not to violate a single Precept. Put into practice the Ten Precepts which all Bodhisattvas have practiced, practice, and will practice. Keep to them with a respectful heart, for then the eighty thousand forms of dignified

deportment in walking, standing, sitting, and reclining will occupy a position of great brightness in your life.”

The Buddha then said to the Bodhisattvas, “Now that the Ten Precepts which lead to liberation have been explained, I shall expound for you the Forty-eight Less Grave Precepts.”

FIRST LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On being disrespectful of superiors, teachers, and friends.

The Buddha said, “Disciples of the Buddha, should you find yourself in the position of imperial ruler or universal spiritual leader, or receive an appointment as an employee of the state, you should first accept the Precepts of the Bodhisattvas. All the various guardian deities* will then help and protect you in your position as leader or official, and the Buddhas will be filled with joy. When you have made the Precepts fully your own, you should cultivate a spirit of respect and dutifulness, a heart of reverence and humility. No matter how exalted your station in life, upon seeing an Abbot, a Dharma Master, a Precepts Master, a fellow trainee, a fellow monk, or a fellow Buddhist, you should stand up to welcome him and respectfully make *gasshō* whilst bowing. If, on the contrary, as a Bodhisattva, should

* Buddhism acknowledges the existence of various sorts of non-material ‘beings’ but teaches that the worship of such ‘guardian deities’ is neither the primary essence of religion nor its fundamental purpose.

you allow pride, arrogance, contempt, foolishness, or vanity to get hold of you and fail to rise to welcome the arrival of such a one by respectfully bowing in *gasshō* to him, and if you do not offer such a person everything as accords with the Dharma by being completely unstinting (as though you were willing to dispose of self, kingdom, city, sons, daughters, the seven precious objects, and everything else that you hold to be yours so that you might present such as an offering to this person), you are defiling* yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

SECOND LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On using intoxicants.†

“Disciples of the Buddha, since substances that intoxicate give rise to countless inappropriate and defiling actions, should you give such a substance with your own hands to someone else to partake of, you will be deprived of hands for five hundred existences. How much worse it will be if you partake of it yourself! Likewise, do not urge or induce another to take an intoxicant, much less urge it on yourself.

* ‘Defilement’, in Buddhism, is not synonymous with common Western notions of ‘sin’ but refers to the arising of ‘clouds’ which prevent people from clearly seeing their own Buddha Nature as well as That of others. This arising is simply the effect of karma-producing actions which are contrary to the Precepts.

† See footnote, p. 130.

Should you willingly and knowingly partake or induce someone else to do so, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

THIRD LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On eating meat.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you willingly and knowingly eat flesh, you defile yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept. Pray, let us not eat any flesh or meat whatsoever coming from living beings. Anyone who eats flesh is cutting himself off from the great seed of his own merciful and compassionate nature, for which all sentient beings will reject him and flee from him when they see him acting so. This is why all Bodhisattvas should abstain from eating the flesh of any and all sentient beings.* Someone who eats flesh is defiling himself beyond measure; should you do so willingly and knowingly, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

* That is, abstaining from eating meat arises from compassion, not from sentimentality. In some Buddhist countries and under some medical circumstances, the practice of eating meat is accepted because of the limitation of other sources of sustenance. The relationship between Bodhisattva practice and sentient beings is explored more fully in the Twentieth Less Grave Precept, pp. 150–151. This is one of the Precepts found in the Vinaya of Mahayana Buddhism which distinguishes it from the Vinaya of the other great branch of Buddhism, the Theravada.

FOURTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On using the five pungent roots.

“Disciples of the Buddha, you should not eat of the five types of pungent roots.* Pray, do not use any of these five roots in your food. Should you eat of these roots willingly and knowingly, you are thereby defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

FIFTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On neglecting to encourage others
to turn their hearts around.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you witness some sentient being violating any of the Precepts (be it amongst the first five, the first eight, or all ten), being contemptuous at what they prohibit, committing one of the seven perfidious acts,† or behaving in any way

* The Chinese text names five highly specific types of pungent roots, apparently considered by Kumārajīva as the equivalents of specific plants found in India. Japanese Buddhists have traditionally identified them in more generic terms as garlic, leeks, large onions, scallions, and ginger (or horseradish), even though the text names only specific types. Explanations for their interdiction include their giving an offensive odor to the breath and their ‘heating of the blood’ (that is, having some aphrodesiacal effect).

† Namely, shedding a Buddha’s blood, murdering father, mother, a Dharma Master, a Precepts Master, or an Arahant, or subverting and disrupting the Sangha.

that would lead that person into the eight conditions in which it is difficult to see a Buddha or hear His Dharma*—in short, should you see some fellow monk acting contrary in any way whatsoever against the Precepts—you need to find skillful ways of encouraging this person to reconsider what he is doing. If, as a Bodhisattva, should you not do this and, as a consequence, such a person remains in your community enjoying the benefits and food from that community, and then, should you fail to bring forward those defiling acts of his during the Uposatha ceremony (when the monastic community recite their Renewal of Vows) by encouraging the person at that time to reconsider his actions, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

SIXTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On neglecting to make charitable offerings to those who give voice to the Dharma.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you find out that a Dharma Master of the Mahayana, a fellow trainee, or a fellow monk of the Mahayana has come to your monastery, temple, or town, whether this person has

* Namely, in a hell, as a hungry ghost, as an animal, in the northern continent where all is pleasure, in some heaven where life is long and easy, as one devoid of some sense faculty (deaf, dumb, blind), as a worldly-minded thinker, or in the intermediate period between a Buddha and His successor.

come thirty miles or three hundred, arise without delay and go greet him, bow to him with hands in *gasshō*, and provide for his needs three times a day. Every day supply the Dharma Master with food and drink of varied flavors up to the amount of three ounces of gold, as well as with a bed, a sitting place, and medicine; in short, see to his needs. Also, regularly request the Dharma Master to expound the Law three times each day and respectfully bow to him three times daily. Do not allow any dislike, scorn, resentment, or irritation to arise within your heart with regard to this. Since the Dharma makes it possible for body and mind to return to the Immaculacy of Emptiness, a disciple of the Buddha must never neglect to request It. Should you act in a contrary manner, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

SEVENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On being lax in attending Dharma talks.

“Disciples of the Buddha, although the principles of the Vinaya and the Scriptures are customarily expounded in such places as a large Dharma lecture hall, Bodhisattvas who are new to [monastic] training should take their Scripture and Precept books and go to wherever a Dharma Master may be staying in order to listen and receive his instructions. Everyone should go to where the Dharma is being expounded, be it under a tree, in a mountain forest, or in a monastery. Should you fail to go to where the Dharma is being voiced, so that you may receive instruction, you are

defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

EIGHTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On turning away in one's heart
from the Precepts of the Mahayana.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you turn away in your heart from the eternal Scriptures and Vinayas of the Mahayana, saying that the Buddha did not preach these, and, instead, embrace the erroneous views of non-Buddhists or those duality-minded practitioners who hearken only to the Lesser Course, or accept any teachings or rules of conduct based on perverse views which deny cause and effect, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

NINTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On neglecting to care for the sick.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you discover that a human being is sick—whoever the sick person may be—you should always find wise ways of providing for him as you would for a Buddha. Amongst the eight fields of merit, caring for the sick is the first. If your father, mother, master, or any of your monks or disciples is ill, is not in full possession of his or her senses, or is experiencing one of the hundred types of sufferings arising from disease, you should see to it that the sick one is taken care of. Upon discovering

a person ill in your monastery, in your town, in the country, in mountain forests, or on the road, should you, as a Bodhisattva, not lend the person suitable help out of meanness or malice, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

TENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On possessing objects intended for killing.

“Disciples of the Buddha, do not collect up or keep a stock of swords, sticks, bows and arrows, lances, axes, or any other weapons for the purpose of combat or do the same with any nets or instruments for the purpose of hunting and killing; in short, it is not permissible to store up objects whose intended use is for killing living beings. Since, as a Bodhisattva, you are not to avenge a murder, even if it is the murder of your father or mother, how much less is it permissible for you to kill any other sentient being! A Bodhisattva is not permitted to have in his possession any instrument for the purpose of killing a living being. Should you amass such weapons willingly and knowingly, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

“You should study the foregoing ten Precepts with a respectful attitude and keep them ever before your eyes, for they shed great light on the remaining Precepts.

ELEVENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On serving as a military envoy.

“It is not permissible for a disciple of the Buddha willingly and knowingly to carry or convey official orders to military encampments for the sake of gain or sustenance or from wicked intent, for when troops are mobilized and engage in combat, untold sentient beings are killed. As a Bodhisattva, refrain from meddling in military affairs or playing the courier between one army and the other. How much less should you deliberately incite a revolt within a country! Should you do such things willingly and knowingly, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

TWELFTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On profiting through the suffering of others.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you deliberately traffic in free human beings or in slaves of either gender (say, by matchmaking, pandering, or slave trading), profiteer in the six categories of domestic animals (by raising them for their meat, fur, hide, or bones), or trade in such things as coffins or wood for their construction,* you are defiling yourself by acting

* This reference in the Precept to coffins and their manufacture, as applied to Western culture, would speak to the practice of profiteering by preying upon the grief of those in mourning. In India, the custom was to lay the corpse directly

contrary to this less grave Precept. It is not permissible for you to even construct such objects of ostentation. How much less should you therefore induce others to build them! Should you deliberately manufacture such things, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

THIRTEENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On slander and abuse.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you, out of malice and without just cause, speak against another citizen, a good person, a Dharma Master, a teacher, a priest, a king, or a person of high position, saying that this person has committed one of the seven perfidious acts or violated one of the Ten Great Precepts, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept. We should cultivate a spirit of respect and dutifulness, as well as a merciful and compassionate heart, towards our parents, brothers, and all our close relations. If, on the contrary, should you deliberately insult or abuse them, or put them in awkward positions, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

on the funeral pyre for cremation. In China, coffins were used as part of elaborate, and often ostentatious, ceremonies, during which much of the grieving family's resources was sometimes used up.

FOURTEENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:**On setting fire to things.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you start a forest fire in the mountains or a brush fire on the plains through malice or some other wicked intent, carelessly start fires, say, during the drought season, or deliberately burn down houses, buildings, towns, monasteries, or the fields and trees of others, as well as goods and property belonging to spiritual guardians or the state, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept. Since everyone has something of which they are owner, pray do not deliberately burn such things. Should you intentionally do so, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

FIFTEENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:**On teaching non-Buddhist doctrines.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, when instructing any and all of your close relations as well as all your virtuous acquaintances—from disciples of the Buddha to those who follow non-Buddhist ways—in accepting and keeping to the Scriptures and Vinayas of the Mahayana, do so by expounding and explaining their meaning and import. In this way such persons may give rise to the intention to realize their Bodhi-mind through cultivation of the Ten Decisions, the Ten Nourishing Attitudes, and the Ten Commitments. You should describe, one by one, what benefits of the

Dharma are to be derived from each of these thirty qualities. If, as a Bodhisattva, you should wantonly and perversely present the Scriptures and Vinayas from the duality-minded viewpoint of one who hearkens only to the Lesser Course, or teach any of the philosophical or other treatises that are based on the heterodox notions of those with spiritually perverted views, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

SIXTEENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On distorting the purposes of training
and the Dharma.**

“As disciples of the Buddha, you should, first and foremost, wholeheartedly study and put into practice the rules of discipline, the Scriptures, and the Vinayas of the Mahayana until you come to understand their meaning and their spirit thoroughly. Should, then, a Bodhisattva who has only just started to train on the path to enlightenment come to you, be it from thirty miles or three hundred, to ask about the Scriptures and Vinayas of the Mahayana, you should, in conformity with the Dharma, tell him of the difficultness of practice, for he will need to commit himself totally to zealous training as if he were ‘burning off body, arms, and fingers’.* This is because, if someone’s

* See the comment and explanation of possible misunderstanding of this and similar phrases in the Translator’s Introduction to this Scripture, pp. 52–53.

training does not blaze up with an ardency as if he were 'committing self, arms, and fingers to the flames' as his offering to the Buddhas, he is not a Bodhisattva who has truly renounced the world to be a monk, for we must give ourselves totally—body, flesh, hands, and feet—as offerings 'to feed the starving tigers, wolves, lions, and hungry ghosts'.

"Next, you must expound the True Law to him, point by point and in the correct order, so that his heart may open and his intention to realize enlightenment may develop. If, instead, as a Bodhisattva intent on some unworthy purpose such as gain or sustenance, should you evade his questions or defame the Triple Treasure by twisting around what the Scriptures and Vinayas say, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

SEVENTEENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On misusing power and position.

"Should a disciple of the Buddha become involved with, say, rulers, princes, ministers of state, or officials in order to obtain personal benefits—such as food and drink, money, possessions, sustenance, fame, and reputation—and then presume upon his position to demand and exact things from others by wrongfully taking their money and property, he is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept. It is the same if, in such a position, he seeks his own benefit through threats and intimidation or asks for too much

and, by such actions, encourages others to behave as he has done.

EIGHTEENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On teaching without genuine understanding.

“Disciples of the Buddha, you who study and recite the Precepts must keep the Precepts of the Bodhisattvas every day and at all hours; you must expound both their meaning and their spirit, as well as that of the nature of Buddha Nature. If a Bodhisattva, even though he may not understand a single sentence or a line of verse, let alone the basis of the Precepts and rules of discipline, nevertheless should state that he can interpret these, he is deceiving himself and deceiving others. Someone who does not understand, or is ignorant of, the Dharma but, in spite of this, plays the master and confers the Precepts on others is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

NINETEENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On speaking from spite.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you see a monk dutiful to the Precepts committing some trivial error, such as holding onto the incense censer in some wrong way, whilst otherwise conducting himself as a Bodhisattva should, and, out of malice and spite, try to pick a quarrel with him or talk about this good person to others in a slanderous way as though he had committed

all sorts of wrongdoings, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

TWENTIETH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On not acting to set sentient creatures free.

“Disciples of the Buddha, you should willingly and with compassion carry out the work of setting sentient creatures free.* All male beings are our fathers and all female beings are our mothers; there is not a single one amongst them from whom we have not received life in some previous existence. Consequently, all sentient beings in the six realms of existence are our fathers and mothers. Should you kill and devour some sentient creature, you are killing your parent, and even your own former being, because our present being has come into existence as a result of all kinds of former existences that were likewise fashioned from the four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind. Therefore, be unceasing in your practice of setting free all forms of life, for, so long as we are within the six worlds, it is an eternal law to receive life in successive existences. Instruct others also in how to set sentient creatures free.

“Should you see a worldly person intent on killing an animal, attempt by appropriate means to rescue or

* The procedure for setting a creature free has long been codified in a special ceremony in which a lawfully obtained creature is given the Precepts, teaching in the fundamentals of the Dharma, and a Buddhist name.

protect it and to free it from its misery. We must always give the Precepts of the Bodhisattvas in order to bring all sentient beings to the Other Shore.

“When your father, mother, brother, or sister dies, you should request a Dharma Master to come that same day and recite the Scriptures and expound the Precepts of the Bodhisattvas; in this way you will bring happiness and merit to the deceased so that they may behold the Buddhas and be reborn higher than an ordinary human or deva. Someone who does not act in this way is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

“You should study the foregoing ten Precepts with a respectful attitude and keep them ever before your eyes, for each one sheds great light on how to eradicate defilements.”

TWENTY-FIRST LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On taking vengeance.

The Buddha said, “Disciples of the Buddha, do not repay hatred with hate or trade blows for blows. Do not take revenge for the murder of father, mother, brother, or any close relative, nor for the assassination of the country’s ruler, because murdering one sentient being in order to avenge another does not conform to the principles of respect and dutifulness. Moreover, it is not permissible to treat people of either gender as slaves, for should you beat, slap, scold, or abuse those in your charge, this will result in untold daily

wrongdoings, first born of the mouth, which then defile your body, speech, and mind. How much worse is it, therefore, to commit any of the seven perfidious acts. Should a Bodhisattva who has renounced the world to be a monk, failing in compassion, wreak vengeance or deliberately avenge an offense committed even against one of his close relatives, he is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

TWENTY-SECOND LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On neglecting to ask for the Dharma
out of pride or arrogance.**

“When a disciple of the Buddha has only recently renounced the world to be a monk, he does not yet possess full understanding. Should he become proud or arrogant on the grounds that he is clever, intelligent, or learned, that he is a person of high rank, senior age, good birth, or superior culture, or that he is very fortunate, very generous, or rich in treasures and precious objects and, as a result, fail to ask for or accept Scriptures and Vinayas from a master who has studied them before him, he is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept. If this master comes from a humble family, is young, is of low birth, is poor or belongs to the lower classes, or is not in possession of all his faculties, but nevertheless is truly a virtuous person who fully understands the Scriptures and Vinayas, the Bodhisattva new to training should not give heed to the birth and family of this Dharma

Master. Should such a Bodhisattva not go to this Master to ask for and receive his teaching on the basic explanations and interpretations, he is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

TWENTY-THIRD LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On how to take the Precepts
when there is no master
and on giving improper teaching
out of pride or arrogance.**

“After My parinirvana, if a disciple of the Buddha gives rise in his heart to take the Precepts of the Bodhisattvas,* he should personally vow in front of some image of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas to take the Precepts. Thereafter, he must do *sange* in front of this Buddha during seven days. If he has some indication which confirms his sincerity,† then he has surely accepted the Precepts; if no indication appears, he should strive two or three weeks more up to a year for this to happen. Should some indication manifest by

* The text is not completely clear as to what is intended in this first paragraph. It may refer simply to laity who wish to take the Precepts but have no access to a Dharma Master, or it may refer to those who wish to be monks but have no one to ordain them. The content of the passage on pp. 171–172 suggests the latter.

† Description of the form these indications may take is given in the Forty-first Less Grave Precept.

then, he may formally take the Precepts in front of the image of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. Should no indication manifest, it is possible that he has not truly accepted the Precepts even though he has formally taken them in front of the Buddha's image.

“Should a person who has already taken the Precepts of the Bodhisattvas now wish to receive them from a Dharma Master, it is not necessary for some confirmatory sign to appear. This is because a Dharma Master confers the Precepts master to master. When someone receives the Precepts from a Dharma Master, he truly accepts them. This is so due to the gravity of the intention with which he takes them. If, however, no master who can confer the Precepts is to be found within a radius of three hundred miles and the person is able to take them before the image of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, it will be necessary for some confirmation to appear.

“Should a Dharma Master—say, one who, through his reliance upon his understanding of the Mahayana Precepts of the Scriptures and Vinayas, has come to be on friendly terms with the ruler of the country, the crown prince, or some state official—be asked by a Bodhisattva who has only just begun to train to explain to him the meaning of some Scripture or Vinaya, and should this Dharma Master then be flippant, scornful, or rude and fail to give him good responses to his questions point by point, the Master is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

TWENTY-FOURTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On not devoting oneself solely
to that which leads to realizing
one's Buddha Nature.**

“Once a disciple of the Buddha has the true Mahayana Teachings of the Buddha's Scriptures and Vinayas, the right view of both the Four Noble Truths and the nature of causality, a genuine spiritual intention, and the true Dharma Body, if he then does not apply himself zealously to his training and renounce the seven worldly treasures but, instead, pursues a study of the worldly writings and speculative treatises of those who follow the Lesser Course and of non-Buddhists who promulgate erroneous views of causality and morality, he cuts himself off from his Buddha Nature and places obstacles in his path to realizing Buddhahood, so that he does not walk the Way of the Bodhisattvas. Someone who willingly and knowingly acts in this way is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

TWENTY-FIFTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On not governing the Order properly.

“After My parinirvana, should a disciple become, say, Chief Lecturer, Chief Disciplinarian, Head Missioner, Head Novice, or Guestmaster, he needs to cultivate a compassionate attitude so that he may be able to pacify any quarrels or disputes that may arise. He must also look after and guard the possessions of

the Triple Treasure, treating these goods with the same care that he would were they his own. Should he, contrary to this, abet disorder and disruption within the Community by allowing quarrels, arguments, and debates to flourish, or by recklessly spending the goods and possessions of the Triple Treasure, he is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

TWENTY-SIXTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On accepting alms for one's personal profit.

“When a disciple of the Buddha who has been residing in a monastery sees a visiting monk entering the priests' quarters or a private residence in town, the resident monk should go welcome him and, when the time comes, see him off; he should see that the visitor has food, drink, and lodging as well as bedding or a hammock, in short, provide him with what is needed. The same holds true for a visiting monk who comes to stay at a dwelling set up for monks' use by a ruler, a shelter which monks occupy during their summer retreat period, a monastic lodging for pilgrims, or housing for those attending a large festival. Should a disciple of the Buddha have nothing tangible to offer his guest, he should be completely unstinting in serving him, just as though he were willing to dispose of self, sons and daughters, or anything else that he holds to be his so that he might present such as an offering to the visitor.

“When a donor comes to invite the Community of monks to his home in order to give them alms, visiting monks should receive their share of these presents and food donations. The Head of the monastery should allow such visiting monks to accept these invitations in their turn. If, however, he lets the monks who were already residing in the monastery accept such invitations only for themselves and fails to include the visiting monks, the Head of the monastery is defiling himself immeasurably by behaving no different from an animal; he is not a true Buddhist monk and does not belong to the Shakya family. If someone deliberately acts in this way, he is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

TWENTY-SEVENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On accepting personal invitations.

“Disciples of the Buddha, you are not to accept separate personal invitations from donors or to appropriate for yourself the benefits and food which you receive from them, for these benefits and food belong to the whole Sangha. By accepting such personal invitations you appropriate to yourself what belongs to the whole Community. If you deliberately appropriate for your own selfish ends that which belongs to those in the eight fields of merit, namely, Buddhas, Arahants, Dharma Masters, Precepts Masters, monks, father, mother, and the sick, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

TWENTY-EIGHTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:**On making personal invitations to monks.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, when there is a Bodhisattva—be he a monk or not—who, as a donor, wants to invite some worthy member of the Sangha to come partake of something, the person should go to the monastery and tell the monk in charge of administration that he wishes to invite a monk to come that day to take what he wishes from what is offered. The administrative monk then passes the matter on to that monk whose turn it is to be invited somewhere and, in this way, the person who made the invitation receives someone worthy and saintly from amongst the whole Community. If the donor were to send personal invitations to five hundred Arahants, Bodhisattvas, or monks, this would be less meritorious than to invite one ordinary monk whose turn it was to accept an invitation, inasmuch as making personal invitations to specific monks is a non-Buddhist practice. The seven Buddhas of the past did not know of the practice of personal invitations, for such do not conform to the principles of respect and dutifulness. Whoever deliberately and willfully addresses a personal invitation to a monk is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

TWENTY-NINTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On using improper means
to secure what one needs to live.**

“Should a disciple of the Buddha, acting out of selfish intent in order to gain advantages or to secure a livelihood, deal in prostitution of men or women, manipulate others through seduction, bribery, cajoling, or bullying, predict by means of divination or dreams whether a pregnant woman may expect a boy or a girl, predict good or bad fortune for someone through interpretation of dreams, engage in any form of sorcery or similar practice, engage in falconry, or concoct poisonous mixtures—be it from the hundred thousand varieties of poisonous plants, from the venom of snakes and insects, or from any of various metals—he thereby shows that he is devoid of all compassion. Anyone who willingly and knowingly does such things is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

THIRTIETH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On exerting a bad influence on the laity.

“Should a disciple of the Buddha, out of spite or malice, deliberately slander the Triple Treasure through trying to deceive members of the laity—say, by appearing to be friendly and cordial and then glibly talking about Emptiness whilst his actions are, in fact, of a worldly nature—and, by these means, should he enter into collusion with lay followers so

that licentious and immoral relationships or debauchery and bondage result, or should he, through his actions, cause lay followers to lend themselves to murder, theft, or other actions contrary to the Precepts or to violating the fasting periods during the six days of monthly abstinence* or the three months of continuous abstinence which should be observed each year,† he is thereby defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

“You should study the foregoing ten Precepts with a respectful attitude and keep them before your eyes, for they shed great light on all the categories of rules and Precepts.”

THIRTY-FIRST LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On not acting to redeem
what has been plundered
from the Triple Treasure.**

The Buddha said, “Disciples of the Buddha, after My parinirvana, you may meet in this world of vice

* The 8th, 14th, 15th, 23rd, 29th, and 30th: the traditional devotional days each month when, in some Buddhist traditions, lay persons were encouraged to pay particularly close attention to adhering to the Precepts and to refraining from taking food after noon.

† The first, fifth, and ninth months when the laity were also encouraged to keep to the Precepts and to abstain from taking food after noon for the whole month.

a villainous person amongst the non-Buddhists who, having plundered or stolen an image of a Buddha or of some Bodhisattva, is offering it for sale, or find such a person peddling a Scripture or Vinaya book, or enslaving monks of either gender, or abusing those of the Bodhisattva Way who have aroused the Bodhi-mind by forcing them into servitude under some official or making slaves out of them. If, as a Bodhisattva, you encounter such a thing, you should cultivate within yourself a compassionate attitude and, with skillful means, strive to bring deliverance and give protection. In all such cases, try to instruct and convert the villainous person and redeem what has been taken, be it the image of a Buddha or Bodhisattva, the monk, the Bodhisattva awakened to his Bodhi-mind, or the Scripture or Vinaya book. Should you not try to get these redeemed, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

THIRTY-SECOND LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On causing injury to sentient beings.

“Disciples of the Buddha, do not trade in swords and other weapons of warfare or in bows and arrows and other devices for hunting. Also, deal fairly and refrain from using scales that show a false weight or measurement. Do not appropriate another’s belongings by dint of possessing influence and power as an official. Do not, with malicious intent, tie someone up, literally or figuratively, or destroy the harvest of his

labors. Do not take to breeding and raising animals such as cats, foxes, swine, and dogs for hunting or slaughter. Someone who deliberately does such things is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

THIRTY-THIRD LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On getting caught up in worldly fascinations.

“Disciples of the Buddha, should you have the wrong attitude of mind which leads to attachments and taking sides and then deliberately let yourself get caught up with watching men or women quarreling or fighting, whether in anger or in sport, or with playing spectator to battles between armies, warriors, commanders, thieves, etc., you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept. Also, do not with such an attitude of mind listen to musical instruments—be they of the wind, percussion, or string families—or to the voice of singers, nor should you gamble with dice, play chess, or engage in any similar games of chance or competition. In addition, do not play around with any of the various forms of divination, nor associate with those who engage in dishonest or thieving practices, for these are things that must not be done. If, nevertheless, you deliberately do such things, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

THIRTY-FOURTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On straying from True Wisdom
even for a moment.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, if you would maintain and keep to the Precepts day and night whilst walking, standing, sitting, or reclining, then read and recite these Precepts as though they were as precious as diamonds, or were the float for you to cling to in your desire to cross the great sea of suffering, or were the vines used to tie up the monk.* Continually cultivate in yourself a virtuous faith in the Mahayana and keep in mind that you have not yet realized Buddhahood, whereas all the Buddhas are already perfect in their Buddhahood. Give rise to the intention to realize the Supreme Wisdom and constantly bear it in mind, for should you give rise to a single Lesser Course or non-Buddhist thought, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

THIRTY-FIFTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On neglecting to make resolves.

“Disciples of the Buddha, we should continually make all kinds of resolves to be respectful and dutiful to father, mother, teachers, monks, and the Triple

* A reference to the monk in Shakyamuni Buddha's time whose oppressors bound him with live plants but who refused to free himself lest he harm the plants.

Treasure. We should also resolve to find good masters and good fellow-trainees as well as virtuous friends and acquaintances, so that they may instruct us ceaselessly in the Scriptures and the Vinayas of the Mahayana, the Ten Decisions, the Ten Nourishing Attitudes, the Ten Commitments, and the Ten Stages. So that these good persons may bring us to understand all of these Foundations of Training, we should resolve to practice Them in accordance with the Dharma and hold firmly to the Precepts of the Buddha. Better we give up our very life than allow these thoughts to leave our heart. Any Bodhisattva who does not make such resolves is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

THIRTY-SIXTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On not pledging ourselves to keep the Precepts.

“When a disciple of the Buddha has taken the Ten Great Vows of Samantabhadra, he commits himself to the Precepts of the Buddha by making the following solemn wishes:

I would rather that this body of mine be cast into a pit of fierce and raging fire or onto a hill of razor-sharp knives than ever I vilify or act contrary to a Scripture or a Vinaya of the Buddhas of the Three Worlds or commit an impure act with any person.

I would rather that this body of mine be wrapped a thousand times around with a net of red-hot

iron than ever I accept from a faithful donor a single piece of clothing for this body if its actions are contrary to the Precepts.

I would rather that this mouth of mine swallow balls of red-hot iron and great streams of raging fire for a hundred thousand kalpas than ever I accept from a faithful donor any tasty delicacy of food or drink for this mouth if its actions are contrary to the Precepts.

I would rather that this body of mine be laid down within a great raging fire or upon a grid of red-hot iron than ever I accept from a faithful donor any manner of bed or seat for this body if its actions are contrary to the Precepts.

I would rather that this body of mine be pierced with the sharp point of a sword three hundred times for a kalpa or two than ever I accept from a faithful donor any medicine for this body if its actions are contrary to the Precepts.

I would rather that this body of mine be thrown into a cauldron of molten iron for a hundred thousand kalpas than ever I accept from a faithful donor any type of room, dwelling, garden, forest, field, or land of any sort for this body if its actions are contrary to the Precepts.

I would rather that this body of mine be shattered to pieces from head to foot with an iron mallet and reduced to fine dust than ever I accept from a faithful donor any expression

of reverence or respect paid to this body if its actions are contrary to the Precepts.

I would rather that both my eyes be stabbed blind by a hundred thousand red-hot knives than ever I look upon the love-making or debauchery of others with a heart or mind that acts contrary to the Precepts.

I would rather that my organs of hearing be pierced with a hundred thousand iron awls for a kalpa or two than ever I listen to pleasant music or speech with a heart or mind that acts contrary to the Precepts.

I would rather that this nose of mine be cut off with a hundred thousand knives than ever I desire to smell any aroma with a heart or mind that acts contrary to the Precepts.

I would rather that this tongue of mine be sliced off with a hundred thousand knives than ever I taste any pure food or donated dainty with a heart or mind that acts contrary to the Precepts.

I would rather that this body of mine be hacked to pieces with a sharp ax than ever I desire a pleasant sensation with a heart or mind that acts contrary to the Precepts.

I pray that all sentient beings everywhere will realize Buddhahood.

A Bodhisattva who does not give rise to these wishes defiles himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

THIRTY-SEVENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On overlooking monastic requisites and ignoring or defying danger when traveling.

“During the two retreat periods in winter and summer, as well as during the renewal period at the beginning of summer when pilgrimages are undertaken, as a disciple of the Buddha, you should always have for your personal use a tooth-cleaning stick, soap, your three monastic robes, a water jug, your begging bowl, your bowing mat, your mendicant’s traveling staff, an incense burner, a clothes box, a water filter, a towel, a razor, something to light a fire with, tweezers, a hammock, a Scripture and Vinaya text, an image of the Buddha, and some image of a Bodhisattva. Whenever you go on a pilgrimage, or travel for other spiritual reasons, be it thirty miles or three hundred, you should always carry these eighteen objects with you. The retreat periods last from the fifteenth day of the first month to the fifteenth day of the third month and from the fifteenth day of the eighth month to the fifteenth day of the tenth month; during these two periods you should always carry these eighteen objects with you when you travel, just as a bird carries its two wings.

“Bodhisattvas new to monastic training observe Uposatha days (when monastic vows are renewed) by reciting every fortnight the Ten Great Precepts and the Forty-eight Less Grave Precepts in front of some image of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. When there is only one person to celebrate the Uposatha, then, obviously, this one person does the recitation, but

if two or three up to a hundred thousand persons are present, still only one single person recites the Precepts. The one who recites the Precepts sits on an elevated seat and all others on lower seats. Everyone present wears a kesa of nine, seven, or five stripes.

“During a summer pilgrimage everything you do should be done in accordance with the Dharma. Also, when traveling about the countryside, you are not to enter dangerous areas. If a country is having difficulties or is under the rule of a wicked person, or the landscape, literally or figuratively, is known for its precipitous places or is filled with remote and deep jungles and forests where lions, tigers, and wolves are to be feared, or if the place is subject to floods, fires, or violent winds, is a haven for robbers or brigands who threaten the roads and byways, or is a place where poisonous snakes make traveling dangerous, then avoid such places. Thus, be it during retreat times or on a summer pilgrimage, none of these dangerous places is to be entered. Someone who willingly and knowingly ignores the danger and enters such places is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

THIRTY-EIGHTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On not observing proper respect for seniority.

“Disciples of the Buddha, you should take your place in accordance with the proper order of seniority as accords with the Dharma. For example, those who were first to accept the Precepts take their place in the front whilst those who accepted them most recently are

seated in the back, without questioning whether they are old or young, male or female monks, persons of high position, rulers, princes, eunuchs, or servants of either gender; each and every one should be seated according to the principle described above. You are not to act in the same way as foolish non-Buddhists who allow the elderly and the young ones to seat themselves wherever they wish; not to be seated in a regulated order is the custom amongst soldiers and menials. Within our Community of the Buddha Dharma, whoever was first sits in front and whoever joined last sits in the back; if, as a Bodhisattva, you do not take an appropriate place accordingly, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

THIRTY-NINTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On not applying oneself
for the weal of self and others.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, not only should you constantly instruct all sentient beings by inducing them to realize Buddhahood, but you should also found monasteries and construct Buddhist pagodas within mountain forests, parks, and fields, as well as build abodes for the winter and summer retreat periods and set up places of shelter alongside roads for times of pilgrimage.* Also, when someone is ill or the country

* For the deeper meaning of such tasks, see *Bodhi-dharma's Discourse on Pure Meditation*, pp. 368–369.

is endangered by rebellion or by any other danger, as well as on the day of the death of father, mother, brother, sister, Dharma Master, or Precepts Master, and on every seventh day during the forty-nine days following their death, as a Bodhisattva, you should recite, and lecture on, the Scriptures and Vinayas of the Mahayana.

“When there are services or fasts, when you seek blessings for officials and governors who come or leave, when great fires and floods occur, when storms and gales endanger those in ships, when malevolent demons threaten disaster in rivers, lakes, and oceans, you should also recite the Mahayana Scriptures and Vinayas. You should do likewise when a defiling act is done whose karmic consequences will be reaped in the present life, in the next rebirth, or in some later rebirth, or when one of the seven perfidious acts occurs, or when some deed is done that will place the doer in one of the eight places or conditions where meeting a Buddha or hearing the Dharma will be difficult.

“You should also recite them when you are bound up or fettered in any way, as well as when debauchery, hatred, foolishness, or sickness abounds. If a Bodhisattva new to monastic training does not act in this way, he is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

“You should study the foregoing nine Precepts with a respectful attitude and keep them ever before

your eyes for they shed great light upon the matter of Brahma's Rod.*"

FORTIETH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On being discriminatory
when giving the Precepts.**

The Buddha said, "Disciples of the Buddha, when giving the Precepts to others, do not discriminate amongst people on the basis of any personal preferences. Any being—whether ruler or prince, minister or public official, monk or virtuous lay trainee of either gender, lustful man or dissolute woman, someone in the eighteen Brahma heavens or in the six worlds of sensual desire, someone born without sex organs or with both, eunuch, servant of either gender, any kind of ghost, demon, or spirit—can receive the Precepts. Instruct them that their kesa should be of a dull hue, dyed a blue, yellow, red, black, or purple shade as is appropriate to the path of their training. Dyed clothes, including their bowing mat, are to be of a dull shade, and whatever they wear should also be so. Whatever may be the customary dress of people in any country, monks should wear garments that differ from those worn for everyday use by ordinary people.

"When someone wishes to formally take the Precepts, the Master should ask this person whether he has defiled himself by deliberately committing any

* A reference to the application of the rule of silence to help an errant monk experience *sange*.

of the seven perfidious acts within his present life, for if the answer is affirmative, as a Bodhisattva, the Dharma Master cannot allow such a person in his present existence to formally take the Precepts. The seven perfidious acts are the following: shedding the blood of a Buddha, murdering father, mother, a Dharma Master, a Precepts Master, or an Arahant, or causing a rift in the Sangha (whose task it is to turn the Wheel of the Law). Anyone who is possessed of the karmic obstructions from any of these seven deliberate acts is unable to clearly grasp and adhere to moral practices in his present existence. With this one exception, any person whosoever can formally take the Precepts.*

* This prohibition has long been a source of diverse interpretations, as it appears to imply that some people are incapable in their lifetime of turning their hearts around fully to the Buddha's Way, a proposition denied by other parts of the Dharma. It also appears to require the Master to turn away from helping a person who has committed a perfidious act, even though he is sincerely repentant. Many have considered such an act of rejection contrary to compassion and inconsistent with the Bodhisattva ideal. Nevertheless, the wording of Kumārajīva's translation clearly requires an absolute refusal to formally give the Precepts to any person who has at any point in his life committed one of the seven perfidious acts.

Several approaches to the dilemma created by the wording in this Precept have been taken. One is to adhere strictly to the prohibition against formally giving the Precepts, while showing one's compassion to the person in all other ways. This approach places emphasis on the limited scope of the

phrase, 'formally taking the Precepts'. In Mahayana Buddhism, lay Buddhists who have formally taken the Precepts are considered part of the Sangha, along with the monks, since the Ceremony of Taking the Precepts constitutes a form of ordination. Thus, the point of this restriction in the Precept, in this view, is that someone who has deliberately and wantonly committed any of the seven perfidious acts has revealed, by such an action, that he is so unrestrained by, unwilling to keep to, or incapable of grasping fundamental principles of human morality that he is incapable of fully and reliably functioning as part of the Buddhist Sangha. However, this prohibition would not mean that such a person could not be taught meditation, be given instruction in the Dharma in all its aspects, be provided with spiritual counseling, attend public ceremonies, or attempt to live by the Precepts and other principles of Buddhist practice.

Another approach has been to assert that the wording of the Precept is not intended to be taken literally by the Master who encounters this situation since to do so would violate the greater teachings of Mahayana Buddhism on the power of repentance and the need for compassion toward all beings. Masters who have held this position have considered themselves ready, if necessary, to take the consequences of acting contrary to the literal sense in the service of a higher principle of Buddhism. Great Master Dōgen (1200–1253), for example, when asked whether someone who has committed one of the perfidious acts and has done *sange* for the act could formally receive the Precepts, commented, "Yes, it is the understanding which my late Teacher Eisai himself attested to. Once the person's *sange* has been acknowledged [as genuine], he can once again formally take the Precepts. Even though he has defiled himself by committing one of the perfidious acts, if he repents his action, he may have the Precepts conferred on him at a formal Taking of the Precepts

“Those who have renounced the world to be monks do not prostrate themselves before a ruler or before father or mother; they do not pay deference to any of their other close relatives, nor do they make reverence to any demon or departed spirit, but confine themselves to understanding what the Dharma Master is talking about. Should someone come from a distance of thirty miles or three hundred to seek the Dharma and should then a Dharma Master, as a Bodhisattva, out of wickedness of heart or mind, not give that person the Precepts (which belong to any sentient being), such a master is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

FORTY-FIRST LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On performing ordinations for personal profit.

“Disciples of the Buddha, if, through the influence of your teaching, someone turns himself around and gives rise to a true and virtuous heart, you, as a Bodhisattva, should have some master in the Dharma give instruction and advice to this person. This master should see to it that the one who wishes to receive the

Ceremony” (*Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki*, part I, section 6). Also in this section, Dōgen remarked concerning his understanding of the true intent of this Scriptural prohibition that “its significance lies in its serving as a barrier gate for curbing such behavior.” That is, it is a compassionate reminder of the extremely deep and serious karmic consequences from committing any of the perfidious acts.

Precepts takes two masters: a Dharma Master and a Precepts Master. The Dharma Master must then ask him whether in his present existence he has deliberately committed any of the seven perfidious acts for, if he has, the master should not permit the person to formally take the Precepts. If, on the other hand, he has committed none of the seven perfidious acts, he can be formally given the Precepts.

“If this person has acted contrary to any of the Ten Great Precepts, he should be instructed in doing *sange*, during which he recites the Ten Great Precepts and the Forty-eight Less Grave Precepts in front of some image of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas over six days and nights, until some confirmatory evidence appears whilst he is being worshipful in front of the Thousand Buddhas of the Three Worlds. The person may need to persevere during one, two, or three weeks up to a full year before such a confirmation manifests, for it is quite essential that he manifest some confirmatory sign. Confirmatory signs include the Buddha Transmitting the Truth to the person, the person taking on a luminous glow or blossoming out, as well as any of a variety of similar noteworthy signs. The occurrence of this sign indicates that the person's defilements have been eradicated. If some such confirmation does not appear, then, even though a *sange* has been attempted, it has apparently been to no avail, for the person concerned is not yet capable of observing the Precepts in his present state. Nevertheless, the person will receive merit which will bear fruit in a subsequent existence. If the person has acted contrary to one of the Forty-eight

Less Grave Precepts and he turns himself around with true repentance, his defilement will be eradicated; it is not the same with the karmic obstruction from the seven perfidious acts.

“The master who instructs and advises the person must explain to him each and every article of the Dharma until he understands It clearly, not failing to expound the Scriptures and Vinayas of the Mahayana. The master should not give too much or too little importance to confirmatory signs. He must also expound the primary meaning of the Precepts so that the person may learn of his inherited nature, his nature that is the product of nurturing, his unsulliable nature, his nature that holds the seed of his Buddhahood, and his True Nature. He must also present the many approaches to meditative practice so that the disciple may have some method for entering into the ten branches of meditation. If, as a result of the master's failure to do any of these things, the person fails to grasp, point by point, the intentions that lie embodied within the Dharma but, instead, is deceived by the master who is, as a Bodhisattva, giving him false interpretations of Scripture and Vinaya (behaving so out of sheer covetousness for benefits or sustenance, fame, and reputation or with the intention of wrongfully obtaining something, obtaining it in an inordinate quantity, or garnering profits or disciples), such a master is engaging in fraud and lying to himself and to others merely for the sake of gathering up offerings. One who deliberately gives the Precepts in this way is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

FORTY-SECOND LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On expounding the Precepts to the intractable.

“Disciples of the Buddha, you must not, with hopes of gain or sustenance, deliberately expound on the Great Precepts of the Thousand Buddhas before those who still will not accept these Precepts of a Bodhisattva or before those non-Buddhists who are of hateful or malicious intent, nor may you hold discourse on them before those fixed in their false notions regarding karmic causality. With the exception of the ruler of a country, you must not expound on them before any such people, for these types of bad-intentioned persons have not accepted the Buddha's Precepts. Hence, we refer to them as ‘beasts’, for, existence after existence, they have not encountered the Triple Treasure and thus are heartless as trees and stones; they are designated as a class of non-Buddhists who are fixed upon erroneous views and are not different from a block of wood. If, as a Bodhisattva, should you expound on the Precepts proclaimed by the Seven Buddhas before these bad-intentioned people, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

FORTY-THIRD LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

On brazenly accepting alms.

“Disciples of the Buddha, if, with a heart of faith, you have renounced the world to be a monk and have received the True Precepts of the Buddha, and then deliberately and intentionally set out to vilify the holy

Precepts and act contrary to them, you may not accept any offerings from any donor, nor may you travel upon the ruler's land or drink from his water. Five thousand great protecting spirits will continually block the road that lies before you and call you the Great Spoiler. Whenever you enter a monastery room or a dwelling in some town, these spirits will continually sweep away any traces of your having been there. The humans in this world will revile you, calling you a renegade within the Sangha of the Buddha Dharma, and every sentient being will be loathe even to look upon you, for anyone who violates the Precepts in this way is not different from an animal or from a block of wood. Should you deliberately vilify the True Precepts, you defile yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

FORTY-FOURTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On not making offerings
to the Scriptures and Canons.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, you should always wholeheartedly accept, keep to, read, and recite the Scriptures and Vinayas of the Mahayana. Let your skin be as the paper, your blood as the ink, your marrow as the solvent, and your bones as the writing instruments, that you might keep the Precepts of the Buddha ever recorded within your very being. You should write them down fully on bark, fine paper, silk, bamboo, or cloth to preserve them and always, literally and figuratively, fashion cases with the seven priceless

treasures, fragrant flowers, and all manner of precious things to enclose the books of the Scriptures and Vinayas. Should you not make offerings to the Scriptures and Vinayas in accordance with the Dharma, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

FORTY-FIFTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On not leading sentient beings
to turn their hearts around.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, always give rise within yourself to the heart of Great Compassion. Upon entering a dwelling in any town and seeing sentient beings, you should say quietly to yourself, ‘O you sentient beings, may you fully accept the Three Refuges and the Ten Precepts.’ When seeing an ox, a horse, a pig, a sheep, or any other animal, you should say within yourself, ‘Since you are an animal, I pray that the Bodhi-mind will awaken within you.’ Also, as a Bodhisattva, when you penetrate into a mountain forest, a river valley, or a plain, you should in all places act in such a way as to help sentient beings develop the Bodhi-mind. If, as a Bodhisattva, should you not in such ways help others to turn themselves around, you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

FORTY-SIXTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:**On failing to preach the Dharma
in conformity with the Precepts and Vinayas.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, whenever you undertake to induce others to turn their hearts around, give rise in yourself to the heart of Great Compassion. When entering the house of a donor or of a person of high position, or when finding yourself in the midst of a crowd, you should not expound the Dharma to lay people from a standing position; instead, you should sit on an elevated seat in front of the lay assembly, because a Dharma Master (or any monk) must not teach the Dharma to the four classes of Buddhists whilst standing upright. A Dharma Master, when teaching, is seated on a higher place amidst the offerings of incense and flowers, whilst the four classes listen from their lower seats, for they must be respectful and dutiful towards the Teachings of a master in the same way as they would show respect and filial piety toward their parents or would respect a Brahman who was tending his ritual fire. Should the one who is expounding the Dharma not conform to these rules for teaching, he is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

FORTY-SEVENTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On creating laws that hinder
or impede the Dharma.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, once you have accepted the Precepts of the Buddhas with a faithful heart, should you then, in your high rank and position as a ruler, prince, public official, or disciple (amongst any of the four classes of Buddhists), break or nullify the Precepts and Vinayas of the Buddha’s Teaching, openly create laws forbidding our disciples of the four classes to renounce the world in order to practice the Way, create laws prohibiting the setting up of images, the construction of Buddhist pagodas, or the manufacturing of Scripture and Vinaya books, put public officials in charge of spiritually governing the laity, and make laws that interfere with, or circumscribe, religious practice or monastic life, or, as a high-ranking lay person (in yielding to the request of his superiors in the same manner as a soldier or a servant), put similar bad laws widely into effect, then you are defiling yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

“As a Bodhisattva, you should accept the offerings of all people. If, instead, you make yourself the agent of officials or create bad laws and regulations, you defile yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept. When rulers and officials have accepted the Precepts of the Buddhas with a sincerely inclined heart, they must not defile themselves by assailing the Triple Treasure. If, nevertheless, they should do so

deliberately and thereby violate the Dharma, they are defiling themselves by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

FORTY-EIGHTH LESS GRAVE PRECEPT:

**On committing acts that interfere
with the teaching of the Dharma.**

“Disciples of the Buddha, say that one of you, with a well-inclined heart, were to renounce the world to be a monk and then began to teach the Precepts of the Buddha to some ruler or official, even though it were in order to gain personal renown and benefits (or to secure your livelihood); if you were then put into shackles and held as prisoner, slave, or soldier through the intrigues of some monk of either gender (or of any disciple of the Precepts of the Buddhas), the one responsible for your downfall would be comparable to a worm within a lion’s body which gnaws away at the lion’s flesh, for such a disciple of the Buddha, through acting in a non-Buddhist way, has harmed the Buddha’s Teaching which neither devas nor demons can destroy. When you accept the Precepts of the Buddhas, you must also take them under your protection with the same concern that you would take for your only child or in caring for your father or mother. You must not vilify or break the Precepts of the Buddhas.

“When, as a Bodhisattva, you hear a non-Buddhist, from hate or malice, speak ill of the Precepts of the Buddhas and slander them through wicked words, you may feel as though three hundred lances were piercing

your heart or as though your body were struck by a thousand swords and ten thousand cudgels (so that you would rather enter some hell for a hundred kalpas than have to hear even once the sound of hateful and malicious words vilifying the Precepts of the Buddhas). How much worse is it, then, if you yourself break these Precepts or induce another to do so. Such is not the way of a respectful and dutiful heart. Whoever willingly and knowingly does such a thing is defiling himself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept.

“You should study the foregoing nine Precepts with a respectful attitude and keep them before your eyes.

“O disciples of the Buddhas, accept and keep to these Forty-eight Less Grave Precepts. Bodhisattvas of bygone times have recited them, Bodhisattvas of the present recite them, Bodhisattvas of the future will recite them. Listen and heed, O disciples of the Buddhas! The Buddhas of the Three Realms have already recited the Ten Great Precepts and the Forty-eight Less Grave Precepts, are reciting them now, and will recite them in the future. I, too, have recited them now as well. All of you who have accepted and keep to the Precepts of the Bodhisattvas, be you ruler, prince, official, monk of either gender, or lay person of either gender, should not only accept and keep to them but also read them aloud, understand them, and expound them, as well as write them down. This is to be done so that the Book of the Precepts, wherein resides the

Buddha Nature, may forever be propagated and spread throughout the Three Realms and so that all sentient beings may ever turn around in their hearts and see the Thousand Buddhas. These Thousand Buddhas stretch out their hands to us so that, birth after birth, we will not fall into some lower state of existence or into one of the eight conditions or states where it is difficult to meet a Buddha or hear the Dharma but, instead, will be reborn always as human beings or amongst the devas.

“I have now expounded under this Bodhi tree the Dharma Precepts of the Seven Buddhas in detail. It is now up to you to practice these Precepts wholeheartedly and to put them into practice joyfully, as has been clearly expounded, point after point, in the exhortations to train given by the Lord of the Heaven beyond Thought and Discrimination.”

Three thousand learned ones who were then amongst the listeners, upon hearing the Buddha Himself proclaim the Precepts, wholeheartedly accepted them and, with joy and enthusiasm, kept to them.

After Shakyamuni Buddha had finished expounding the aspects of the Dharma of the Ten Inexhaustible Precepts (which are contained within the Dharma Gates to the Foundations of Training as preached by Vairochana Buddha whilst seated on His lotus pedestal that encompasses all worlds), the ten billion Shakyamunis also proclaimed them in the same way. Wherever He was, from within the palace of the deva king Maheshvara to beneath the Bodhi tree, He preached on the various aspects of the Teaching, whereafter an untold vast multitude of Bodhisattvas accepted, kept to, read,

recited, and explained their meaning in the same manner. In the ten billion worlds—worlds enclosed within the lotus pedestal, worlds as numerous as particles of dust—all the Buddhas expounded on the Treasure House of the Thirty Characteristic Attitudes of a Bodhisattva, the Treasure House of the Ten Stages of Bodhisattvahood, the Treasure House of the Fifty-eight Precepts, the Treasure House of the Immeasurable Commitments and Vows to Train, and the Treasure House of Causality and the Eternal Buddha Nature.

After all the Buddhas had preached on the Treasure Houses of all the innumerable Teachings, all sentient beings in the ten billion worlds accepted and kept to them and, with joy and respect, put them into practice. Once they had clearly manifested the characteristics of the Foundations of Training, the Lord of the Glorious Lotus Light of Buddha spoke thus in verse:

“The bright-minded person who is strong
in patience, equanimity, and wisdom
And can keep to Teachings such as these,
Easily obtains five types of benefits
Even before reaching the rank of Buddha:
First, the Buddhas of all the Ten Quarters
Look upon him with sympathy
and ever protect him;
Second, at the end of his life,
He will see clearly
and his heart will fill with joy;
Third, in all future lives
He will be friend to all Bodhisattvas;

Fourth, he will garner innumerable merits
 Through his perfecting the Precepts
 within himself;
 Fifth, in this and later lives
 His wisdom and happiness
 from keeping to the Pure Precepts
 will be full and complete:
 Such is the disciple of the Buddha.

The clever one who relies upon intellect
 And the one who swears
 that all things have a permanent self
 Cannot live in faith with this Teaching;
 The one who denies that Truth can be known
 Is also not soil in which to plant this seed,
 But, should you wish to cultivate
 the tender stem of True Wisdom
 And make Its splendrous light
 illumine the world,
 Then let yourself in stillness and reflection sit
 And fathom the genuine character of all things:
 They are neither born nor do they perish,
 They are not eternal and unceasing,
 They are neither all the same nor different,
 They neither appear nor disappear.

Within your whole heart
 Let your skillful means
 blossom forth with zeal,
 For that which a Bodhisattva is to do
 Must be studied in the correct sequence

And, whether still new to training
or far beyond,
Do not cultivate discriminative thoughts:
This is called the Prime Path
Or Mahayana, the Great Course;
All vain and fallacious theories are destroyed
when we follow this Path,
All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
Spring forth from It.
This is why you, as disciples of the Buddha,
Must cultivate great courage and valor,
So that you may guard and preserve
the Pure Precepts of the Buddhas
As though they were the most luminous
of pearls.
All Bodhisattvas of times past
Applied themselves to putting them into
practice;
Bodhisattvas of the present
apply themselves likewise now,
As will the Bodhisattvas of the future.

These Precepts are the conduct of Buddhas;
They are what the Buddha, Holy Lord of Lords,
ever praises.
I, too, follow His example and preach them,
Piling high immeasurable blessings and merits,
Which I then bestow on all sentient beings
So that all shall direct themselves
Toward that All-encompassing Wisdom
Which Is;

I pray that all those
 who have heard these Teachings
Shall quickly find the Path
 that leads to Buddhahood.”

RELIGIOUS PROSE TEXT.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO DO PURE MEDITATION.

*Translated from the Chinese of the Fifty-fourth Ancestor,
Great Master Keizan Jōkin.*

Pure meditation opens us so that we may directly realize the Foundation of our minds and dwell content within our own Buddha Nature. This is called ‘displaying our Original Face’. It is also called ‘revealing the landscape of our Original Nature’. Body and mind both drop off, with no clinging to sitting up or lying down. Hence, there are no discriminatory thoughts of ‘this is good’ or ‘this is bad’. You readily go beyond thoughts of ‘this is worldly’ or ‘this is saintly’. You penetrate into, and go on beyond, the multitude of notions and theories about delusion versus enlightenment. You leave far behind the boundary between ‘ordinary beings’ and ‘Buddhas’. Therefore, you cease to pant after the myriad phenomena and let go of all attachments to them.

All willful actions have ceased; the six sense faculties are not actively pursuing what things are, unsure of what to call them. No need to activate body, no need to activate mind. Should you wish to deliberate, you find that deliberative thought has died out; should you wish

to speak, you find that you are destitute of words. You are like the fool and like the one who is resolute; you are as lofty as a mountain and as profound as the ocean, with the peak beyond view, the bottom beyond sight. Without comparing conditions, you illumine them, your Eye shining out from the clouds. Without pondering on anything, you penetrate all; your teaching is clear as you speak out from the silence.

Whilst sitting in pure meditation, cut yourself free of Heaven and Earth: your whole being is as a solitary drop of dew. Those whose spiritual realization is unfathomable in its depth are as great corpses: their eyes have no veil, no cataract; their feet never contact even a single mote of dust, for where is there any dust? What is there to obscure or hinder? By its very nature, clear water has no front or back; in the last analysis, the empty sky has no inside or outside. Like them, you are unobscured and clear, luminous in yourself, spiritually ablaze, for form and space are not yet divided, so how are knowledge and the wisdom that contemplates it to arise? From the beginning, they have dwelt together for successive eons without a name.

The Great Master who was our Third Ancestor called It 'Mind', meaning 'Original Nature'. The Venerable Nāgārjuna, as an expedient, called It 'Body', meaning 'True Self'. The former points to the aspect of Buddha Nature, whilst the latter expresses the embodiment of the Buddhas. As 'the Full Moon', It reveals no lack or excess. This Original Nature is none other than Buddha. The radiance of the True Self arises from the ancient past and is dazzling in Its brilliance

today. It effects the transmutations of Nāgārjuna and perfects the samadhi of Buddhas.

Our minds, from the first, have no dual nature and our bodies differ in appearance. There is just mind and just body; do not speak of them as being different or as being alike. Mind shifts and perfects body; body manifests and its appearance diverges. A single wave moves ever so little, and myriad waves come following after. No sooner have mind and perceptual consciousness arisen than myriads of phenomena compete to come in. Thereupon, what we call 'the four elements and the five skandhas' harmoniously combine, and the 'four bodily segments and their five sense organs' suddenly emerge, culminating in the thirty-six physical parts and excretions, along with the twelve links in the chain of dependent origination. Our features, ever changing and shifting, roll on in succession, inheriting from what has gone before. Still, combining with all phenomena, they have 'existence'. Hence, the mind is like the ocean's water, the body like its billowing waves. Just as there is no trace of a wave outside the ocean's water, so there is not a single drop of water outside of, or apart from, the billowing waves. Water and wave have no separate existence; movement and rest are no different. Hence, it is said that the True Person of 'birth and death, coming and going', the Indestructible Body of the four elements and the five skandhas, is the One who now sits in meditation, who straightway enters the ocean of Buddha Nature and accordingly manifests the embodiment of the Buddhas.

From the first, the wondrous, pure, bright Original Nature immediately appears before one's eyes. One light continuing from the first ultimately becomes fully illuminating. The waters of the ocean are all without increase or decrease. Likewise, the waves and billows have no withdrawing or turning back upon themselves. Thus, all Buddhas have appeared in the world for the sake of the Reason for the One Great Matter for which we train. Straightway, They help sentient beings open up spiritually and see the way to go, that they may awaken and know Buddha.

Also, They have a wondrous method which does not entangle or distress or foster defiling passions: it is called 'pure meditation'. It is, of course, the samadhi which all Buddhas employ, to their delight. It is also called 'the samadhi that is the lord of samadhis'. If even for a little while you reside contented within this samadhi, then straightway you will open your spiritual eye and clarify what your mind really is. Know well that this is indeed the right gate to Buddhahood. If you are desirous of clarifying what your mind really is, let go of all your deluded, discriminatory knowledge and explanations. Put aside the teachings of the world and the Teachings of the Buddha. Cut yourself free from all false and deluding opinions and sentiments. When you manifest the true Nature of the One Reality, the clouds of doubt and delusion that have accumulated will disperse, and the Moon of your Original Nature will once again shine clear and bright. The Buddha said, "Should you, upon hearing the Dharma, ponder on Its meaning, you are still as one outside the gate. To come back

straightway to pure meditation is to calmly sit within the house.” How true this is! And just as with that ‘hearing and pondering’, likewise all your opinions are still not yet put to rest. Your mind is still hindered by attachments. Thus, you are as one sitting outside the gate. Just do pure meditation, and all will relax and come to rest. There is no place where you will not penetrate. Therefore, you will resemble one who returns home and sits in peace.

Now then, the defiling passions from the five skandhas all arise out of ignorance. ‘Ignorance’ is ‘not seeing the True Self clearly’; ‘pure meditation’ is ‘seeing the True Self clearly’. Even though you rid yourself of the five hindrances—namely, desire, anger, drowsiness, excitability, and doubt—you still have not rid yourself of ignorance. That was not the case with the Buddhas and Ancestors. If you wish to rid yourself of ignorance, then pure meditation and practice of the Way, together, will form the key. Someone of old said, “If you are exerting yourself unnecessarily, live quietly. If you live quietly, wisdom will manifest. If wisdom manifests, Truth will be seen.” If you wish to bring a disordered mind to an end, you must put thoughts of what is good or bad to rest and abandon all worldly pursuits and obstacles. Let your mind have no judgmental thoughts and fancies; let your body have no ‘business to attend to’. This is a primary point to heed, for, when you have brought the causes of your delusory thoughts to an end, the misleading mind will follow suit and become extinguished. When the misleading mind is extinguished, the Immutable Body will

manifest, and you will understand and forever know. This is not a teaching of nihilistic annihilation nor is it a teaching of a perpetual personality ever on the move.

The active pursuit of arts and crafts, medicine, and fortune-telling should all be left far behind. How much more so, singing and dancing, as well as seeking friendships, arguing, playing pranks, or engaging in debates and discussions. Keep your distance from chasing after things because of their reputation or appearance, seeking to profit from them! Although poetic eulogies and lyrics of various kinds are, by nature, the karmic effects of a pure attitude of mind, nevertheless, do not dote on reciting them. Lay aside brush and ink for composing literary works, and do not use them for such purposes. Such abstention will serve as a fine model for one who would tread the Path; it is what is adequate for a harmonious mind.

Do not be attached to the wearing of fine garments or of soiled or ragged clothing. Fine garments give birth to covetousness and encourage a fear of thieves and robbers; thus they are impediments for the follower of the Way. To refuse to accept them—whether offered with an ulterior motive or, openly, as alms—is a praiseworthy act traceable to ancient times. Even if you had them to begin with, do not worry about them; should some thief steal them, do not chase after them or begrudge their loss. Wash and patch your soiled or old robes, removing any dirt and grime. Make them clean and fit for wearing; otherwise, your body will be exposed to the cold or become ill from not removing

the dirt and grime. These are also conditions that obstruct your pursuit of the Way.

Do not neglect taking care of your body's life. Lacking sufficient clothing, food, or sleep is referred to as the three insufficiencies, for each is a cause of regressions and lapses. Also, do not eat any sentient being nor any stale or spoiled food, for they are not pure. Such things will upset the stomach and make the body and the mind fevered and pained, so that, when sitting in meditation, you will feel ill and anxious. Likewise, do not be addicted to fine and fancy foods. When you have not rid yourself of thoughts of greed, it is never enough for the body and mind simply to be free from illness and anxiety. Food is taken simply to support one's vital energy, so do not lust after flavors. Since, in some cases, eating a hearty meal and then sitting can cause illness, you ought not to sit immediately after a large or a small meal. After a little time has passed, you will again be fit for sitting. Monks, without fail, should restrain themselves as to the amount of food eaten. 'To restrain intake' implies 'in relation to your particular body'. Within three parts, eat two parts and leave one. This principle can always find exception for medical reasons, such as the taking of sesame, potatoes, and so forth, as remedies for colds, for such practices are an essential technique in regulating the body.

When sitting in meditation, do not lean up against fences, walls, partitions, meditation chairs, screens, barriers, and the like. Also, do not sit for meditation in a spot where there is a strong wind or climb atop

a stupa and meditate there, for these are all causes of illness.

When sitting in meditation, the body sometimes feels as though it were boiling hot or freezing cold, sometimes as though stagnant or like a whirlpool, sometimes strong or weak, sometimes heavy or light, sometimes as though being forced to stay awake: all are disharmonies of the breathing which you should certainly bring into regulation. To regulate the breathing, open the mouth wide for a short while. If your inhalations are long, let them be long; if short, let them be short. Slowly, slowly, regulate them, doing it ever so gradually. When you feel the opportune moment has come, gently adjust the breathing to normal, finally letting the breath pass through the nose, and then continue on in that way.

Sometimes, whilst sitting, your mind may feel as though it were sinking down or floating up. Sometimes it may seem foggy or uncommonly keen. Sometimes it may see through the wall to outside the room or see into your body. Sometimes it may see the Buddha in person or some Bodhisattva.* Sometimes it

* Seeing Buddhas or Bodhisattvas while meditating is, indeed, an impediment for the beginning meditator; however, at other times or in other contexts within training this is not necessarily the case. See, for example, *The Scripture of Brahma's Net*, p. 175, where visions of the Buddha are listed as confirmatory signs. Whether detrimental or beneficial, in neither case is attachment to such things warranted. The matter of visions is an area where the wise discernment of an experienced master is invaluable.

may bring up 'sage opinions' or 'penetrating insights' into the meaning of Scriptures and Commentaries. Experiencing various wondrous happenings such as these, along with their extraordinary characteristics, are, through and through, illnesses from a disharmony of thoughts and breathing. Should such an illness occur, focus your mind on your crossed legs as you sit. Should your mind feel dull and depressed, focus the mind on the space between your eyebrows. Should your mind run riot, focus your mind down the ridge of your nose onto the *tanden*. (The *tanden* is located an inch and a half below the navel.) Normally, when sitting, you should quietly focus your mind on the palm of your left hand. Then, should you sit for a long time, even though you do not force your mind to be focused, the mind will not of itself wander off. Furthermore, even though such things as the ancient writings are the instructions of bright minds within our Tradition, you ought not look at them, read them, or listen to them in too great a measure, since, in excess, this causes the mind to become scattered and disorderly.

In general, to exhaust and overwork body or mind causes illness. Do not by any means do sitting meditation during fires, floods, windstorms, or robberies, nor at the beach, in wineshops or brothels, in the houses of widows, or in the presence of female entertainers. Also, you should not take up residence in the houses of the ruler of the nation, his ministers, or other influential people, nor in the dwelling places of those who greatly crave fame or indulge in frivolous discussions and arguments.

Although participating in massive Buddhist Services and working on huge construction projects are, by and large, fine activities, they are impracticable for those devoted to seated meditation. Also, do not foster a passion for voicing the Dharma or for teaching others how to turn their hearts around, for those who are attached to these things are subject to scattered minds and disordered thoughts. Do not encourage a delight in being in crowds or long to seek for disciples. Do not become involved with too many activities or too many studies.

By no means sit in meditation in extreme brightness or dark, in extreme cold or heat, or the like, to say nothing of the places frequented by entertainers or gamblers. Within a monastery, at the home of good friends, deep in some forest or glen can serve you for this. By blue waters, in green hills are places to stroll quietly; near valleys, under trees are places for clearing the mind. Beholding impermanence, do not ignore it, for this encourages the mind to search the Way.

Your meditation cushion should be thick enough so that you are comfortable and at ease when sitting. Your meditation and ceremonial halls should be clean and neat—always make offerings of incense and flowers. Accordingly, the good deities that protect the Dharma, as well as the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, will respond by guarding and watching over you. If you enshrine the image of a Buddha, Bodhisattva, or Arhant, Mara's wicked minions with all their deluding charms and entanglements will be unable to depend on your support.

Constantly dwelling within great benevolence and compassion, transfer the immeasurable spiritual merits of your seated meditation to all sentient beings. Do not give rise to arrogance, conceit, or pride in your knowledge of the Dharma, for such attitudes lie outside the Way and are the methods of ordinary, everyday, people. Mindfully resolve to rid yourself of defiling passions; vow to personally confirm Buddhahood.

Just sit, without 'doing' anything: this is the essential technique for practicing pure meditation. Customarily, you should rinse your eyes and wash your feet before sitting. Make your body and mind quiet, and be well-regulated in your deportment at all times. You must discard worldly feelings and not cling to emotional attachments to the Way. Although you should not be stingy with the Dharma, even so, do not give voice to It if you are not asked, keeping to the 'triple request'.^{*} Follow the Four Noble Truths. Ten times having the urge to speak, let nine go past: let the moss grow around your mouth. Be like a fan in midwinter, or be like a wind chime hanging in space, which does not query which way the wind blows. Such are weathervanes for one who would tread the Way. It is enough to have the Dharma, you need not crave for anyone; it is enough to have the Way, you need not add self-praise: this is a primary point to heed.

^{*} That is, waiting until you have been asked three times, thus revealing the earnestness and sincerity of the inquirer, as well as restraining yourself from speaking out of your own desires.

Pure meditation does not concern itself with teachings, practices, or realization and it encompasses the virtues of all three. ‘Realization’ depends on the tenet of ‘waiting for enlightenment’, which is not the attitude of mind in pure meditation. ‘Practice’ depends on ‘sincere application and genuine effort’, which is not the attitude of mind in pure meditation. ‘Teachings’ depend on ‘cutting off evil and doing good’, which is not the attitude of mind in pure meditation. Even though teaching is done with regard to pure meditation, it is not customary teaching; it is called ‘the way of direct pointing to Buddha Nature and single Transmission from mind to mind’, in which the Master gives his whole being to voicing the Truth; his words, from the first, do not have chapter and verse.* It is the place where notions and ideas have come to an end, and the limits of reasoning are surpassed—one word encompasses the universe, even without the slightest shred of praise. This is surely the true and proper teaching of the Buddhas and Ancestors!

On the one hand, a Master may speak of practice, but it is a natural, spontaneous practice free from defiling passions. It is called ‘having nothing that the body needs to do; having nothing the mouth needs to chant, even to itself; having nothing that the mind needs to seek after’: the six sense faculties are naturally immaculate, all without stain or flaw. This is not the sixteen aspects of the Four Noble Truths which

* That is, they are not just a reading or quoting from Scripture.

Shravakas hold to, nor is it the twelve links in the chain of dependent origination which the Pratyekabuddhas speak of, nor is it the six paramitas and the ten thousand good deeds of the Bodhisattvas: none of these acts is 'the seeing of the Eternal before one's very eyes', which is therefore called 'being a Buddha'. Just reside at ease in the samadhi which the Buddhas themselves accepted and used. Joyfully and unhindered, perform the four actions of a Bodhisattva which ease the way to Buddhahood,* for these are surely the profound and wondrous deeds of Buddhas and Ancestors!

On the other hand, a Master may speak of personal confirmation, yet there is no confirming and there is confirmation. This is the samadhi that is lord of samadhis, the samadhi that manifests the wisdom of the Unborn, the samadhi that manifests all wisdom, the samadhi that manifests the wisdom of one's Original Nature: it is the Bright Gate which the Tathagata's Wisdom opens out; it is That which flows from 'the Gate that leads to the Teaching on the great deeds that ease the way to Buddhahood'. It surpasses any social rules of 'being worldly' or 'being saintly'; It lays bare the emotional thinking behind 'delusion versus enlightenment'. How could this not be confirmation of Supreme Enlightenment?

Also, pure meditation does not stand against the Precepts, mindfulness, or wise discernment. Rather it combines with these three aspects of spiritual training.

* *The Scripture on Conduct that Eases the Way* (pp. 5–25) describes these four actions in detail.

‘Precepts’ are the resisting of what is wrong and the ceasing from what is evil. When seated in pure meditation, we observe that there is no duality whatsoever; we cast aside the multitude of things and bring all conditions to rest. Neither the Teachings of the Buddhas nor the teachings of the world dominate us; emotional attachments to the Way and worldly feelings are both left behind. There is no ‘right and wrong’, no ‘good and evil’, for what is there to resist or cease from? This is what the Precepts that go beyond mental characterization are.*

‘Mindfulness’ is the observing that there is nothing that is in excess. When seated in pure meditation, we let go of ‘body and mind’, abandon ‘delusion and enlightenment’. We are unchanging, immovable, unwillful, impervious. We are like a simpleton or a legless man. We are like a mountain or an ocean: no trace of ‘movement versus stillness’ has yet arisen. When mindful, there is no fixed state of things. Because there is no fixed state of things, we call this Supreme Mindfulness.

‘Wise discernment’ is being selective within enlightened awareness. When seated in pure meditation, what is intellectually known spontaneously vanishes and self-consciousness is discarded. Your whole being’s Eye of Wise Discernment possesses no ‘specialized insight’: It clearly sees Buddha Nature and is, from the first, not deluded. Whilst sitting, you cut off the roots of thought, and this is wise discernment

* That is, the real significance of the Three Pure Precepts: cease from evil, do only good, do good for others.

without any outer signs of wise discernment. Because it has no signs of wise discernment, it is called Supreme Discerning Wisdom.

The instructional Gates of the Buddhas—what They gave voice to in Their lifetime—contain nothing that is not within the Precepts, mindfulness, and wise discernment. Pure meditation has no Precepts that are not kept to, no mindfulness that is not put into practice, no wise discernment that does not know things through and through. ‘Overcoming demons’, ‘realizing Buddhahood’, ‘turning the Wheel’, ‘nirvana’: all depend on the strength of your pure meditation. The wondrous uses of your spiritual powers, your emitting light when voicing the Dharma, are all there when you are truly sitting in pure meditation. Moreover, participating in a spiritual examination is also a form of sitting in pure meditation.

When you wish to do seated meditation, first of all, seek a good, quiet place. See that your cushion is thickly padded. Do not let mist, smoke, or fog enter. Do not let rain and dew intrude upon you. Protect and take care of the ground where you put your knees. Keep your sitting place neat and clean. Although in ancient times some sat on a diamond throne, there are traces of their sitting atop boulders. Also, at no time should you fail to have some carpeting spread out beneath your meditation mat. Your sitting place must not be bright during the day or pitch dark at night. It should be warm in winter and cool in summer.*

* All the instructions in this paragraph have both literal and figurative significance.

This is the technique for meditating: Let go of, and abandon, awareness of thoughts; put to rest looking at mental fancies and images. Do not devise some notion of what ‘realizing Buddhahood’ is. Do not let ‘right and wrong’ control you. Act as if you were saving your head which was ablaze! The Tathagata’s sitting erect, Bodhidharma’s facing the wall at Shōrin Monastery as he attended only to his meditation: both had no ‘other thing’ to them. Sekisō imitated a withered tree; Taihaku censured the practice of falling asleep whilst sitting. Do not get involved with the burning of incense, the making of bows, the reciting of the Buddha’s name, the undergoing of some penitential ritual, the reading of Scriptures, the holding on to a daily work schedule: just sitting, without ‘doing’ anything, is what you should aim at above all.

As a general practice, when doing seated meditation, you should put on your kesa. (Remove it in the dark before dawn and at dusk, as you come out of the meditation state.) Do not omit this. Whilst on your mat (which, when folded over is one foot two inches wide, when rolled up is three feet six inches in circumference), do not always sustain the cross-legged, ‘lotus’ sitting position; range from a half-lotus position to, later, sitting with your feet under your spine. This is the method of sitting of the Buddhas and Ancestors: sometimes to do full lotus, sometimes half-lotus.

As for the full lotus method, first put your right foot on top of your left thigh. Then, put your left foot atop your right thigh, and loosely arrange your robes. (Gird your under-robe with a cord.) You should make

everything well-regulated. Next, rest your right hand atop your left foot, and your left hand atop your right hand. With the thumbs of both hands touching, bring your hands near your body, the touching thumbs opposite the navel. Your body is held straight as you sit upright, not tilting to left or right, not leaning forwards or backwards. Your ears need to be symmetrically aligned with your shoulders, your nose with your navel. Your tongue rests against the roof of the mouth. Breathe through your nose. Your lips and teeth are together. Your eyes should be kept open, but neither fully open nor almost shut. Balance your body in this way, breathe out sharply, then breathe easily. This is what is called 'opening the mouth and expelling the breath once or twice'. Next, you should settle down in your sitting place by swaying your body seven or eight times in ever smaller movements, then steadily sitting erect. Take care in this not to think of any particular thing. How does one take care of this? By not trying to 'take care' of anything. This is the essential method of doing seated meditation: straightway, you should break free of any defiling passions and personally realize enlightenment.

When you wish to arise from meditation, first, place your hands respectfully on your knees and sway your body seven or eight times in ever larger movements. Open your mouth and exhale. Flatten out your hands and place them on the ground. Gently rise from your sitting place; slowly and with dignity begin to walk, moving at a normal pace.

Whilst sitting, if you begin to fall asleep, you should always sway your body or open your eyes wide. Also, focus your mind on the space between your eyebrows. If you are still not fully awake, use your hands to wipe your eyes or rub your body. If you are still not fully awake, rise from your sitting place and walk about calmly, making sure to do it at a normal pace. When you have taken about a hundred paces, you will most likely have come out of your sleepiness. The method for walking calmly is to regularly take one breath for each half step. Although you are walking, do it as though you were not walking: be calm and tranquil, and do not thrash your body about. If after walking in this way you are still not fully awake, either rinse your eyes and douse your head with cold water or recite, say, the “Introduction to the Bodhisattva Precepts”.* Apply these various skillful means so that you do not let yourself fall off into sleep. You should observe that the matter of birth and death is a great one, and that impermanence is swift indeed. What do you do about drowsiness when your Eye that seeks the Way is not yet bright? If periods of drowsiness persist, you should make a vow, saying, “Because my karmic habits are already heavy, I am now shrouded in sleep. When will I awaken from my dark and confused wandering in the mind? I pray that the Buddhas and

* For a translation of this Introduction, see *The Monastic Office* (Mt. Shasta, California: Shasta Abbey Press, 1993), pp. 122–123.

Ancestors will confer their great compassion on me and remove my dark and heavy suffering.”

If there are times when your thoughts go off in all directions or are agitated, focus your mind down the ridge of your nose to your *tanden* and count your cycle of inhalations. If your thoughts are still not at rest, you should call to mind some short *kōan* which your Master has given you to guide you, such as, ‘What is It that comes like this?’, ‘A dog’s not having Buddha Nature’, ‘Ummon’s Mount Sumeru’, ‘Jōshū’s oak tree’, for instance: ‘bland talk’ is what meets the need.* If your thoughts are still not at rest, do your meditation period by focusing on the great matter where your breathing comes to an end and your eyes close forever. Or, focus on the ‘not-yet-born state’ before a single thought has arisen. Then, when you are doing your daily activities, you will suddenly give rise to the two types of ‘emptiness’—that of there being no personal self and of there being no permanent self in phenomena—and your scattered thoughts will, without fail, lose their force.

After you have given rise to mindfulness, without a thought or care, you will manifest a dignified appearance. Then, what is right before your eyes will be your *kōan*. You and it will not be ‘two things going around

* “Bland talk” is a common Zen Buddhist term for traditional *kōans*, referring to the fact that, when properly used, they do not stimulate discriminatory thought, intellectual speculation, or emotional attachments.

each other'; you will realize that that which your training confirms has come to full fruition. At that moment, what the *kōan* is is 'right before your eyes'. 'What happens when signs of existence are not yet to be seen', the conditions and causes which surround the eon of annihilation, and the importance of the wondrous spiritual deeds of the Buddhas and Ancestors are all just this One Matter for which we train. Straightway you should go take a day away from your normal schedule. Go rest. Go cool down. Let 'one thought is equivalent to ten thousand years' pass. Let 'being cold ashes' or 'being a dead tree' pass. Let 'being an incense burner in an old shrine' pass. Let 'the single white thread' pass. Wholeheartedly do I pray for this; with all my heart do I so pray.

APHORISTIC POEMS.

**THAT WHICH IS ENGRAVED
UPON THE HEART
THAT TRUSTS TO THE ETERNAL.**

*Translated from the Chinese of the Thirtieth Ancestor,
Great Master Chien-chih Seng-ts'an
(J. Kanshi Sōsan).*

The Way to the Ultimate is not hard;
 simply give up being picky and choosy.
Just by not giving in to hatred and craving
 will your heart and mind be as clear and bright
 as the realm beyond the opposites;
Let but a hair's breadth of discriminatory thought arise
 and you have made Heaven and Earth
 strangers to each other.

When the craving to possess
 emerges before your eyes,
 do not persist in following its perverting path.
When you allow gratification and dissatisfaction
 to compete within you
 they will create a sickness in your heart.
If you are not aware of the deeper purpose
 for which we train,
 you toil in vain however pure your thoughts.

The All-embracing is perfect
 and, like the great vault of space,
 It lacks for nothing and has nothing in excess.
Because we are good at grasping after,
 or pushing away,
we are not at one with It.

Do not chase after external entanglements
 or stoically abide in some inner void
 where suffering is denied;
Within the oneness of your every-day mind,
 simply be indifferent to differences,
 and any sense of self
 will completely cease to exist.

If you try to stop all mental activity
 in order to bring yourself back to stillness,
 your stillness will all the more be filled
 with mental busyness
For you are merely attaching yourself to duality
 rather than coming to know
 the oneness of your every-day mind.
If you are not conversant with this oneness of mind,
 both your stillness and activity lose all their merit.

If you try to grant existence to anything
 it will cease to have existence;
if you pursue emptiness,
 you turn your back on True Emptiness,

Hence, the more you talk about It, or ponder on It,
the more you turn yourself away from
being in accord with It.

Terminate your talk, cease your pondering
and there will be nowhere
that you will not converse with It.

Return to the root of the matter
and you will realize the Principle;
pursue illumination and you will miss the point
But, if you revert to the Luminous for even a moment,
It will surpass any previous ideas you had
of what emptiness really is
And your previous ideas of emptiness will be altered
for they were all due to your erroneous views.

There is no need to hunt for Truth,
simply stop exhaling personal opinions;
Cease your abiding in dualistic views
and take care not to chase after them
or seek them out
For, as soon as 'right' and 'wrong' arise,
confusion sets in and your thoughts will go awry.
The two exist because of the One
but do not try to hold on to this One.

When you do not beget even the notion
of 'the oneness of mind',
nothing in the whole universe
is seen as lacking in any way

And whatever is not lacking in any way
 is beyond 'things'
 for, when thoughts of things cease to arise,
 your mind is no longer
 'something in which thoughts arise'.
The sense of a separate subjective mind,
 along with its realm of 'objective things',
 disappears
 whilst the realm of 'objective things'
 follows this subjective sense of mind
 as it sinks away.
What makes objects objects is the subjective mind,
 the mind is experienced as 'something subjective'
 because of these 'objective things'.
Seek to realize that the two 'worlds', subjective and
 objective,
 are, from the first, but the One
 which is empty of such distinctions
And this One which is empty of distinctions
 is not something separate
 from these two 'worlds'
 for it contains all universes.

If you do not view things in such terms as
 'crude' and 'refined',
 you will not be a companion to biases;
The Great Way is broad,
 being neither easy nor difficult to traverse
But, if you are limited by your opinions,
 wary or filled with doubts,

the faster you hurry about,
the more you slow yourself down.

If you try to grab hold of It,
you will lose the measure of It
as your mind enters convoluted
and perverse pathways.

If you let It be free to be what It will,
then you will experience
neither change nor permanency.

When you entrust yourself to your Original Nature,
you are in accord with the Way,
roaming where It leads you, free from cravings,
For, when you set your heart on things,
you act contrary to Truth
and, when you let yourself sink
into a stupor of indolence, it is just as bad.

It is not good to wear yourself out in this way;
what use is there in alternating
between shunning experiences
and being intimate with them?

If you wish to advance quickly upon the One Course,
you must not despise
the experiences of your six senses
For, with no loathing for sensory experiences,
you become once again at one with the omniscient
wisdom of Buddha.

The one of wise discernment
 is free of the goals and purposes
 to which the foolish bind themselves
For one thing is truly not different from another,
 yet the illusory self clings to its attachments.

Using your discriminatory mind
 to seek your Original Nature,
 can there be a greater blunder?
It is the deluded self
 that engenders standards of peace and unrest;
 enlightenment is beyond such judgments made
 from like and dislike.

Dualities are all
 what the false self deliberates upon;
They are the stuff of dreams and fantasies
 or as the spots before one's eyes
 which are mistaken for flowers,
so why struggle to grab on to these
 and cling to them?

Gain and loss, right and wrong:
 let go of such things at once
 and forget all about them
For, when the eye does not close in sleep,
 all dreams cease of themselves.

When the mind does not discriminate,
 all things in the whole universe
 are the One Which Is.

The nature of this One Which Is
 is subtle and profound,
 unconcerned with karmic conditions
 in its steadfastness.
If you look upon all things in the whole universe
 as though alike,
 they will return to what they naturally are.
When you put an end to that which needs things,
 comparisons cease.
When you stop all mental activities,
 there will be no activities
 but, even when activities cease,
 you will not have stillness;
Since both sides of a duality
 are in themselves incomplete,
 how can either one be absolute?
Rules and standards do not exist
 for That which is supreme and ultimate,
Hence, devote your heart to being impartial
 for then whatever activity you undertake
 will attain stillness.
Completely cleansed of wariness and doubts,
 your true faith will then harmonize discords
 and straighten out irregularities
So that nothing lingers on,
 nothing is clung to by memory.
Bright and empty of expectations,
 just functioning naturally,
 your mind will not wear out its strength
For it is not a place for judgmentalism;

however, discriminatory consciousness
and feelings will find this difficult to fathom.

In the Dharma Realm of That Which Is,
there is no self or other
So, of necessity, hasten to be in accord with It
by simply saying, “Not two!”
Within this ‘Not two’ all are alike
and nothing is not included.
The wise in discernment in the ten quarters
have all awakened to this Principle.

This Principle is beyond compression and extension
in time or space;
within It ten thousand years is as a single thought.
Nowhere is It not present
and the universe infinite in the ten directions
is right before your eyes.
The infinitesimally small is the same as the largest
in this realm where delusions have ceased;
The immeasurably large is the same as the smallest
for no boundaries or surfaces are to be seen.
Existence is not other
than That which is beyond existence
and That which is beyond existence
is precisely what exists.

If matters are not such as this,
then, by all means, do not hold on to this.

The One is everything,
everything is the One.

If you can be as herein described,
 why waste your time
 worrying over not finishing things?
Trust and the heart are not two separate things;
 the 'Not-two' is the heart that trusts to the Eternal.
Words fail to describe It
 for It is beyond the past, the future or the now.

THE SONG THAT ATTESTS TO THE WAY.

*Translated from the Chinese of
Great Master Yung-chia Hsüan-chüeh
(J. Yōka Genkaku).*

Good sir, have you not yet caught sight of the one who
has broken off his pursuit of knowledge, seeks no
goals and now leisurely walks the Way?
He does not try to exclude from his mind foolish or
deluded thoughts nor does he hunt after Truth
For the real nature of his ignorance is none other than
Buddha Nature
And his illusory, ever-changing body, empty of any
permanent self, is none other than the Dharma
Body.

Once we have realized what the Dharma Body is, not
a single thing exists that we can call 'our own'
For our original Self-nature is this Buddha of Ultimate
Reality.
Our five skandhas are as floating clouds, vainly coming
and going,
And the three poisons of greed, hatred and delusion
are as water bubbles which emerge and disappear
to no purpose.

Once we have awakened to That Which Is Real,
 ‘persons’ and ‘things’ no longer exist

And, in a second, the karma that has been dragging
 us through the incessant torments of avichi hells
 dissolves into thin air

But, were we then to deceive any sentient being with
 false words and claims,

We would incur having our tongues ripped out in
 aeons of future lives as uncountable as dust grains
 in the universe.

Upon our sudden awakening to the meditation of a
 Tathagata

Our myriad practices of the six paramitas are perfected
 within that essential state.

Whilst we are within that dream called life, the six
 realms of existence are all too clear;

After awakening, the great universe of universes is
 completely empty of any substantiality.

Therein are no defilements or blessings, loss or gain,
For, within our Original Nature, serene and free of
 defiling passions, there is no need to raise ques-
 tions or search for anything

And, as the mirror of mind which is covered with the
 dust of age-old ignorance has not yet been wiped
 clear,

Now is the day to be scrupulous in our cleansing of it.

Who is beyond thought? Who beyond birth?

If truly there is the Unborn, then there is not anything
 that is not born of It.

Summon up your mechanical man, the one with the
wooden head, and ask him
How soon in his search for Buddhahood he will attain
his goal through his kind of efforts.

Let the four elements go free; do not grasp after them.
Acting from within your serene and defilement-free
Nature take what you need of food and drink
For all your actions lack any permanence, are empty
of any substantiality
And are nothing but the great, perfect, enlightened
understanding of the Tathagata.

Certainty bespeaks the true monk;
Those who are given to disagreeing display signs of
emotional commitments.
The direct severing of the roots of karma is what a
Buddha attests to with His seal;
If you just pick at the leaves or search for the branches,
I cannot help you.

The whereabouts of the Mani-pearl is beyond the ken
of ordinary people
But you can find It for yourself within the Tathagata's
Treasure House which is within your own being.
Its wondrous spiritual functioning through your six
senses will be both empty and not empty
And the halo of light of Its manifestation will take
forms and be beyond form.

Purify your five types of vision associated with
the physical, spiritual, Wisdom-, Dharma- and

Buddha-eye and attain the five powers from your
faith, zeal, mindfulness, meditation and wise discernment which destroy all hindrances,
But it is only after you have attested to It for yourself
that you will truly know how unfathomable It is;
When looking at shapes in a mirror it is not difficult
to see what they are
But, if you grasp at the moon in the water, how will
you succeed in taking hold of it?

Always acting on his own, always walking on his own,
The one who has realized It roams, as his predecessors
did, the pathway to nirvana;
His tune is an ancient one, his spirit pure, his temperament naturally elevated;
Gaunt of countenance, sturdy of bone, he does not turn
back to give others a second look.

The penniless disciple of Shakyamuni is a pauper, so
say the mouths of many,
But the truth is that he is materially poor but not destitute in the Way.
His poverty appears as a body always draped in ragged robes
But the priceless Jewel of the Way is stored within the
Treasure House of his heart.

This rare and priceless Treasure is inexhaustible in Its
functions
And never miserly is he in using It to benefit all beings
in response to the occasion

For within his Essential Nature the threefold Buddha
body and the four forms of Buddha wisdom have
been perfected

Whilst the eight forms of liberation and the six won-
drous spiritual abilities are the seal that attests to
his training.

The disciple high along the Way, with a single burst,
understands all

Whereas one who is still middling or below hears
much and has many misgivings,

But such a one need only discard the grimy robes he
wears within his heart

For of what use is it to look outside yourself and boast
of your devotion and diligence?

In attending to the slanders of others, tolerate the
wrongs they do you:

In their attempt to put the very heavens to the torch,
they vainly burn themselves out.

When I hear what such say, it is just as though I were
sipping the Sweet Dew;

All melts away and I suddenly enter the Inconceivable.

If you regard the ill speech of others as a source of
merit and virtue,

They will indeed become your good friends.

When you feel the teeth of backbiting, if you do not
give in to fault-finding, hatred or partiality,

How better can you give rise to the power of the
Unborn's compassion and forbearance?

Thoroughly understand the Principle for which we
 train as well as what It has given voice to
 And both your meditation and wise discernment will
 be perfectly clear without your becoming mired
 down in 'emptiness'.

Not only have I now, on my own, succeeded in apprehending It

But the Buddhas as uncountable as sand grains are,
 in essence, the same.

Speak with the fearlessness of a roaring lion
 And all the beasts, upon hearing it, will be boggled out
 of their minds;

The elephant, fragrant with springtime passions, may
 lose his dignity and composure as he thunders
 about like a restless surf

But the devas and nagas, tranquilly listening, will
 beget joy and delight.

Travelling the broad rivers and seas, fording the mountain streams,

I sought out teachers, inquired about the Way and
 challenged the understanding of Masters,

But, ever since I found the pathway of Hui-neng,
 I have thoroughly understood that the issue of birth
 and death is not necessarily involved with such
 activities.

Meditating whilst active as well as meditating whilst
 sitting,

Whether speaking or silent, moving about or inactive,
 my Self-nature is quiet and tranquil.

Should I happen to encounter those with swords or
daggers, It will continue ever-peaceful
Or, were I to be poisoned by some drug, again It will
remain at Its ease.

In a former life our Master Shakyamuni attended on
His twenty-fourth predecessor, Dipankara Buddha,
Then, after many kalpas, He trained Himself as the
holy ascetic who patiently experienced mutilation
in order to convert King Kali.

How many rounds of birth, how many rounds of death
He passed through!

His births and deaths were unbounded whilst He re-
mained uncertain when they would end

Until He Himself suddenly awoke to fully know the
Unborn

For, in the midst of all the struggles and rebuffs of
life, what are momentary grief and pleasure?

Entering deep into the mountains to abide in a forest,
As isolated and remote as the mountain peaks, under
some tall pine tree I have taken my place,

Strolling about or tranquilly sitting with my family
of rustic monks.

Silent in our solitude, we peacefully dwell together
through the rainy season, truly solitary and un-
attached.

Once you have fully and completely awakened, there
is no striving after things

For none of the things of worldly purpose and common
value is the same as this.

Thus, with an eye on your condition in life, to practise
charity in order to beget celestial blessings and
auspicious fortune

Is no different than shooting an arrow into the heavens
For, once its potential power is spent, your arrow
merely falls back to earth

And what you will receive in future lives will not be
what you desire.

What resemblance does this kind of behaviour bear
to that gate to Reality which is the breaking free
from entanglement with the every-day world's
sense of worth?

Once you have crossed over that threshold, straight-
way you enter the Tathagata's realm.

Therefore, simply get to the root of the matter, do not
worry yourself over the new shoots that branch
out atop the tree.

It is just as the clearest porcelain holding within itself
the Precious Moon.

I now understand what the so-called Wish-granting
Jewel is:

It is our seeking spiritual benefits for ourselves that
we might spiritually benefit others without sur-
cease.

Within the river the luminous moon floats, among the
branches of the pine the wind blows softly,

Throughout the long night the dark sky is clear—what
is there that needs to be done?

The Precepts, the Buddha Nature's pearls, are imbedded upon the very ground of my heart,
Frost and dew, clouds and mist, are the raiment of my Original Self.

Coaxing dragons into one's begging bowl, pacifying quarrelsome tigers with one's travelling staff
Whose jangling metal rings clearly resound
Are not mere conventional metaphors for dutifully conforming to the Precepts
But are the very leaning on the Tathagata's precious staff and the walking in His traces.

It is not a matter of seeking Truth or cutting off false views,
Just fully understand that dualities are void of meaningfulness and have no reality of their own.
To be beyond form is to be beyond emptiness and beyond being not empty;
This is precisely what the genuine form of a Tathagata is.

His Original Nature is as a mirror bright, a looking-glass without obstructing blemishes,
Its vastness and clarity permeate realms as numerous as the Ganges River sands.
The whole universe and all that it contains are but silhouettes reflected within It.
The halo of light of Its manifestation has no duality of outside and within.

Vacant-headed notions of emptiness which deny causality

Bring about calamities as dire as a raging conflagration or a rampaging flood.

Rejecting that anything exists whilst clutching on to emptiness is a sickness and a fever

And is no better than avoiding drowning by throwing oneself onto a fire.

If someone tries to discard his deluded mind in order to snatch at the True Principle,

His mind, given over to the duality of grasping and abandoning, will become a clever and deceiving cheat.

The novice who has not yet comprehended this needs to train;

When he has deeply perfected himself, he will recognise this thief which he was wont to take for his True Child.

The loss of the Dharma's wealth and the destruction of merits and virtues

Invariably come about through the wilful and conscious indulgence of the discriminatory mind,

Therefore the gate to meditation is the complete dropping off of discriminatory thoughts

Whereby you will suddenly awaken to the ability to know and see for yourself the Unborn.

The one of great zeal holds within his hands the sword of wise discrimination;

This weapon of wisdom is the very flame that springs forth from the indestructible Jewel.

Not only does it utterly smash the mind-sets of those
outside the Way

It also has, for ever so long, discouraged the boldness
of those demons who reside in heavens.

He sets the thunder of the Teaching to vibrating,
strikes the drum of the Dharma,

Displays to all the clouds of benevolence and showers
upon them the Sweet Dew

For, wherever this lordly naga-elephant treads, count-
less ones are benefited

And all those of the five different temperaments
who ride within the three vehicles are roused to
awakening.

The milk-enrichening herb in the snowy Himalayas,
which grows where none other will,

Produces a ghee as pure as the Buddha Truth which I
continually offer up,

For the One Nature completely and perfectly permeates
the natures of all,

The One Dharma wholly embodies all dharmas,

The One Moon manifests Itself everywhere in all drops
of water,

The moons reflected in all drops of water are but the
One Moon.

The Dharma Bodies of all Buddhas penetrate my Self-
nature,

My Self-nature, being the same as Theirs, is united
with the Tathagata's.

Any single stage of Bodhisattvahood encompasses all stages

And involves no particular form or way of thinking or special practice.

Within the time of a finger snap, it has completely perfected eighty thousand Dharma gates;

In but a moment the three immeasurably long periods in a Bodhisattva's progress to Buddhahood are eradicated.

All calculations and logical propositions as well as arguments against making calculations and logical propositions,

What connection do they have with my spiritual awakening?

That is not something which can be ruined by slander or improved by praise,

Its nature resembles empty space in its being unbounded by any bank or shore,

It never departs from any place, remaining constantly clear.

Though you may search for it in me, know, good sir, it is beyond sight.

It cannot be grabbed onto nor can it be removed.

Only within the Unattainable is it to be realized.

When I am silent it speaks, when I speak it is silent;

The great gate of its charity is open wide, nothing bars the way.

When people ask me what the Principle is that I expound,

I respond that it is the power of Mahaprajna, the Great
Wisdom,

But, whether they say yea or nay, it is beyond their ken
For, whether they resist it or walk in compliance with
it, it is even beyond heaven to fathom.

For too many kalpas have I trained myself in it
For this to be some idle boast or attempt at deception
or delusion.

By hoisting up the standard of Buddha Truth in order
to establish the Principle for which we train
Hui-neng did what Buddha decreed and ever so
brilliantly.

The first to Transmit the Lamp was Mahakashyapa,
Then, through twenty-eight generations in India, It
was kept burning in memory

Until the Dharma flowed east and entered this land.

Bodhidharma was our First Ancestor

And for six generations the Kesa has been Transmitted
as people have heard.

Those who will later realize the Way, who can count
how many there will be?

Truth needs no establishing and fallacy is fundamen-
tally void

So, when the duality of existence and non-existence is
altogether banished, then even non-emptiness is a
vain term.

The twenty gates to Emptiness are, from the start,
non-attachment;

The nature of all Tathagatas is one and their substance
is the same.

The mind is a sense organ, dharmas are its objects;
Both are just as dark smudges upon a mirror.
Once such dirt spots are completely removed, its light,
for the first time, is fully revealed.
When both mind and dharmas are forgotten about,
one's Nature is the Truth.

Alas, in these grievous degenerate days of the Dharma
the world has fallen on evil times.
The auspicious spiritual fortunes of sentient beings
fade and people grow difficult to bring into har-
mony or to train.
The saintly ones of the past are long gone and per-
verted views have become deeply ingrained.
When Mara's minions grow strong as the Dharma is
weakened, many are the fears and dangers that arise
For, when they hear talk about the Tathagata's gate of
sudden enlightenment
They want only to destroy and do away with it as they
might pulverize a tile.

That which acts is the wilful mind, that which receives
the calamities of these actions is one's own body;
No need to seek the cause outside yourself and blame
others.
If you would avoid incurring unrelenting, hellish
karma,
Do not malign the Tathagata's Wheel of the True
Teaching.

In a sandalwood forest no other species of tree is to be
found.

Submerged deep in this dense wood, that disciple of
the Master, the lion, abides.

Quiet, peaceful, he roams on his own where he would.
Timorous beasts and flighty birds all keep their distance
But the lion's cubs follow after him in a pride.

Even at three, how they can roar!

Were jackals or wild foxes to skulk after this Dharma
King

For the rest of their lives, they would stare at this un-
canny figure dumb-founded, their mouths agape.

The Teaching of perfect and sudden enlightenment has
nothing to do with conventional worldly thought;
Where doubts and uncertainty remain, straightway
arguments will arise.

But I, a mountain monk, do not say this to flatter my
own ego;

I fear lest your manner of training land you in duality's
pit of nihilism versus eternalism.

Wrong is not always wrong and right is not always
right;

A hair's breadth of difference and you miss it by a
thousand miles.

If right, then the naga-dragon's daughter becomes
Buddha in an instant;

If wrong, then the learned monk Shurakshatra, whilst
still alive, falls into a hell.

From a very early age I took to accumulating knowl-
edge

And was always brashly inserting myself into discussions on the Scriptures and commentaries;
 I was unrelenting in making distinctions over terms and their meanings
 As though diving into the sea to calculate the grains of sand therein and vexing myself thereby to no purpose.

To remove such suffering, the Tathagata offered me severe rebukes,
 For what profit is there in counting the jewels and treasures of others?
 Deflated by this, I awoke to the futility of these pursuits
 And then, for many years, just as vainly played out the role of wanderer upon the winds, guest of the dusty road.

When someone's seed Nature becomes perverted and he explains things with erroneous information
 He will fail to penetrate to the Tathagata's principle of complete and sudden enlightenment.
 However diligently pursued, the course of shravakas and pratyekabuddhas—those who listen but do not heed and those who listen only for their own sakes—is not that of the heart bent on the Way;
 Non-Buddhists who are quick and bright still lack true spiritual wisdom and discernment
 Whilst those who are muddled or silly, as well as those who are small-minded or foolish,
 Believe that the showing of an empty fist or the pointing of a finger upwards is what produces a true explanation

And, taking the finger for the moon, toil on in vain
efforts to understand
Whilst fabricating wondrous absurdities from the things
they find in their sense fields.

Not seeing a single dharma; this is the Tathagata.
Such is the one who is called an Avalokita, one who
regards things just as they are.
With this understanding, karmic obstructions are seen
to be, from the first, empty of any substantiality
But, when not yet understood, earlier karmic debts
must be repaid.

If someone is unable to stomach the royal feast even
though famished,
How can he be cured of his sickness even though
he meets the Lord of Physicians Himself?
However, doing meditation whilst in the realm of
sensuous desires will engender the power to be-
come aware
So that, within the fire of your training, the indestruc-
tible lotus will be born.
Pradhanashura Bodhisattva offended against the Great
Precepts yet, when he awoke to the Unborn,
He instantly realized Buddhahood and still exists in
another realm.

Even though a disciple of the Master speaks fearlessly
as a roaring lion,
Alas, the foolish and confused, obdurate and as insen-
sitive as leather,

Only understand that offending against Precepts hinders realization of enlightenment,
They do not see how a Tathagata opens up the mysteries.

Long ago there were two monks, one who acted contrary to the Precept on licentiousness and the other on killing.

The Vinaya Master Upali, whose brightness was as limited as that of a glow-worm, could only add the fetters of defilement and guilt to them

Whereas the lay disciple Vimalakirti, the Mahasattva, forthwith dissolved their doubts
Just as a blazing sun melts frost and snow.

The abilities of one who is liberated go beyond comprehension;

Their wondrous functions, numberless as the sands, are also limitless.

Such a person would not fail to offer the four essentials of clothing, food, bedding and medicine

To say nothing of dispersing ten thousand ounces of gold where needed.

To have one's body crushed and bones reduced to powder is not sufficient to repay him,

For one verse, clearly explained, surpasses ten million merely mouthed.

He is a lord amidst the Dharma deserving of highest respect,

And Tathagatas, as numberless as the sands of the Ganges, are alike in their attesting to what he has attained.

Now, comprehending what this Wish-granting Jewel is,
I know that those who have accepted It in true faith are
all in accord with It.

Such a one clearly sees that not a single thing substan-
tially exists,

That there are neither ordinary people nor Buddhas,
That the great thousandfold universes, containing
worlds as numerous as the grains of sand, are as
bubbles within the ocean

And that all saints and sages are as lightning sweeping
across the sky.

Even if an iron wheel were sent spinning above his
head,

The perfect brilliance of his meditation and wisdom
would never be lost.

The sun can grow cold, the moon can turn hot,
But the host of Mara's demons cannot destroy the true
speech of such a one.

Like a lofty elephant drawing a carriage slowly along
the road,

What praying mantis can stop his turning of the Wheel?

The lordly elephant does not wander about in the
rabbit's trails;

One of great awakening does not adhere to petty
formalisms.

Do not malign the blue heavens as you peer at them
through a slender, hollow reed.

Since you may not yet have comprehended, I have
now, for your sake, good sir, given you here my
parting words as a key.

OTHER RELIGIOUS WORKS.

*The Scripture of
the Buddha's Last Teachings.*

THE SCRIPTURE OF THE BUDDHA'S LAST TEACHINGS.

From the time when Shakyamuni first turned the Wheel of the Dharma to ferry Ajñata Kaundinya to the Other Shore until the last time He gave voice to the Dharma to carry Subhadra there, those responsive to being ferried had all been taken across and now He lay among the four twin sala trees about to enter parinirvana. At midnight when all was calm and not a sound was heard, He gave a summary explanation of the essentials of the Dharma to His disciples:

“O you monks, after I enter into eternal meditation, you should deeply honour, esteem and revere as precious the Ten Great and the Forty-eight Less Grave Precepts; just as darkness encounters brightness or a destitute person receives a treasure, so you should recognize these as your Great Teachers; whilst I abided in this world there were indeed none different from These for Me. Those of you who keep to these Pure Precepts are not to go about seeking to deal in commerce, barter or sale, or to live secure in field and home tending and nurturing family, clan, servants and animals; you should stay clear of any other kinds of profiteering and treasure hunting as if you were avoiding the fiery pit itself. Do not go about wantonly

destroying or trampling down the vegetation, clearing the land and digging up the soil literally or figuratively. You should not mix and blend potions and nostrums, engage in forecasting fortune or misfortune, stare up at the positions of the stars and planets to infer how you should go forth based on their waxing and waning or make up calendars to try to compute and fix the future. When regulating the body, eat wholesome foods for self-sustenance. Do not go about participating in worldly affairs by circulating yourself as a messenger, do not engage in sorcery in search of some elixir of eternal life, seek to be intimate with people of influence and position or be close with those who treat others rudely or with contempt; none of these should you do. With an upright heart and appropriate thoughts you should seek to ferry others to the Other Shore. Do not go about trying to conceal your faults and shortcomings or display how different you are from deluded creatures. In making the four offerings which are your joy in awakening your heart, your reverence for the Dharma, your resolve to train and your practice, know your capacity and be content with that. Be quick to go about doing services and work but do not seek to amass tasks; these guides summarize the characteristics of keeping to the Precepts. The Precepts are what is appropriate to, and in accord with, the foundation and source of liberation, this is why they are called the Pratimokshas or what leads one toward liberation, accordingly, these Precepts can beget various meditations and the wisdom that eradicates suffering. O monks, keep to these Pure Precepts without giving

others cause to slander you. If you can keep to these Pure Precepts you should know that this can have spiritual benefits for self and others; for those who do not have the Precepts, all goodness, merits and virtues cannot produce for them what they need to know. The Precepts are foremost for well-being, the abiding place of merit and virtue.

O you monks, since you can already abide in the Precepts, you should work on regulating your five senses; do not wantonly enter into the desires that arise from them. You are, for example, just as an ox-herder who holds his staff in hand and need but show it to his ox. Do not indulge in idleness, letting that which does not keep to the Precepts sow its seeds and grow its crops for, if you indulge your five senses, not only will your desires, which know no bounds, be ungovernable, they will also be as an unruly horse that, uncontrolled by a bridle, threatens to drag the trainer along until he tumbles into some hole. As if a kalpa's worth of injury and pain would come to an end in one lifetime! The calamities and misfortunes created by the thieving done by the five senses stretches from generation to generation; because their harm is exceedingly heavy, great caution is necessary. Wise is the one who is the governor and regulator of his senses and not their follower; treat them as though they were thieves; do not let them indulge in indolence and evasiveness. If you let them indulge themselves, they will soon enough see to their own obliteration for the lord and master of these five senses is the discriminatory mind, therefore you should govern your mind well. The

evasiveness of the discriminatory mind goes far beyond the dreadfulness of poisonous serpents, fierce beasts, ruthless robbers or blazing infernos, yet it is not enough merely to instruct it through metaphors for it is just like someone with a handful of honey who wheels about recklessly whilst focussing on the honey and fails to see the deep pit before him. It is like a crazed elephant without any restraints or like a monkey who has taken to the trees and prances about, leaping and jumping; only difficulties and suffering can constrain it; you should hasten to damp its ardour and not give it license to be indulgent for someone who indulges his mind loses his good practices. Govern it in a single situation and there will not be any affair you will be unable to manage; therefore, O monks, you should be diligent and skilfully progress by bending that discriminatory mind of yours to submission.

O you monks, when receiving food or drink you should look upon it as upon the ingesting of medicine; do not give rise to fluctuations in judgment by weighing it on the scales of good and bad. Be prompt to ingest it as a support for your body which removes hunger and thirst, at the same time be as the honeybee who, whilst gathering pollen from a flower, only takes the nectar and does not spoil or destroy the flower's colour, shape or scent. When receiving an offering from another, partake of it whilst ridding yourself of any feelings of irritation and dislike; to feel that you have not got very much, and therefore seek after more, destroys the good-hearted intention of the donor. It is just the same as with the shrewd person who measures

the strength of an ox by how much it can bear and does not go to excess so that he wears out its strength.

O you monks, during the daytime practice the good Teachings with a diligent heart for there is no time to lose; the early evening and early morning should not be wasted. If you recite the Scriptures in the middle of the night, expend your breath by yourself; do not doze off and let your eyes close lest you allow your whole life to pass in vain without realization. Be mindful that the fires of impermanence incinerate all worlds so be quick in seeking to ferry yourself to the Other Shore and do not doze off, letting your eyes indeed close. The defiling passions rob, continuously waylay and slay people; they are far worse than a household filled with resentful people. How can you afford to doze off ? You must arouse yourself and waken from your slumber; a defiling passion is a poisonous serpent asleep in your heart; it is like having a black viper in your room whilst you sleep. You must quickly snare this serpent by keeping to the Precepts, drive it off and remove it from your room; once the somnolent serpent has departed, you can sleep peacefully and in safety. If it does not depart and you close your eyes to it, you are the same as a person who lacks true modesty, that is you will lack awareness of your susceptibilities and remorse for your shortcomings, for, of all things splendrous, modesty is foremost; it is as a cast-iron restraint which can restrain others without recourse to any other thing. O monks, you should always act with a modest heart without neglecting it even for a short while; if you separate yourself from your feelings

of modesty then you lose merit and virtue. When there are people who are modest then there will be good Teaching; if people lack modesty, there is no difference between them and birds or beasts.

O you monks, if someone should come to dismember your every joint, you should pacify your heart, not glare angrily or hatefully at the person, guard your mouth and refrain from spouting hot words of hate. If you indulge in a raging or resentful heart then you make yourself an obstacle in your own path and lose the benefits of your merit and virtue; forbear for virtue's sake and keep to the Precepts for, if you act in this way, you reach what seems impossible. The one who can behave with forbearance is called a great and powerful person. If there are those who cannot be joyful and delight in others, forbearance will accept the poison of their malice and curses as a person drinking the Sweet Dew. He or she, namelessly entering the Way, is indeed the one with discriminate wisdom. Why is this? Because the mischief from anger, hatred and resentment can break one's own Teachings and destroy another's reputation so that now, and in the future, people will not be delighted to meet them or you. You should realize that an angry heart depends on a fierce flame, so be on guard, without crossing over into anger and resentment, lest you let these thieves of kalpas of merit and virtue gain entrance. When common folk embrace their greeds they are people who walk not in the Way; they lack the Teaching to restrain themselves so that their anger can still harbour resentment and find fault with others. When monks walk

in the Way they are people who do not hanker after things so that attachments, which give rise to anger and resentment, become all but impossible. Just as one who, at the first sound of thunder amidst the chill and bracing clouds, starts up a fire, it is not fitting to enkindle anger at the first signs of coldness or trouble.

O you monks, you should polish your heads and, having relinquished ornaments and other adornments, wear appropriate robes of a subdued colour; holding a suitable vessel in your hands, beg alms for your livelihood. Look at yourself in the following way. If arrogance or pride arise you should quickly eradicate them; arrogance and pride are not seemly even for common folk who follow worldly ways so how much less are they seemly for a person who has left home to enter the Way. Will you yield yourself to those attitudes when you go forth to beg alms for the sake of liberation?

O you monks, the mind that is flattering and fawning acts contrary to the Way, therefore keep your heart honest and forthright for you should realize that flattery and fawning are merely done for the sake of imposing on others or making fools of them. O monks, maintain an upright heart which will serve you as the foundation for your honesty and forthrightness.

O you monks, recognise the person who has many cravings; his misery and troubles are many because he seeks for many benefits, gains and advantages. The person of few cravings is free from seeking after things or yearning for them, hence he is free of such sufferings; he desires little, only esteeming what is fitting for

his spiritual training and practice; by desiring little, so much more is he able to bring forth fine merits and virtues. The person of few desires is free of flattery and fawning when searching out the intentions of others. The heart of someone who behaves with few desires is, as a consequence, composed and free from gloom, anxiety, sorrow or fear; when coming in contact with things, he finds a surplus for there is never an insufficiency. The one who has few desires has Nirvana for this is the name for 'having few desires'.

O you monks, if you wish to be free from miseries and woes, look into contentment which is synonymous with knowing what is enough; the Teaching of contentment is none other than the location of true wealth, ease, security and peace. The person who is contented, though he sleeps upon the bare ground, is still at ease and satisfied; someone who is discontented, even if he were ensconced in a celestial palace, would still not find this tallying with his ideas and tastes. The one who is discontented, though rich, is poor; the person who is contented, though poor, is rich. The one who is discontented always does what his five desires latch onto; he does that which causes grief to, and arouses the compassionate pity of, one who is contented. This is what I mean by the term 'contentment'.

O you monks, if you seek to be tranquil and quiet, liberated from the insistence of the defiling passions, at ease and content, then you should part company with confusion and bustle and dwell at your ease in some solitary place. The person who dwells in quietude continually forsakes what those in the heavens esteem

so highly amongst themselves, therefore withdraw from those about you, as well as from other crowds, and, in a place of solitude apart from them, reflect on the source of the eradication of suffering at your leisure. If you are one who enjoys the company of others then you will take on the woes of their company, just as with a flock of birds that gather in some huge tree, there is the lament of dead branches breaking off under their weight. When the world binds itself around us, we drown in the suffering of such company just as an old elephant, sunk down in the mire, is unable to drag himself out.

O you monks, if you are diligent in your devotion to progress, training will not be difficult for you, therefore be diligent and devote yourselves to progress just as a small stream, ever flowing, can bore holes in rocks. If the mind of the trainee is often inattentive and remiss, it will be just the same as making a fire by friction and blowing on it before it is hot enough to catch ablaze; although your desire to train can blaze up, the fires of training are hard to arrive at. This is what I call 'devotion to progress'.

O you monks, seek fine understanding, search out good assistance and do not neglect being mindful. If you are one who does not neglect mindfulness, the thieves of passional defilement will not be able to enter, therefore, you monks, always keep your minds alert, for the one who loses mindfulness loses his merits and virtues. When the strength of your mindfulness is constant and vigorous, though the five desires would break in to rob you, they will do you no harm;

you will be as one who puts on armour before entering a battle and will have nothing to fear. This is what I call 'not neglecting mindfulness'.

O you monks, when your mind is kept alert, then you are in meditation; because your mind is in meditation, you are able to know the world, birth and death, as well as the characteristics of all things, therefore you monks should always study and practice the ways of meditation with finest diligence. When you achieve meditation, your heart is not in turmoil or your mind scattered; just as a household that would be frugal with water arranges dikes and pond banks carefully, so a trainee does likewise. Therefore, for the sake of the water of discriminate wisdom, practice meditation well that you may prevent the loss of that water through leaks caused by the defiling passions. This is what I call 'doing meditation'.

O you monks, when you have discriminate wisdom, you will not be attached to desires; by constant self-reflection and watching what you do, you will not bring about any loss through the defiling passions; within My Teachings this is what can bring you to liberation. If someone denies this, not only is he not a person of the Way, he is also not an ordinary, everyday person either; indeed, there is no name for such a one. Genuine discriminate wisdom is the sturdy craft that ferries others across the sea of old age, disease and death; it is also a great bright lamp for the darkness of ignorance, a wonderful curative for all disease and suffering. It is a sharp axe for felling the trees of defiling passions, therefore you monks should improve

yourselves by means of this wisdom which you attain through hearing, thinking about and putting into practice My Teachings. When someone has the radiance of this wisdom then, though he be blind, he will clearly see what people are. This is what 'discriminating wisdom' is.

O you monks, if your mind plays around with all kinds of theories and opinions it will be confused and in disorder and, though you have left home to be a monk, you have still not yet realized liberation; therefore, O monks, quickly abandon your disordered mind and your playing around with your theories and notions. If you wish to enjoy the pleasure that comes from calmness and the extinction of defiling passions, thoroughly eliminate the affliction of playing around in your head. This is what I mean by 'not playing around with theories and opinions'.

O you monks, you should wholeheartedly discard all forms of looseness and self-indulgence in favour of merits and virtues just as you would keep away from a malicious thief. What the World-honoured One desires with His great compassion is to benefit all by means of their ultimate realization of their identity with Buddha. Be it deep in the mountains, in an uninhabited valley or under some tree, your place of seclusion is your abode of peace. Keep in mind what you have received of the Teachings; do not let yourself be forgetful of Them and thereby lose Them; always be as diligent as possible in your practice and mastery of Them; the unreality of the unconditioned after death spawns gloom and regret. Like a good physician, I

understand illness and prescribe curatives for you to take; not to take them is not the doctor's fault. I also resemble a skilled guide who leads others to a clear pathway; not to heed him and not to travel the path is not the mistake of the guide. If you, in your sufferings, have any doubts about the Four Noble Truths, you can forthwith ask Me about them for, to fail to eradicate your doubts, is indeed to fail to seek for certainty."

The World-honoured One then made this same offer twice again but, among those present, none asked. Why was this? Because, within the assembly, none had any doubts.

Then Aniruddha, the Buddha's chief disciple with divine vision, scrutinizing the minds of the assembled, said to the Buddha, "O World-honoured One, the moon can make us hot and the sun can be cold to us. The Buddha has told us that the Four Noble Truths should not make us different from each other. The Buddha has also told us that the reality of the Truth of suffering is that suffering, which is the inability to make ourselves happy, exists, that the reality of the defiling passions is the cause of that suffering and this cause is not different for any of us, that if suffering is extinguished then this cause is extinguished because, when a cause is eliminated, its fruits are also eliminated and that the path to eliminating it is, in reality, the Path of Truth and there is no other way. O World-honoured One, these monks have certainty and are free of doubts about the Four Noble Truths. If there is anyone within this assembly who has not yet accomplished what needs to be done then, upon seeing the

Buddha enter parinirvana, let him give rise to feelings of pity for others. If you have already penetrated His Teachings you have heard what the Buddha has voiced which is to help ferry all to the Other Shore; it is as a flash of lightning seen in the night which helps one see the Way. If what needs to be done is already accomplished and you have already crossed the sea of suffering, keep just this thought in mind, the parinirvana of the World-honoured One is exactly the same as shouldering the burden of all ills!"

Although Aniruddha spoke these words, the assembly had all thoroughly penetrated the meaning of the Four Noble Truths. The World-honoured One, desiring to help all in this great assembly to realize certainty, spoke to them from His heart of great compassion,

"O you monks, do not harbour grief and woe within your bosoms. Were I to abide in this world for the space of a whole kalpa I must still enter into eternal meditation; to remain for such a length of time, and not ultimately to depart, is an impossibility. The Teaching that to spiritually benefit yourself by training benefits others contains all; were I to abide longer there would still be no more to obtain from Me than this. As for those who should be able to ferry others to the Other Shore, if humans are in some heaven they have already been completely carried across; those not yet carried across have also all already created the cause for their being ferried; you yourselves are now already past this. O My disciples, the Principles which I have extended, expanded and employed are the Dharma-body of the Tathagata which always abides and is not

extinguished, therefore you should realize that the world is not forever, of necessity we part from it, so do not cling to grief for the world is ever thus. Be diligent in your devotion to progress and quickly seek liberation; with the clarity of your discriminate wisdom and insight eradicate the darkness of delusion for the world is truly susceptible to fear and mistrust and wants strength and stability. Since I now enter into eternal meditation, you should strive to rid yourself of what I call 'the embodied self' as though it were something foul that was polluting you, for it is this illusory self which will sink down into the great ocean of birth, old age, disease and death. To get rid of it is like recovering from a bad illness. How can any of you, who has the wit to try, fail to feel anything but joy when you have freed yourself from the false ego for then you will have slain the malicious thief that it is?

O you monks, with wholehearted devotion always seek to get back on the path. All that is mutable or immutable in all worlds defeats and destroys the signs of uncertainty. Bring them to a halt! Do not ask Me to say more for the time is nigh when I would pass and I wish for my parinirvana. These are My last Teachings and instructions."

*The Scripture on
Fully Perfected Enlightenment.*

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION.

There are certain important features in *The Scripture on Fully Perfected Enlightenment* which may not be immediately apparent on the first reading and which may prove useful to know about before undertaking to read the text.

The Scripture, as a whole, consists primarily of a series of twelve inquiries and responses concerning various aspects of Buddhist training, following the sequence in which they often arise. The respondent is Shakyamuni Buddha, and those raising the questions are twelve Bodhisattvas. Who these Bodhisattvas are and the order in which they rise to ask their questions are not arbitrary, and the reader may find it helpful to take note of which Bodhisattva is asking what question. The reason for this is that each of these particular Bodhisattvas represents some aspect of the Eternal which surfaces within a spiritual trainee when all conditions are ripe.

For instance, training 'begins' when the question of how to give rise to the intention to train wells up within the heart of the trainee: this question 'springs from the lips' of the innate wisdom (personified by Manjusri Bodhisattva) within the trainee's Buddha Nature. Shakyamuni Buddha responds that it is done

through recognizing the illusion brought about by spiritual ignorance. He then leads Manjusri deeper and deeper into what His response signifies. The second question, raised by Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, who personifies the all-pervading goodness inherent within Buddha Nature, concerns how to train within this illusion, with the Buddha responding in turn. In this way, the reader is led through the various stages of training up to full Buddhahood.

While the Scripture can be read in such a manner, it should also be pointed out that the responses are addressed to the spiritual frame of mind of the questioner. That is, the same question as asked by a given Bodhisattva may arise at any time, and any number of times, during a trainee's life. Hence, the first question and response, for example, are not 'just for beginners' but are also pertinent for those with various degrees of experience in spiritual training whenever this question of 'the beginner's mind' arises within them.

Further, the reader may notice that the particular way in which a response is given differs in manner and style with each questioner. As a result, some responses may, at a given time, seem to 'speak more directly' to a given reader while others may seem puzzling or even irrelevant for the moment: readers should not let this daunt them, but continue on, since some later passage may indeed prove quite pertinent to their immediate spiritual state.

Finally, these inquiries and the responses are of a spiritual nature and bear a close resemblance to what occurs in the Spiritual Examination ceremony within

the Zen Buddhist tradition, in which novices and other monks twice a month ask the Meditation Master a question which reflects where they are in their training at the time. As with those question-and-answer sessions, the matters presented in the Scripture are neither intellectually derived nor idle inquiries, and the responses are not of a philosophical, speculative, or theoretical nature: all arise, on both sides, from the mind of meditation.

**THE GREAT FAR-REACHING SCRIPTURE
WHICH REVEALS
THE WHOLE MEANING
OF THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING ON
FULLY PERFECTED ENLIGHTENMENT.**

From the Chinese of Buddhatrāta.

Thus have I heard: once when the Revered One, in order to perceive all things correctly, had entered into the samadhi* which is the Treasure House Womb of His wondrous spiritual powers and great brilliance, He dwelt in the splendor from the radiance of all the Tathagatas. This is the stage where there is full awareness of the immaculacy of all sentient beings, where body and mind are tranquil and free of defiling passions, where equanimity and impartiality completely fill all the ten quarters, where there is no duality but only conformity with Enlightened Nature, and where Pure Lands are revealed within this realm which is beyond the mundane and the holy. Together with Him there were a hundred thousand Great Bodhisattvas highly advanced in training, chief amongst whom were Manjusri Bodhisattva, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva,

* A state in which the mind is relaxed and calm, and functions like a mirror illumining objects. The text describes this state in greater detail on p. 309.

Avalokiteshwara who is the Bodhisattva with the all-seeing eye of compassion, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, and the benevolent and invincible Maitreya Bodhisattva, along with the Bodhisattva of Immaculate Discernment, the Bodhisattva Who is the Sovereign Lord of Awesome Virtue, the Bodhisattva Who is the Voice of Eloquence, the Bodhisattva Who is Cleansed of His Karmic Obstructions, the Bodhisattva Whose Enlightenment is Universal, the Bodhisattva Whose Enlightenment is Fully Perfected, and the Bodhisattva Foremost in Wisdom and Virtue. These, along with their retinues, all entered samadhi and likewise dwelt within the assembly equally with the Tathagata.

At this point Manjusri Bodhisattva arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha's feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held in *gasshō*,* addressed the Buddha, saying, "O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, for the sake of this and future assemblies I pray that You will speak on how someone first gives rise to the intention to realize Buddhahood and which practice within the Dharma is fundamental to the realization of Immaculacy. Also, please explain to us how Bodhisattvas may leave all manner of spiritual illnesses far behind and bring forth the Heart of Immaculacy from within the

* A gesture of respect and reverence in which the hands are held in front of one, with palms and fingers touching, and fingers pointing upwards.

Greater Course, so that they can help prevent worldly beings up through the final age* from falling into false and twisted views during their search for the Greater Course.”

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, he again knelt, hands in *gasshō*. The World-honored One then spoke to Manjusri Bodhisattva, saying, “Excellent, excellent, My fine disciple! For the sake of Bodhisattvas you have skillfully inquired about the fundamental practice of My Dharma to help those worldly beings up through the final age who are searching for the Greater Course to keep to the straightforward, so that they will not fall into false or twisted views. Listen carefully now and I will explain it for you.” Manjusri Bodhisattva then, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly hearkened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, I, as Lord of the Unsurpassed Dharma, hold open for you the Gate to the great spiritual watercourse which I call Fully Perfected Enlightenment. From It flow forth the Immaculate Absolute, Bodhi, nirvana, and emancipation from birth and death, all for the edification of Bodhisattvas.

* That is, the age when interpretations of Buddhist Scriptures and Teachings have become so fragmented that those who desire to follow the Buddha’s Way all too easily develop mistaken notions.

“All Tathagatas have given rise to Their original intention to realize Buddhahood through the fundamental practice of cutting off blind ignorance forever, which They have done through Their total illumination to the Truth that all beings are fundamentally enlightened and immaculate; this has naturally produced the Way to Buddhahood. And what is blind ignorance, My fine disciple? All worldly beings from time immemorial have matters turned around in a variety of ways so that they keep returning to the same place, just as anyone does who is lost and wanders off in all directions. They mistakenly perceive the four elements to be properties of their own bodies and the shadows that flit across the fields of their six senses to be properties of their own minds. They are just like someone with diseased eyes who sees in the sky flowers floating around or two moons. O My fine disciple, there are truly no such flowers in space, yet the diseased one will cling to his delusion and, because he clings to it, he will not only be led astray as to the nature of space but also be confused as to where flowers really grow. Thus it is that the wheel of birth and death spins on to no purpose. Hence I call this blind ignorance.

“O My fine disciple, this blind ignorance truly has no substance; it is like a figure seen in a dream which the dreamer regards as having existence but which is recognized to be thoroughly unreal and intangible by the dreamer when he awakens; his awakening is just as though the mass of illusory flowers had been wiped from the sky. We cannot say that there is some place from which they have been really eliminated. And how

so? Because there is no such place in which they were physically produced to begin with.

“Though within the Unborn, all worldly beings vainly witness birth and extinction. This is why I speak of their ‘being spun about on the wheel of birth and death’. O My fine disciple, to strive after ‘perfect enlightenment’ out of a desire to realize Tathagatahood is an illusory flower; the one who truly knows this will cease to be spun about on the wheel. Also, there is no body or mind which undergoes this birth and death. There is no ‘Mu’ which meditation creates, because our Original Nature is Mu.* One who has personally awakened to this is as empty space. However, ‘knowing what empty space is’ is also an aspect of being an illusory flower and, at the same time, it cannot be said that there is no Nature that is awakened to. This is because, upon awakening, such a one has left both ‘existence’ and ‘Mu’ behind. This is what I call ‘being in accord with awakening to Immaculacy’. How so? Because It is the Nature of empty space, because It is continually unmoved, because It has no arising or passing away within the Treasure House Womb of the Tathagata, because there is no ‘becoming awake’, because It is just as the nature of the whole universe which completely fills everywhere in all directions to the utmost. Therefore, I call this ‘making

* ‘Mu’ is a negating term. It is used in Buddhism, particularly in the Zen tradition, to refer to That which transcends all opposites and which, at the same time, does not stand as something opposite to the ‘world of opposites’.

use of reason as the ground for training to realize Buddhahood'. Give rise to the Heart of Immaculacy so that worldly beings up through the final age, by practicing in accordance with this, will not fall into fallacious or twisted views."

The World-honored One, then desiring to proclaim the meaning of this Teaching again, spoke thus in verse:—

“Manjusri, know that all Tathagatas, on the basis of Their original intention to realize Buddhahood, have awakened by means of their spiritual perceptiveness and wise discernment.

When They thoroughly recognized the darkness of Their ignorance and realized that it was as an illusory flower, They were able to escape from spinning through trans-migrations, just as someone awakening from a dream knows it to be unreal.

The one who has spiritually awakened is as empty space: impartial, impervious to the changing winds; by being spiritually awakened, everywhere in all realms he realizes the perfecting of the Buddha's Way.

There is no place from which illusions and phantoms need to be annihilated, and 'perfecting the Way' is also unattainable because Original Nature in Itself is already completely perfected.

O Bodhisattvas, within this Original Nature,
you can give rise to the heart and mind
of Bodhi, and when worldly beings up
through the final age practice in this way,
they will escape from their false and
twisted views.”

At this point Samantabhadra Bodhisattva arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha’s feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held in *gasshō*, addressed the Buddha, saying, “O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, for the sake of all the Bodhisattvas gathered here in this assembly and for the sake of all those worldly beings up through the final age who would put the Greater Vehicle into practice, I pray that, upon hearing of this immaculate realm of Fully Perfected Enlightenment, they will ask how to train. World-honored One, if amongst these worldly beings there are those who come to recognize what is illusory, they will realize that their own bodies and minds are also illusory. Hence, they may ask how someone trains amidst illusions by means of something that is itself illusory. In addition, once the nature of all these illusions is totally eradicated, there is no ‘mind’ to be had, so who or what is there to do training?

“Also, please explain how to train within the illusory, for if worldly beings are not training to begin with, they will continue to dwell amidst the delusions which they have created within birth and death.

Furthermore, since they will have no clear understanding of the realm of the illusory, they may ask with minds filled with erroneous notions and preconceptions how they may liberate themselves. So I pray that, for the sake of all worldly beings up through the final age, you will tell us what skillful means we should apply, step by step, to their practice in order that we may help all these beings abandon their delusions.”

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, he again knelt, hands in *gasshō*. The World-honored One then spoke to Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, saying, “Excellent, excellent, My fine disciple! For the sake of the Bodhisattvas as well as worldly beings up through the final age, you are capable of studying and putting into practice the Bodhisattva’s samadhi on the illusoriness of delusion. Thus, you will be able to apply your skillful means to help worldly beings succeed in abandoning their delusions. Listen carefully now and I will explain this for you.” Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly listened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, every variety of delusion of any worldly being arises out of the wondrous Original Nature to which the Tathagata has completely awakened. Delusions are just as illusory flowers ‘existing’ in space; although the unreal blossoms may be eliminated, the nature of space is not harmed or destroyed in the process. The illusory ‘mind’ of a worldly being is likewise eliminated along with its illusions. Although

the illusions are completely eliminated, the awakened Mind, which is the Original Nature, remains immutable. To speak of 'awakening' in relation to 'delusions' is also called a delusion. If someone tells you that he is enlightened, he has still not abandoned his delusions; were he to say that he is not enlightened, the situation would be no different. This is why I speak of the elimination of delusion as 'being immutable'.

"O My fine disciple, all Bodhisattvas, as well as worldly beings up through the final age, must distance themselves from all the empty and vain realms of the illusory. Nevertheless, someone who firmly holds on in his mind to the notion of separating himself from such realms is also deluded in his thoughts and must distance himself from such a notion. 'Being far from delusion' is likewise a delusion, so he must abandon the notion of his 'being far from it'. Since 'abandoning the notion of "being far from" ' is yet another delusion, again he must give up this notion as well. When such a one realizes that there is nothing to separate himself from, then he has abandoned his delusions. By analogy, it is just as, by rubbing two sticks together to produce a fire, the wood is consumed, the ashes fly away, and the smoke dissipates; training your delusions by means of your delusions is no different. Although all your delusions will come to an end, do not enter into trying to chop them off or wipe them out.

"O My fine disciple, when you recognize a delusion, let it go. There is no need to employ any 'skillful means', since to let go of one's delusions is to awaken. There is no step-by-step procedure. When

all Bodhisattvas and worldly beings up through the final age practice and train accordingly, they will be able to separate themselves from their delusions forever.”

Then the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this again, spoke thus in verse:—

“O Samantabhadra, know that the blind ignorance derived from the beginningless delusions of all worldly beings has totally arisen from the Original Nature, to which the Tathagata has completely awakened.

Such delusions are just as illusory flowers in empty space, which depend on space for signs of their ‘existence’; when these unreal blossoms perish, the empty space, as from the beginning, will be immutable.

All delusions arise from enlightenment in all its variety; when these delusions are eliminated, enlightenment is fully complete because the enlightened Original Nature is, as space, immutable.

These Bodhisattvas here, as well as worldly beings up through the final age, must rid themselves of their delusions forever.

When they have abandoned all their delusions, it will be as though they had produced a fire from two sticks for, when the wood is completely consumed, the fire perishes.

Awakening is not a gradual process, and the use of skillful means is no different.”

At this point Avalokiteshwara, the Bodhisattva with the all-seeing eye of compassion, arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha's feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held in *gasshō*, addressed the Buddha, saying, "O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, for the sake of the Bodhisattvas gathered in this assembly as well as for worldly beings up through the final age, I pray that you will explain the training and practices of a Bodhisattva step by step. Tell us what such a one should reflect on, what hold fast to, and what skillful means to use with worldly beings who have not yet awakened to their Original Nature so that we may help them open up totally to Truth. O World-honored One, if these worldly beings are lacking in appropriate skill in means or do not engage in appropriate reflection then, even though they hear the Buddha Tathagata speak about this samadhi, their minds will be troubled by their delusions and, as a consequence, they will be unable to awaken and enter into Fully Perfected Enlightenment. I pray that You enkindle Your benevolence and compassion and, for the sake of our companions here and for worldly beings up through the final age, You will speak about these skillful methods."

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, he again knelt, hands in *gasshō*. The World-honored One then spoke to Avalokiteshwara Bodhisattva, saying, "Excellent, excellent, My fine disciple! For the sake of Bodhisattvas and worldly

beings up through the final age, you have inquired about My various methods as a Tathagata for expediently teaching: that is, how to train and practice, what step-by-step procedures to follow, what thoughts and reflections to use, and how to hold firm. Listen carefully now and I will explain these for you.” Then Avalokiteshwara, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly listened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, those Bodhisattvas who are new to study as well as those worldly beings up through the final age, being desirous of seeking after Original Nature, which is the Tathagata’s immaculate Fully Perfected Enlightenment, must distance themselves from their delusions by the application of correct mindfulness. First, in accordance with the Tathagata’s meditative practice of quieting the mind, they should hold fast to the Precepts. Then, sitting at ease with their fellow trainees as they all feast on meditation in a quiet hall, they should continually make this their form of mindfulness: ‘This body of mine is a unifying of the four elements. The so-called forms of hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, muscles, bones, marrow, brain, and ear wax will all return to earth; saliva, tears, pus, blood, phlegm, sweat, mucus, spittle, semen, feces, and urine will all return to water; the warmth of the body will return to fire, its mobility will return to air.’ When they have distanced themselves from these four elements, where will their body be then? Accordingly, they will know that this body ultimately has no substantiality. The unifying of the

elements creates its characteristics, but it is truly in no way different from a mirage. This provisional joining together of the conditions associated with the four elements arbitrarily possesses six sense organs. These six sense organs and the four elements take on an exterior and interior form, which is accompanied by feelings arising according to conditions. These feelings, accumulating within, seem to take on a form of their own, which we provisionally call ‘the conscious mind’.

“O My fine disciple, this illusory ‘conscious mind’ is incapable of existing independent of the six sensory stimuli of form, sound, aroma, taste, touch, and mental data. When the physical body’s four elements disintegrate, there is nothing left to receive these stimuli; when these stimuli have dissipated and died out, the ‘conscious mind’, which was dependent upon these, is not to be found.

“O My fine disciple, when these worldly beings have disposed of their illusory ‘body’, their illusory ‘conscious mind’ is also done away with. Since the illusory mind is disposed of, the illusory ‘sensory stimuli’ are also done away with. Once they have rid themselves of illusory sensory stimuli, the illusory act of ‘ridding oneself of’ is also eliminated. However, once they have rid themselves of this illusory act of ‘ridding oneself of’, That which is beyond illusion is not eliminated. By analogy, it is just as with polishing a mirror: when the dust and dirt have been removed, its brightness is revealed.

“O My fine disciple, you must know that body and mind are both merely the dust and dirt of illusion; when the properties of ‘dust and dirt’ have been removed forever, the whole universe is immaculate. O My fine disciple, by analogy, it is just as the five colors of the spectrum being reflected from the immaculate Mani Jewel, with each manifesting itself as it follows its own direction: even the most obdurate and quarrelsome will see that there are the five colors in this Mani Jewel.

“O My fine disciple, the Immaculate Nature of Fully Perfected Enlightenment manifests Itself in body and mind in accord with species and in correspondence with each being. Those who are obdurate and quarrelsome say that immaculate Fully Perfected Enlightenment actually has a body and a mind, as well as a personality. Hence, they cannot rid themselves of their delusions. That is why I speak of body and mind as being the dust and dirt of delusion, in contrast to the letting go of this illusory grime, which is what I call ‘being a Bodhisattva’. When the notion of ‘grime’ is abandoned, its opposite is also removed; accordingly, when speaking of what is in contrast to this ‘grime’, there is nothing to give a name to.

“O My fine disciple, if these Bodhisattvas here, as well as worldly beings up through the final age, realize that these delusions are just delusions, and then rid themselves of these phantom images, at that moment an Immaculacy unlimited by space will be realized, an awakening to an unbounded spaciousness will manifest. Because of the full radiance of enlightenment,

Original Nature manifests as Immaculacy. Because of this immaculacy of Original Nature, visual stimuli are immaculate. Because of this visual immaculacy, the organ of sight is immaculate. Because of the immaculacy of this organ, visual perception is immaculate. Because of the immaculacy of perception, auditory stimuli are likewise immaculate. Because of the immaculacy of hearing, the organ of hearing is immaculate. Because of the immaculacy of the sense organ, auditory perception is immaculate. Because of the immaculacy of perception, that which stimulates spiritual awakening is likewise immaculate, and so on in a similar vein for nose, tongue, body, and mind.

“O My fine disciple, since the sense organs are immaculate, the stimulus of form is immaculate. Since form is immaculate, the stimulus of sound is likewise immaculate, and it is no different for aroma, taste, touch and mental data. O My fine disciple, since the six sensory stimuli are immaculate, the element of earth is immaculate. Since earth is immaculate, the element of water is likewise immaculate, and it is no different for the elements of fire and air. O My fine disciple, since the four elements are immaculate, the six sense organs, their stimuli, and the perception of those stimuli, as well as the twenty-five varieties of existence brought about by defiling passions and karmic suffering, are, all, immaculate. Because of the immaculacy of these, the ten faculties of perfect knowledge of a Buddha, the four kinds of fearlessness, the four unlimited Bodhisattvic abilities to understand and interpret the Dharma, the eighteen characteristics

that distinguish a Buddha from a Bodhisattva, and the thirty-seven conditions leading to Buddhahood are all immaculate, as are the eighty-four thousand Gates which embrace all the ways to practice good and cease from evil.

“O My fine disciple, because the nature of all reality is immaculate, any single body is immaculate. Because one single body is immaculate, all bodies are immaculate. Because all bodies are immaculate, it ultimately will follow in a similar manner that the Fully Perfected Enlightenment of all worldly beings is immaculate. O My fine disciple, since one realm is immaculate, all realms are immaculate. Since all realms are immaculate, so will it be for everything until the ends of limitless space are reached and all time past, present, and future is encompassed. All are impartially immaculate and truly still.

“O My fine disciple, since empty space is in this way impartial and still, you should recognize that Enlightened Nature is impartial and still; since the four elements are truly still, you should recognize that Enlightened Nature is impartial and still. Continue on in this manner until you recognize that Enlightened Nature is impartial and utterly still, since the eighty-four thousand all-encompassing Gates to the deepest practice are impartial and truly still.

“O My fine disciple, because the all-pervading immaculacy and stillness of Enlightened Nature is totally boundless, you must realize that the six senses completely pervade the universe. Because the senses

are all-pervading, you must realize that the six types of sensory stimuli completely pervade the universe. Because the sensory stimuli are all-pervading, you must realize that the four elements completely pervade the universe, and you should continue in like manner to where you realize that the all-encompassing Gates to practice completely pervade the universe.

“O My fine disciple, because the nature of the sense organs and their stimuli depends on the all-pervasiveness of this wondrous Enlightened Nature, they are without blemish and are unadulterated in their purity. Because the senses and their stimuli are without blemish and are unadulterated, the four elements are also without blemish and are unadulterated, and so forth, up to where the all-encompassing Gates to practice are without blemish and are unadulterated. It is just as the light from hundreds of thousands of lamps illuminating a single room: such light pervades everywhere, without blemish, and is unadulterated.

“O My fine disciple, because of your successful realization of enlightenment you will know that Bodhisattvas are not bound to anything physical or mental, nor do they seek liberation from anything physical or mental. They do not despise samsara with its birth and death, nor do they crave nirvana. They do not worship those who keep to the Precepts, nor do they despise those who break the monastic rules. They do not extol those whose study has been lengthy, nor do they belittle those new to training. And why so? Because all are enlightened. By analogy, it is just as

the glint in the discerning eye when it becomes aware of what is right before it. That glint, being completely perfected, has not the least bit of hatred or greed in it. And why so? Because the nature of the glint, being beyond duality, is devoid of hatred and greed.

“O My fine disciple, these Bodhisattvas, as well as worldly beings up through the final age, who, by training their hearts and studying their intentions, have succeeded in fully awakening, will be beyond ‘training something’ and beyond ‘succeeding to something’. Their Fully Perfected Enlightenment will light up everywhere, and their tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions will be beyond all duality. The hundreds of thousands of millions of billions of Buddha realms within us, as numerous as the untold sand grains of the Ganges, are like illusory flowers which riotously arise, whirl about in profusion, scatter, and disappear. They lack foundation, yet are not dismissed, and there is no being bound to them or liberated from them. Above all, know that worldly beings, from the beginning, have realized Buddhahood, and that samsara and nirvana are just as last night’s dreams. O My fine disciple, because samsara and nirvana are as a past dream, know that both have no arising or perishing, are without any coming or going. The one who has awakened to this state has nothing to acquire or lose, nothing to hold onto or discard; the one who is able to speak of That Which Is from the certainty of direct knowing makes no effort at anything, nor is indifferent, nor tries to bring

all mental operations to an end or to annihilate all desires.* Within this speaking from certainty of his there are no powers to be acquired, no places to abide in; ultimately, there is no ‘speaking from certainty’ or ‘one to speak from such certainty’. The nature of everything physical and mental is impartial and indestructible.

“O My fine disciple, when these Bodhisattvas train in this way, progress step by step in this manner, reflect like this, hold firm like this, skillfully apply means like this, awaken to their True Nature like this, seek after the Dharma like this, they will not be troubled by delusions.”

Then the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this again, spoke thus in verse:—

“O Avalokiteshwara, you whose eye of compassion sees everywhere, know that the bodies and minds of all worldly beings are illusory.

The characteristics of body are to be classified amongst the four elements; the characteristics of conscious mind go back to the six sensory stimuli.

* ‘Speaking from certainty’ refers to a direct knowing associated with the transcending of any personal perspective which arises from the discriminatory mind or dualistic thinking. It should not be confused with ‘speaking with certitude’, that is, asserting something to be so through rational persuasion, faith, or intellectual conviction.

When the physicalization of the four elements disperses, who is there who can bring them back into a unity?

When you progressively train like this, all becomes immaculate through and through, as well as truly still everywhere throughout the whole universe.

There is no effort made, nor any indifference, no stopping of thoughts or annihilating of desires, and there is no ‘one to speak from certainty of It’.

All Buddha realms are as unreal flowers in empty space; past, present, and future are completely impartial for, in short, there is no coming or going.

Since Bodhisattvas who have already given rise to the intention to seek Buddhahood, as well as worldly beings up through the final age, all, through and through, long to seek out the entrance to the Buddha’s Way, they must train and study in these ways.”

At this point Vajragarbha, the Bodhisattva who is the very Treasure House of the adamantine Jewel, arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha’s feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held in *gasshō*, addressed the Buddha, saying, “O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, for the sake of all the Bodhisattvas assembled here, You have expounded with great care on a Tathagata’s

Fully Perfected Enlightenment, the all-encompassing Gates to realizing Immaculacy, the training ground of the Dharma, and the step-by-step use of skillful means. You have also helped worldly beings disperse their unheeding willfulness. Further, the Sangha assembled here have received Your benevolent instructions so that their vision, which was blurred by delusions, has been made clear, and the eye of their wise discernment is now immaculate. O World-honored One, if worldly beings are enlightened to begin with, how is it that there is all this blind ignorance? If this ignorance has existed in worldly beings from the beginning, why does the Tathagata speak of them as being enlightened from the very beginning? If ordinary beings everywhere have originally realized the Buddha's Way and only later give rise to ignorance, will all the Tathagatas Themselves at some later time once again beget defiling passions? Pray, do not forsake Your unrestricted great benevolence; open the Treasure House to these enigmas for the sake of the Bodhisattvas as well as for worldly beings up through the final age."

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, he again knelt, hands in *gasshō*. The World-honored One then spoke to Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, saying, "Excellent, excellent, My fine disciple! For the sake of Bodhisattvas as well as worldly beings up through the final age, you have asked about the extremely profound, subtle, and superb skillful means of a Tathagata. These are My most advanced instructions for Bodhisattvas, that they

may clearly grasp the meaning of the Greater Course whereby they will be able to help Bodhisattvas who are still young in their training, as well as help worldly beings up through the final age, to attain the trust that arises from certainty and to sever their doubts and misgivings forever. Listen carefully now and I will expound these for you.” Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly listened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, all realms of beings of whatever sort are constantly being born and perishing; whether existing or not in past or future, whether amalgamating or scattering, arising or ceasing, moment by moment they continue on, alternating between going away and coming back, exhibiting endless varieties of holding on and pushing away: all this is the cycling of transmigration. Not yet have they taken their leave of the wheel of birth and death; not yet do they discern their Fully Perfected Enlightenment. The nature of this Fully Perfected Enlightenment is in no way different from their drifting through the six realms of existence, but if they do not escape from the turning wheel, they will not find this Place. By way of analogy, it is just as the darting eye makes the clear, still water seem to move and the steady, staring eye makes the fire seem to flicker and dance, or as the clouds, in their scudding across the sky, make the moon seem to hasten in the opposite direction, or as a boat, plying its way, causes the shore to appear in transit. O My fine disciple, when these motions have not yet stopped, you cannot get these things—the water, the fire, the moon,

the shore—to abide as they originally are. How much more incessant in its movement is the heart that is not yet immaculate but ever sullied by the whirling wheel of birth and death. It moves incessantly until it beholds the Buddha's Fully Perfected Enlightenment! Therefore, these beings give rise to the three delusions which are brought about by their tendency to succumb to greed, hatred, and false views, to become confused when trying to help others, and to misunderstand what things really are.

“O My fine disciple, by analogy, it is like the distorted vision from blurred eyes which see illusory flowers in the sky. If the blurred vision is eliminated, you cannot say, once this blurredness has been removed, when it may again arise. And why so? Because the two phenomena of blurred vision and illusory flowers are not mutually dependent on each other. Also, just as when illusory flowers vanish from the sky, you cannot say when unreal flowers may again appear in the empty sky. Why so? Because from the beginning there were no flowers, and so they do not arise or perish; samsara and nirvana are just the same as to their ‘arising and perishing’. When the wondrous awakening fully illumines, both flowers and blurred vision are abandoned.

“O My fine disciple, you must know that empty space does not exist at one moment and cease to exist at another. How much more does the Tathagata comply with Fully Perfected Enlightenment, which is His Original Nature, as impartial as empty space! O My fine disciple, it is just as when refining gold ore: even

without smelting, the gold is already gold, but once it is refined, it does not become ore over and over again. Though time without end may pass, the nature of the gold is not destroyed; do not say that it is not perfected to begin with nor say the same about the Tathagata's Fully Perfected Enlightenment. O My fine disciple, the heart of Fully Perfected Enlightenment of all Tathagatas fundamentally contains neither Bodhi nor nirvana, it possesses no realization of Buddhahood, nor does it lack such realization, it does not vainly spin upon the wheel of transmigration, nor does it not spin.

“O My fine disciple, to state it simply, within the realm encompassing those who hear My voice, they have severed themselves from their bodies, words, and minds and let them fall away, yet the nirvana which is revealed through direct knowing is still beyond their reach. How much less is it possible to measure the realm of a Tathagata's Fully Perfected Enlightenment by means of a mind filled with speculations and fanciful notions. It is just as though someone tried to use the glowing light of a firefly to set Mount Sumeru ablaze; try as one may, it cannot be ignited by such. The viewpoint of ‘birth and death’ arises from a heart and mind cycling through birth and death; try as they may, such a heart and mind cannot enter the vast sea of the Tathagata's tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions. Therefore, I tell all Bodhisattvas, as well as worldly beings up through the final age, to first sever the roots of beginningless circling on the wheel of birth and death.

“O My fine disciple, this creating of speculations and fanciful notions arises from the having of thoughts, all of which are due to the conditioned propensity for false notions which arises from contact with the six types of sensory stimuli. In that these speculations are not the substance of True Mind, which is Original Nature, they are already as unreal flowers in space. Someone who uses these speculations and fanciful notions to ‘discern’ the realm of Buddha is just as someone fastening illusory fruit onto unreal flowers. You will never arrive at this Place by ruminating on speculations and false notions. O My fine disciple, no matter how many clever ideas may be produced by a mind aimlessly adrift, they cannot accomplish what the skillful means of Fully Perfected Enlightenment can. Engaging in such discriminatory thinking is not to be taken as appropriate and true inquiry.”

Then the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this again, spoke thus in verse:—

“O Vajragarbha, know that the tranquil and undefiled Nature of the Tathagata has never known a beginning nor will know an end.

If someone speculates and dreams up notions by means of a mind that is revolving up-on the wheel of birth and death, he will continue to whirl round and round, merely reaching the rim of this spinning wheel without being able to enter the sea of Buddhas.

By analogy, it is just as with the smelting of gold ore: the gold does not exist because it has been refined; it has been gold all the time and is ultimately perfected by refining, and once the substance of pure gold has been produced, it does not become crude ore again.

Both samsara with its birth and death and nirvana, as well as mundane people and Buddhas, all take on the aspect of unreal flowers.

If speculations and theories are but illusions, what then are the discriminations of the vain and empty!

If you can thoroughly clarify what this mind of yours is, by and by it will search for Fully Perfected Enlightenment.”

At this point Maitreya Bodhisattva arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha’s feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held in *gasshō*, addressed the Buddha, saying, “O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, You have opened wide the Treasure House to various enigmas for the sake of Bodhisattvas and have helped the assembly gain a deeper understanding of transmigration. You have also helped them distinguish the false from the genuine so that they can bestow upon all worldly beings up through the final age the undaunted eye of the Way. This eye produces certainty and trust

in the Great Nirvana, so that such beings do not continue time and again to yield to the realms of the whirling wheel of rebirths and give rise to spinning thoughts. O World-honored One, if Bodhisattvas and worldly beings up through the final age wish to roam the seas of the Tathagata's tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions, how should they go about cutting off the roots of transmigration? How many varieties of transmigration are there? How many distinct ways are there in training to realize Buddhahood? What kinds of skillful means can you provide to train those entangled with, and absorbed in, the dust and troubles from their defiling passions? How may they turn their hearts around and be ferried to the Other Shore? I pray do not abandon Your great compassion for rescuing the world from itself: help all Bodhisattvas who are devoted to training, as well as worldly beings up through the final age, to wash the dust from their eye of wise discernment and make the mirror of their heart sparkle and glisten so that they may awaken fully to Your unsurpassed insights."

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, he again knelt, hands in *gasshō*. The World-honored One then spoke to Maitreya Bodhisattva, saying, "Excellent, excellent, My fine disciple! For the sake of Bodhisattvas, as well as for worldly beings up through the final age, you have skillfully asked Me about profound, subtle, and wondrous matters which will help Bodhisattvas purify their eye of wise discernment so that they may help

all worldly beings up through the final age cut themselves free from the whirling wheel of births and deaths, realize the Truth within their hearts, and thereby acquire the understanding patience of the Unborn. Listen carefully now, and I will explain these matters for you.” Maitreya Bodhisattva, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly listened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, because all sentient beings from beginningless time have depended on their various affectional ties and their attachments to pleasure, they have returned again and again on the wheel. When all the various sorts of beings in the universe reproduce, whether by egg, womb, moisture, or metamorphosis, they straightway bring about life due to their carnal desires and other greeds. You must understand that transmigration makes such attachments its roots. By their desires for wealth, sex, food, fame, and sleep, beings promote and strengthen their greeds. Because of this they make themselves heirs to birth and death. Craving arises from attachments, and life depends on craving to exist. Thus does a worldly being’s attachment to life rest on a foundation of craving. Attachment to one’s cravings is the cause, whilst attachment to life is the effect.

“Because, within the realm of craving, various disagreeable situations arise, as well as agreeable ones, beings beget hate and envy, as well as foster various actions of karmic consequence, whenever their surroundings are contrary to what their heart desires. Because of this, they are once again reborn in some hell

or as a hungry ghost. Sentient beings who realize that their cravings can exhaust them and are wearied by producing actions of karmic consequence may then attach themselves to the path where they discard evil and long to do good; these will also be reborn, but as devas or humans. Further, should they realize the wearisome evil of all attachments and therefore seek contentment through abandoning and renouncing their attachments, instead of watering the roots of their attachments to make them flourish, they will produce extraordinarily beneficial effects within the transitory world of phenomena. All who are spinning on the wheel of transmigration have failed to realize the Holy Way; those who crave to be free from the cycles of births and deaths and to escape from the turning wheel must, first off, sever their attachments to pleasuring things and abandon their longing for affectional bonds.

“O My fine disciple, a Bodhisattva’s transforming himself to make an appearance in the world is not done on the basis of attachments; he only assumes an attachment to pleasurable things provisionally, in order to enter the world of samsara. If worldly beings up through the final age can abandon their cravings, put aside their hates and greeds, forever sever themselves from the whirling wheel of rebirths, and diligently seek My realm of Fully Perfected Enlightenment, they will succeed in awakening to the Immaculacy within their hearts.

“O My fine disciple, by making greeds their foundation, all sentient beings display their blind ignorance and thereby reveal that the five distinctive natures are

not alike. These beings will appear to be spiritually deep or superficial due to two types of hindrances. And what are these two types of hindrances? The first are the hindrances to Truth, wherein one doubts the genuineness of knowing It through direct experience; the second are the hindrances which arise from the passions, whereby the cycle of births and deaths is perpetuated. And what are the five distinctive natures? O My fine disciple, the first nature is found among beings who have not severed themselves from, and eliminated, these two types of hindrances; we call them 'those who are not yet aware of Buddhahood'. Those of the second nature are worldly beings who have abandoned the hindrances from their passions by discarding their greeds forever but still have not cut through their hindrances to Truth. They have simply been able to realize the kind of emancipation that a shravaka or a pratyekabuddha* may achieve; they have

* Shravakas and pratyekabuddhas are Buddhists who are said to follow 'the Lesser Course'. In this context, a shravaka is one who, upon hearing the Dharma, affirms his allegiance to It but may not yet put It into practice or may try to reduce It simply to a rigid code of 'right and wrong' behaviors. A pratyekabuddha is one who trains for his own sake only; that is, he is still motivated by greed, albeit a spiritual one. They are not 'wrong' practitioners of Buddhism, but, by their following a 'lesser' course, it will take a longer time for their spiritual seeds to germinate and grow into the realizing of Buddhahood, since they have not yet entered the Bodhisattva Path, which involves the doing of one's practice for the sake of all sentient beings.

A widely voiced view is that references in Mahayana texts to 'those who follow the Lesser Course (Hinayana)' denote practitioners of the Theravadan Buddhist Tradition. However, this may not be quite the case. Western scholars, particularly those of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, have subscribed heavily to the view that 'Hinayana means Theravada', partly as a result of attempting to fit Buddhist history into the model of Christian sectarianism.

Originally, a distinction was made by advocates of what is now called the Mahayana Tradition between 'shravakayana' and 'bodhisattvayana'. The former referred to those who were passive listeners (shravakas) to Shakyamuni's Teachings, in contrast to the latter who were active practitioners of the spiritual practices set down by Shakyamuni Buddha for arriving at the realization of enlightenment. It is these two terms that were later changed to 'hinayana' (the lesser course) and 'mahayana' (the greater course). The Theravadins, like some of the other 'schools' of Buddhism prior to the rise of Mahayana, were already using the term 'bodhisattva' to refer to Shakyamuni's practice of the Path before His realization. Mahayana arose as a call for a return to that practice to those who had given way to being passive Buddhists; later it expanded the term 'bodhisattva' to refer to all who actively follow in the footsteps of Shakyamuni Buddha.

In Scriptural and commentarial contexts, the argument 'against following Hinayanist teachings' may thus be regarded as one against any Buddhist teachings, of whatever school, which have a limited view of Buddhism in that they may tend to encourage 'philosophizing' rather than promoting the practice of Buddhism, limit their practice simply to conformity to a rigid moral code, or undertake practice only for their own personal benefit. Despite what some scholars have characterized as a rancorous and polemical use of

not yet taken up abode within the realm of Bodhisattvas. O My fine disciple, when worldly beings up through the final age long to sail on the Tathagata's sea of Fully Perfected Enlightenment, they must first of all be resolved to sever themselves from both types of hindrances with all diligence. Those of the third nature have acknowledged both types of hindrances and thus, with eyes wide open, are able to enter the realm of Bodhisattvas. When these have also severed and eradicated forever their hindrances to Truth, they will be of the fourth [and highest] nature as they enter My wondrous Fully Perfected Enlightenment and find complete contentment with Bodhi and Great Nirvana. O My fine disciple, all worldly beings, in attesting to Fully Perfected Enlightenment, will encounter good spiritual friends. When they rely upon acting in accord with the Dharma Body as the basis for whatever they do, then, at the very moment when they are pursuing their training and study, both the sudden and the gradual paths will be present. When such beings encounter the path of genuine training and practice, which are within My supreme Bodhi, the size and

language by Buddhists of various 'schools', Buddhists have traditionally maintained a mutual tolerance and respect for diversity of approaches. This has continued even to today, wherein the Theravada recognizes and respects the Bodhisattva practice of the Mahayana [see Chapter 40 in Narada Maha Thera, *The Buddha and His Teachings*, 3rd ed. (Kuala Lumpur: The Buddhist Missionary Society, 1977)] just as the Mahayana recognizes and respects the Pali Canon of the Theravada.

quality of their spiritual roots will be irrelevant, for all will realize the fruits of Buddhahood. There is one other nature, found among worldly beings who, in their search for good spiritual companions, only encounter those with topsy-turvy notions and, in addition, have not yet experienced a genuine awakening; they are called ‘those with the seed nature who are non-Buddhists’, since the fault is not theirs but, rather, is due to the past errors of their misbeguided teachers. These are the differences amongst the five natures of sentient beings.

“O My fine disciple, a Bodhisattva enters the various types of worlds simply by means of his great compassion and skillful means, in order to stimulate the intentions of those not yet awakened to Truth. He goes so far as to take on a variety of forms and appearances in hostile or sympathetic realms and, by acting in consonance with the realm, helps beings realize Buddhahood by turning their hearts around, all in accordance with the strength of his beginningless and immaculate resolve. When all worldly beings up through the final age give rise to the extraordinary intention to realize the great Fully Perfected Enlightenment, they will radiate a Bodhisattva’s great and immaculate resolve, which they will fashion into words such as these: ‘I resolve that I who now dwell in the Buddha’s Fully Perfected Enlightenment will seek out good spiritual friends and will not prize followers of non-Buddhist ways or those content merely to listen to the Dharma or to realize the Truth only for themselves. In accordance with this vow, I shall train and practice

cutting off my hindrances one by one until all are at an end and my vow fulfilled, so that I may then ascend to the immaculate Dharma Hall of Liberation to confirm for myself the wondrously adorned and majestic region of the great Fully Perfected Enlightenment.’”

Then the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this again, spoke thus in verse:—

“O Maitreya, know that all failures of sentient beings to realize the Great Liberation are due to their having fallen into cycles upon cycles of births and deaths through relying on their greeds and attachments.

If they can sever themselves from their hates and desires, as well as from their greeds, wrath, and delusions, they will all be able to accomplish the Buddha’s Way regardless of differences in their natures.

The two types of hindrances will forever melt away and, having sought out a Master, they will have a true awakening.

Complying with the Bodhisattva’s vow, they will come to depend on, and rest in, the Great Nirvana.

Bodhisattvas in all quarters of the universe, because of their great compassionate vows, will manifest themselves and enter sam-sara’s realms of birth and death.

If those who are now training and practicing, as well as worldly beings up through the

final age, are diligent in their cutting themselves loose from their attachment-bound views, they will return to the great Fully Perfected Enlightenment.”

At this point the Bodhisattva who is known as He Whose Wise Discernment is Immaculate arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha’s feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held in *gasshō*, addressed the Buddha, saying, “O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, for the sake of our companions You have broadly expounded on such marvelous matters. What we had failed to see or hear originally we have now been favored with through the Buddha’s good guidance and teaching; our bodies and minds, unperturbed, receive from them benefits in great abundance. I pray that You, as Lord of the Dharma, will continue to expound on the nature of Your Fully Perfected Enlightenment for the sake of all those of the Sangha who have assembled here. How does That which all worldly beings and Bodhisattvas come to realize and speak of from certainty differ from what You, O World-honored One, have experienced as a Tathagata? Help worldly beings up through the final age hearken to this Holy Teaching and comply with It so that they may awaken to It and gradually be able to penetrate It.”

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, he again knelt, hands in *gasshō*.

The World-honored One then spoke to the Bodhisattva Whose Wise Discernment is Immaculate, saying, “Excellent, excellent, My fine disciple! For the sake of Bodhisattvas and worldly beings up through the final age you have asked Me about the gradations of difference. Listen carefully now and I will explain them for you.” The Bodhisattva Whose Wise Discernment is Immaculate, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly listened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, whilst the essential Nature of Fully Perfected Enlightenment is not a nature in the sense previously discussed, Its ‘nature’ does arise in accordance with those various natures. In this Nature there is nothing to be grasped and nothing to be confirmed, since ‘Bodhisattvas’ and ‘worldly beings’ do not truly exist within the Ultimate Reality of Fully Perfected Enlightenment. And why so? Because ‘Bodhisattva’ and ‘worldly being’ are both illusory and, since whatever is illusory has been eradicated in that Nature, there is nothing to be grasped and no ‘one who confirms’ anything. By way of analogy, it is just as an eye: it does not see itself. Since this Nature is universally impartial, there is nothing in particular to treat impartially.

“Worldly beings who are deluded and confused have not yet been able to abandon and eliminate all their illusions. As a result, what has been eliminated and what is not yet eliminated will arbitrarily manifest as distinctions amongst their physical, verbal, and

mental actions. When they are able to live in compliance with the tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions of which I speak, there will truly be neither tranquillity and freedom nor anyone who is tranquil and free.

“O My fine disciple, all worldly beings from time immemorial have relied on their erroneous notions of ‘I’ and of a self attached to that ‘I’. They are ever unaware of their moment-by-moment being born and perishing. Thus they give rise to hate and covetousness as they grab hold of, and cling to, their desires for wealth, sex, food, fame, and sleep. When they encounter the teachings of good spiritual friends and are helped to awaken to the nature of immaculate Fully Perfected Enlightenment, they take on a luminosity as they undertake to remove their hindrances. Accordingly, they come to realize that this ‘life’ of theirs is comprised of the five skandhas with their associated sense organs, stimuli, and perceptions thereof. Yet, when any of them cut themselves completely free from their attachments to their skandhas and senses in order to realize the immaculacy of the whole universe, their purity and liberation become spiritual hindrances and obstructions for them, because such do not constitute freedom within Fully Perfected Enlightenment. This is what I call ‘Enlightened Nature when It conforms to those of mundane mind’.

“O My fine disciple, all Bodhisattvas who see the bondage in such ‘liberation’ and cut themselves free from bondage to this ‘being free’ may still abide

in the notion of 'seeing enlightenment'. By binding themselves to the hindrance of 'awakening to Truth' they are not truly free. This is what I call 'Enlightened Nature when It conforms to the Bodhisattva who has not yet penetrated the Realm'.

"O My fine disciple, there is a luminosity and an awareness that I refer to as a hindrance and an obstruction because, whenever a Bodhisattva awakens to his Original Nature, he does not abide in a state of 'one who has awakened'; the luminosity and the luminous one simultaneously become tranquil and free of defiling passions. By analogy, it is just like someone cutting off his own head: once he has severed his head, the person who was able to cut it off no longer exists. Thus it is that, in severing all bonds by means of a mind in bondage, there will be no 'one who severed the bonds' once they have been severed.

"Scriptural teaching is as a finger pointing at the moon: when someone has seen the moon, he thoroughly understands that that which was doing the pointing was, indeed, not the moon. The same describes all my various expoundings for Bodhisattvas and what they point to. This is called 'Enlightened Nature when It conforms to the Bodhisattva who has already entered the Realm'.

"O My fine disciple, all hindrances and obstructions are ultimately enlightenment. The mindful mind and the wandering mind are never without their liberation. Fulfilling the Dharma and marring the Dharma are both called nirvana. Wisdom and foolishness are

ultimately *prajna*.^{*} What Bodhisattvas and non-Buddhists accomplish through their teachings will, alike, be Bodhi. Blind ignorance and Reality are not different realms. Keeping the Precepts, meditation, and wise discerning as well as lust, anger, and foolishness are all actions which are pure and immaculate. Sentient beings and nations are one and the same with the Dharma Nature. The regions in hell and the mansions in heaven are all Pure Lands. Those awake to their Buddha Nature and those totally unaware of It equally accomplish the Buddha's Way. All defiling passions are, in short, liberation. The Buddha's Discerning Wisdom, which is as boundless as the sea of universes, has illumined all aspects and still is just as the empty sky. This is what I call 'Enlightened Nature when It conforms to a Tathagata'.

"O My fine disciple, Bodhisattvas and worldly beings up through the final age are nevertheless present at all times. Do not give rise to erroneous thoughts and do not cease from eradicating the erroneous from your mind. Abiding in the realm of erroneous thoughts does not add to your understanding. When clear understanding is not present, do not try to comprehend what Reality is. When such worldly beings, hearing of this Gate to the Dharma, trust and understand It, accept and hold to It, and are neither overawed nor frightened by It, then this is what I call 'acting in

^{*} That is, the Wisdom that transcends the duality of 'wisdom versus foolishness'.

accord with Enlightened Nature'. O My fine disciple, you must know that such worldly beings have produced offerings for Buddhas and Great Bodhisattvas as numerous as the hundreds of thousands of millions of billions of sand grains in the Ganges and have cultivated masses of spiritual roots. The Buddha proclaims that these people have achieved all manner of intelligent wisdom."

Then the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this again, spoke thus in verse:—

"O You Whose Wise Discernment is Immaculate, know that the nature of Bodhi, which fills all to overflowing, contains nothing to be grasped or confirmed, and is beyond the duality of 'Bodhisattva' and 'worldly being'.

During the times of 'being aware' and 'not yet awake', there are degrees of difference.

Worldly beings hinder themselves for the sake of liberating themselves from their cravings, whilst Bodhisattvas still cling to 'being enlightened'.

Entering the Realm, they will forever be tranquil and free of defiling passions as they abide in no particular aspect; their great enlightenment will completely fill all to overflowing and be called 'acting in accord with Enlightened Nature in all situations'.

When worldly beings up through the final age cease to beget what is vain and empty in their hearts and minds, the Buddha says that such people are, in their present state, Bodhisattvas who are making offerings to innumerable Buddhas and whose meritorious virtues are already full to overflowing.

Though many are their skillful means, all are called ‘the wisdom of acting in accord with Enlightened Nature’.”

At this point the Bodhisattva who is known as the Sovereign Lord of Awesome Virtue arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha’s feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held in *gasshō*, addressed the Buddha, saying, “O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, You have extensively analyzed for our sakes what ‘acting in accord with Enlightened Nature’ is and, by the brilliance of Your enlightened Original Nature, have helped the Bodhisattvas to accept completely what the Buddha has voiced and to attain fine benefits without their having recourse to any set practices. O World-honored One, by analogy, just as with a great citadel that has four outer gates, each one facing a different compass point, so that from whatever direction someone may come, there is not just one way to enter the citadel, likewise there is not just one method for all the

Bodhisattvas who adorn Buddhist lands and realize Bodhi. O World-honored One, I pray that for our sakes You will expound at length what all the varieties of methods are and what types of persons train and practice, so that the Bodhisattvas in this assembly, as well as those worldly beings who seek the Greater Course up through the final age, will quickly awaken to Truth and enjoy roaming upon Your sea of great tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions.”

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, he again knelt, hands in *gasshō*. The World-honored One then spoke to the Bodhisattva Sovereign Lord of Awesome Virtue, saying, “Excellent, excellent, My fine disciple! For the sake of Bodhisattvas as well as for worldly beings up through the final age you have skillfully asked Me about such methods. Listen carefully now and I will explain them for you.” The Bodhisattva Sovereign Lord of Awesome Virtue, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly listened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, the wondrous, unsurpassed Enlightenment has produced, is producing, and will produce Tathagatas everywhere throughout the ten quarters of the universe. All things are alike and equal in the sameness of their Natures for, within all training and practice, there is truly no duality. The number of skillful means that conform to It are beyond count. When We bring together all reliable methods which take into account the differences in the nature of

beings, they come down to three types: *samadhi*, *samapatti*, and *dhyana*.

“O My fine disciple, when Bodhisattvas realize their unsullied Fully Perfected Enlightenment and make use of their Heart awakened to Immaculacy to do their practice whilst keeping truly still, then, due to their having purified their thoughts, a calm discernment will emerge as they become aware of the passional cravings and delusional workings of their discriminatory mind. As these fallacious thoughts and feelings, which intrude to corrupt their body and mind, are being eliminated forever, from within will flow forth a relaxation and lightening up of their sensory agitations, along with a sense of quiet harmoniousness. Because of this relaxing in the face of sensory stimuli, the Tathagatas throughout the whole universe will manifest Themselves within heart and mind, just as images do within a mirror. Hence this skillful method is what I call *samadhi*, that is, the bringing of heart and mind to rest by ceasing to pant after things.

“O My fine disciple, when Bodhisattvas realize their unsullied Fully Perfected Enlightenment and make use of their Heart awakened to Immaculacy to be aware that the nature of the mind’s six types of sensory consciousness, along with its sense organs and their stimuli, are all founded on those illusory manifestations called phenomena, then, being mindful of these phantoms as they arise, they make use of them to rid themselves of what is illusory. By transforming their illusions in this way, they lead other beings out of their illusions. Because they are mindful of these phantoms,

these Bodhisattvas are able to beget from within themselves that quiet harmoniousness which is characteristic of great compassion. All Bodhisattvas, by generating their practice from here, will gradually advance along the Way. Ultimately, because those who behold these imaginings of the mind are not one and the same with these phantoms, and because the observation that they are not one and the same with these phantoms is itself a product of the conscious mind and therefore illusory, these Bodhisattvas cease hanging on to these imaginary appearances forever. This wondrously perfected practice of Bodhisattvas is as a seedling sprouting from the earth. This skillful method I call *samapatti*, that is, the mindfulness whereby one stops oneself from abiding in dualistic thinking.

“O My fine disciple, when Bodhisattvas realize their unsullied Fully Perfected Enlightenment and make use of their Heart awakened to Immaculacy to let go of the mind’s imaginings, its notions of immaculacy, and its ‘complete understanding of body and mind’ (since all these are hindrances), the flash of their realization that there is no knowledge to awaken to will in no way be dependent on there having been hindrances in the first place. They have moved forever beyond the realm of ‘hindrances versus no hindrances’. Whatever they receive from the world, along with their particular bodies and minds, all mutually exist within the realm of sensory stimuli, and ‘come into being’ just as the sound of bell or drum emerges into ‘being’ from within the instrument.

Defiling passions and nirvana do not mutually hinder each other; that is why Bodhisattvas can give rise from within to tranquillity, freedom from defiling passions, and quiet harmoniousness. This serene and free realm which complies with the wondrous awakening is a place unreachable by 'self and other' or 'body and mind'; 'sentient being' and 'life' are both but passing thoughts that float by. This skillful method I call *dhyana*, that is, serene reflection.

“O My fine disciple, these three Gates to the Dharma go hand in glove with Fully Perfected Enlightenment and comply with It. By relying upon these methods, the Tathagatas in all the ten quarters have realized Buddhahood. All the differences amongst the varieties of skillful means of Bodhisattvas everywhere in the universe likewise depend on these three types of practice. When you are able to fully confirm them for yourself, you will then realize Fully Perfected Enlightenment.

“O My fine disciple, even though there are some who, having trained in the Holy Way, teach others to turn their hearts around so that hundreds of thousands of millions of billions realize the fruits of arahanthood or pratyekabuddhahood, such persons will not be as the one who, upon hearing of this unobstructed Dharma Gate to Fully Perfected Enlightenment, instantaneously complies with It by putting It into practice.”

Then the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this again, spoke thus in verse:—

“O You of Awesome Virtue, know that the Ultimate Reality of a heart of unsurpassed great awakening is beyond duality and conforms with all skillful means, whose number is beyond count.

I, as Tathagata, in opening the Treasure House to Truth, have pointed out that there are three types of skillful method:

Samadhi, which brings the mind to be relaxed and calm, is as a mirror illumining objects;

Samapatti, which sees the evanescence of the mind’s imaginings, is as the gradual sprouting up of a seedling, and

Dhyana, which is simply being serene and free of defiling passions, is as the sound inherent within drum or gong.

These three types of wondrous Gates to the Dharma all comply with enlightenment.

The Tathagatas and the great Bodhisattvas in all the ten quarters, by relying upon these, have been, are, and will be able to realize the Way.

Because they fully confirm these three practices for themselves, we call this ‘Supreme Nirvana’.

At this point the Bodhisattva Who is the Voice of Eloquence arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha’s feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held in *gasshō*, addressed

the Buddha, saying, “O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, such Gates to the Dharma are rare to find indeed. O World-honored One, how much do all Bodhisattvas need to habitually practice these skillful methods in order to enter the Gate to Fully Perfected Enlightenment? I pray that, for the sake of this great assembly and worldly beings up through the final age, you will open up these skillful methods for us and help us to realize their genuine characteristics by pointing out their meaning.”

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, he again knelt, hands in *gasshō*. The World-honored One then spoke to the Bodhisattva Who is the Voice of Eloquence, saying, “Excellent, excellent, My fine disciple! For the sake of all great assemblies, as well as worldly beings up through the final age, you have adroitly asked Me about such habitual practices. Listen carefully now and I will explain these matters for you.” Then the Bodhisattva Who is the Voice of Eloquence, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly listened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, the Fully Perfected Enlightenment of all Tathagatas is immaculate; from the first there has been no habitual practice or persons who habitually practice. All Bodhisattvas and worldly beings up through the final age put their illusory powers into practice due to their having not yet awakened. In this state, they have available to them the following twenty-five spheres of immaculate contemplation.

“When Bodhisattvas hold simply to absolute purity and rely on their powers of stillness to cut themselves forever free from their defiling passions, and ultimately realize Truth by not rising from their sitting place of meditation until they have entered nirvana, these Bodhisattvas are called they who solely practice *samadhi*.

“When Bodhisattvas, simply by using their Buddha-powers to view all as evanescent phantoms, transform all manner of worldly functions and actions,* and at the same time, scrupulously perform the wondrous and immaculate deeds of a Bodhisattva, without losing their serene mindfulness or unsullied discerning as they keep within the all-encompassing means of Fully Perfected Enlightenment, these Bodhisattvas are called they who solely practice *samapatti*.

“When Bodhisattvas simply eradicate their imaginings and do not hold on to their actions, as they cut themselves free from their defiling passions until these passions have been completely severed and they can speak from certainty of That which is genuine, these Bodhisattvas are called they who only practice *dhyana*.

“When Bodhisattvas begin by holding to the attainment of stillness and casting light upon their illusory thoughts and images through an attitude of calm discernment, and then, from within this state, give rise to Bodhisattvic acts, these Bodhisattvas are

* “Transform” them in the sense of using what is illusory to rid themselves of illusions; see p. 309.

called they who practice *samadhi* first and later practice *samapatti*.

“When Bodhisattvas use their serene discernment to confirm the nature which has attained stillness, and then sever their defiling passions in order to depart forever from birth and death, these Bodhisattvas are called they who practice *samadhi* first and later practice *dhyana*.

“When Bodhisattvas, by means of their tranquil and still discernment, manifest their powers of illusion by transforming illusion to cure illusion in various ways in order to ferry worldly beings to the Other Shore, and then later enter the serenity and freedom from defiling passions by severing themselves from these passions, these Bodhisattvas are called they who first practice *samadhi* within which they also practice *samapatti*, and then later practice *dhyana*.

“When Bodhisattvas completely sever their defiling passions by means of the power from their attaining stillness, and then later give rise to wondrous, immaculate Bodhisattvic deeds to ferry worldly beings to the Other Shore, these Bodhisattvas are called they who first practice *samadhi* within which they practice *dhyana*, and then later practice *samapatti*.

“When Bodhisattvas sever the defiling passions that arise in their heart and mind by means of the power from their attaining stillness whilst they adorn the universe by ferrying worldly beings to the Other Shore, these Bodhisattvas are called they who first practice *samadhi*, and then practice *samapatti* and *dhyana* equally.

“When Bodhisattvas are using the power that they attain from stillness to work out transformations of their illusions, and later sever their defiling passions, these Bodhisattvas are called they who first practice *samadhi* and *samapatti* equally, and then later practice *dhyana*.

“When Bodhisattvas are using the power that they attain from stillness to secure tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions, and then later give rise to actions which transform the universe, these Bodhisattvas are called they who first practice *samadhi* and *dhyana* equally, and then later practice *samapatti*.

“When Bodhisattvas conform themselves to all realms in a variety of ways by means of their transformational powers, and then hold themselves to attaining stillness, these Bodhisattvas are called they who practice *samapatti* first and later practice *samadhi*.

“When Bodhisattvas use their transformational powers in a variety of realms to keep themselves serene and free from defiling passions, these Bodhisattvas are called they who practice *samapatti* first and later practice *dhyana*.

“When Bodhisattvas engage in the work of the Buddha by means of their transformational powers as they dwell contentedly in their serenity, and then later sever their defiling passions, these Bodhisattvas are called they who first practice *samapatti* within which they practice *samadhi*, and then later practice *dhyana*.

“When Bodhisattvas, unhindered, carry out their actions by means of their transformational powers,

and then, due to their having cut themselves free from their defiling passions, dwell content in the stillness that they have attained, these Bodhisattvas are called they who first practice *samapatti* within which they practice *dhyana*, and later practice *samadhi*.

“When Bodhisattvas use their transformational powers to put their skillful means into operation, and then conform themselves to both their attainment of stillness and their cutting themselves free from their defiling passions, these Bodhisattvas are called they who first practice *samapatti* and then practice *samadhi* and *dhyana* equally.

“When Bodhisattvas give rise to wondrous uses of their powers of transformation to secure their attainment of stillness, and later sever their defiling passions, these Bodhisattvas are called they who practice *samapatti* and *samadhi* equally, and later practice *dhyana*.

“When Bodhisattvas secure tranquillity and freedom from their defiling passions whilst employing their powers of transformation, and then later dwell in immaculate serene reflection free of willful intentions, these Bodhisattvas are called they who practice *samapatti* and *dhyana* equally, and later practice *samadhi*.

“When Bodhisattvas use the power attained from their tranquillity and freedom through severing their defiling passions to give rise to attaining stillness so that they may dwell in immaculacy, these Bodhisattvas are called they who practice *dhyana* first and later practice *samadhi*.

“When Bodhisattvas use the power attained from their tranquillity and freedom to give rise to actions which will serenely conform to all realms, these Bodhisattvas are called they who practice *dhyana* first and then later practice *samapatti*.

“When Bodhisattvas are using the power that they attain from their tranquillity and freedom to dwell content in serene reflection in a variety of self-natures, and then give rise to transformations for the sake of others, these Bodhisattvas are called they who first practice *dhyana* within which they practice *samadhi*, and then later practice *samapatti*.

“When Bodhisattvas are using the power attained from their tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions to give rise to spontaneous actions within their own non-volitional natures, and then, dwelling contentedly in immaculate realms, arrive at serene reflection, these Bodhisattvas are called they who first practice *dhyana* within which they practice *samapatti*, and then later practice *samadhi*.

“When Bodhisattvas use the power from their tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions to dwell in serene reflection in a variety of immaculate realms as they give rise to transformations for the sake of others, these Bodhisattvas are called they who first practice *dhyana* and then later practice *samadhi* and *samapatti* equally.

“When Bodhisattvas, whilst making use of the power from their tranquillity and freedom, secure their attainment of stillness, and then give rise to transformations for the sake of others, these Bodhisattvas are

called they who practice *dhyana* and *samadhi* equally, and later practice *samapatti*.

“When Bodhisattvas, whilst making use of the power from their tranquillity and freedom from defiling passions, succeed in securing transformations for the sake of others, and then give rise to the wise discernment of the pure and bright spheres which have attained stillness, these Bodhisattvas are called they who practice *dhyana* and *samapatti* equally, and later practice *samadhi*.

“When Bodhisattvas employ their wise discernment of Fully Perfected Enlightenment to unite with all things, never separating their Enlightened Nature from all other essential Natures or Their characteristics, these Bodhisattvas are called they who completely practice the three methods by complying with the immaculacy of Self-nature.

“O My fine disciple, these are the twenty-five Bodhisattvic spheres: such are the ways that all Bodhisattvas practice. During the three weeks of the retreat to purify the heart, Bodhisattvas and worldly beings up through the final age should keep their actions unstained whilst engaging in serene reflection and seek the compassion of the Buddhas whilst doing *sange*.^{*} At the same time, they should fix on the marks of each of the twenty-five spheres, wholeheartedly search out

^{*} That is, recognizing what one has done which is counter to the Precepts, accompanied by true remorse and repentance. One formulation of the Precepts is presented in Part Two of *The Scripture of Brahma's Net*, pp. 127–183.

the compassion in these spheres, and take hold and bond themselves with one. Then, in accordance with that one to which they are bonded, they should open up its Teaching for others and point out its meaning. If they practice in this manner, they will understand what ‘sudden’ and ‘gradual’ really mean. Should they give rise to any instance of doubt or misgiving, there will be no realizing of Truth.”

Then the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this again, spoke thus in verse:—

“O You Who are the Voice of Eloquence,
know that the unobstructed and immaculate spiritual discernments of all Bodhisattvas are totally based on, and spring from, meditation.

In practicing the three methods of *samadhi*, *samapatti*, and *dhyana*, there are twenty-five types; none of the Tathagatas in the ten quarters or trainees of past, present, and future has failed to rely on these methods and still been able to realize Bodhi.

Avoid those given to ‘sudden illuminations’ who, at the same time, do not conform themselves to these methods.

All Bodhisattvas and worldly beings up through the final age must always keep to these spheres and diligently practice in compliance with them.

By relying on the power of the Buddha's great compassion you will, before long, realize nirvana for yourself."

At this point the Bodhisattva who is known as He Who is Cleansed of His Karmic Obstructions arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha's feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held in *gasshō*, addressed the Buddha, saying, "O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, for the sake of our companions You have extensively expounded on such wonderful matters as these, which are the activities that serve as the grounds for all Tathagatas realizing Buddhahood and have helped great assemblies realize That which is beyond compare. I observe that all Your practices and achievements as Tamer of Humans and Devas, which You have carried out with great diligence in all realms for ages as beyond count as the sands of the Ganges, are to You as though but a moment in time. We Bodhisattvas bow to You out of deepest respect. O World-honored One, if the nature of the awakened mind is immaculate from the first, how did the mind become stained and sullied so that worldly beings are deluded, troubled, and discontent as they fail to penetrate the Truth? I pray that You, O Tathagata, will for our sakes awaken us to the Ultimate Nature of things and help this great assembly, as well as worldly beings up through the final age, produce eyes which in the future will be able to see Truth."

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, he again knelt, hands in *gasshō*. The World-honored One then spoke to the Bodhisattva Who is Cleansed of His Karmic Obstructions, saying, “Excellent, excellent, My fine disciple! For the sake of great assemblies as well as worldly beings up through the final age you have asked Me as Tathagata about such skillful methods. Listen carefully now and I will explain them for you.” The Bodhisattva Who is Cleansed of His Karmic Obstructions, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly listened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, all worldly beings from beginningless time onwards have held to deluded notions concerning the four aspects of ‘having a self’, ‘being a human being’, ‘being a sentient creature’, and ‘being alive’. Accepting their own topsy-turvy ideas about these four, they make them function as the ‘substance of a true self’, and, based on this, they then give birth to the two spheres of hatred and desire which they pile onto this unreal, illusory ‘substance’ and then cling to what is vain and empty. These two delusory spheres are mutually dependent and produce the karma-laden path of deluded actions. Because of these deluded actions, beings spin about with their wild opinions, transmigrating through the six worlds of existence. Those wearied by this spinning about see nirvana through deluded eyes and, consequently, are unable to enter the realization of Immaculacy.

Enlightenment does not resist those who can penetrate It but, even though such persons have what they need to penetrate It, they do not, and therefore, whether they stir up their thoughts or try to stop them, they return to delusion, trouble, and discontent. And why so? Due to their blind ignorance whose arising, from the first, is beginningless, they take themselves to be the Lord of the House.* All worldly beings at birth lack the eye of wise discernment, and they are blinded to the nature of body, mind, and everything else by this ignorance. By analogy, they hold onto their delusions just as tightly as someone who is reluctant to die holds onto life. You must therefore realize that the person who is attached to a false self conforms to it, cultivates hatred, resentment, and jealousy toward whoever does not go along with him, and nourishes his ignorance in the interests of his heart of hatred and desire. As a result he has fallen heir to this ignorance, and were he to seek for the Way, he would not succeed in finding It.

“O My fine disciple, what is the deluded aspect of ‘self’? I would describe it as that which the minds of the worldly swear to. O My fine disciple, by way of analogy, imagine someone who had kept himself in shape but starts to neglect his body by letting its various parts grow lax and by failing to attend to its nourishment, so that, after a while, acupuncture needles and

* That is, they confuse the false ego with their own Original Nature.

moxa* are called for; he then realizes that he has an 'I'. Because of this, he holds on to what he physically senses, which he duly refers to as 'my body'. O My fine disciple, from this frame of mind up until he confirms for himself the nirvana called 'Immaculacy as ultimately understood by Me, the Tathagata', all are but aspects of the false self.

"O My fine disciple, what is the deluded aspect of 'being a human being'? I would describe it as one who is all too aware of the minds of worldly beings. O My fine disciple, it is someone who is aware that there are 'selves' other than himself but fails to recognize the false self. It is no different for one who thinks that 'that which is aware could not possibly be the false self', whilst someone who claims to have 'awakened and gone beyond any and all confirmations' is functioning as one who is all too 'human'. O My fine disciple, from frames of mind such as these up to that of 'I am fully awakened to nirvana', all are aspects of the false self. When the mind feels the least bit aware of 'being awakened', even though it is doing its utmost to confirm the Principle in fullest detail, all is what I call the aspect of 'being a human being'.

"O My fine disciple, what is the deluded aspect of 'being a sentient creature'? I would define a 'sentient creature' here as one whose mind has not reached confirmation and awakening. O My fine disciple, by

* In Chinese medicine, a cone-shaped, flammable substance, usually made from wormwood leaves. It is placed on the skin and ignited for use as a counterirritant.

way of analogy, imagine someone who fashions the phrase, 'I am a sentient creature'; you should realize that by his saying that he is a sentient creature, he is neither the 'I' nor the 'it'. A notion of 'not I' arises in him when he regards this 'I' as 'a sentient creature', for then anything other is not 'my self'. A notion of 'not other' also arises in him when he regards this 'I' as 'a sentient creature', since 'anything other' is 'not I'. O My fine disciple, to put it simply, the full confirmation and complete awareness of 'sentient creatures' is all taken by such persons to be a matter of 'self' and 'being a human being', since, for them, whatever is not covered under the terms 'self' and 'being a human' is acknowledged to be what they call 'a sentient creature'.

"O My fine disciple, what is the deluded aspect of 'being alive'? I would describe it as what Immaculate Enlightenment understands as the luminosity of the mind of a worldly being; whatever wise understanding fails to see directly as being due to all karmic actions will remain as the roots of life. O My fine disciple, when that which lights up and sees that all enlightenment within the mind is to be completely considered as the dust and dirt of sensory stimuli, since enlightenment and what is enlightened are not separate from this dust, it is just as when hot water melts ice, nothing separate remains that is ice which is recognizable as 'melted ice'. This is not different from someone who is aware of self awakening to Self.

"O My fine disciple, since worldly beings up through the final age do not understand these four

aspects, they still are called ‘those who do not escape from the transformations of being born and perishing’ even though they may pass many eons zealously training in the Way. They are ultimately not able to realize all the holy fruits of Buddhahood. This is why we speak of ‘the final age of the True Dharma’. And why so? Because all such persons at that time, perceiving the false self, will take it to be nirvana and consider their ‘having a direct experience’ or ‘having an awakening’ to be the bringing of themselves to perfection. By analogy, it is just as someone who, upon discovering a person of treacherous or thieving character, treats him as his very child; his family’s wealth and treasure will ultimately not be realized. And why so? The one who has self-love whilst also craving nirvana takes any controlling of his self-love to be nirvana. Conversely, the one who despises himself also despises birth and death because he does not know that craving is true birth and death. The despising of birth and death in particular is called ‘not being liberated from bondage to one’s defiling passions’.

“You must realize that knowing the Dharma is not what liberates you. O My fine disciple, those worldly beings up through the final age who pursue the study of Bodhi by means of their own subtle intellectual confirmations take themselves to be immaculate, but they are still not able to bring the roots of self to an end. Further, when someone sings the praises of this Dharma, thereby producing joy and the desire to ferry others to the Other Shore, and then someone else slanders what the first has voiced, if the former begets

anger and vexation, then you should realize that he is attached firmly to the false self, concealing it in his storehouse consciousness or letting it play and disport in the six sense organs, never interfering with it or stopping it. O My fine disciple, those who train in these ways do not eradicate the aspect of a false self. Because of this they will not be able to enter the awakening to Immaculacy.

“O My fine disciple, when you know that the false self is empty of any substantiality, there will be no ‘one who despises’ this self. When someone gives voice to the Dharma whilst still holding onto a false self, it is because he has not yet cut himself free from the false self. This also holds for the deluded aspects of ‘being a human being’, ‘being a sentient creature’, and ‘being alive’. O My fine disciple, worldly beings up through the final age give voice to these four sick notions as though they were Dharma. Therefore, I call such beings those worthy of pity and compassion. Although they may diligently progress in their training, they increase their sickness. For this reason they are not able to enter into the awakening to Immaculacy. O My fine disciple, worldly creatures up through the final age, failing to understand these four aspects, make use of what I, as Tathagata, have expounded, as well as how I have conducted Myself, as their own practice, but they will not ultimately succeed in realizing enlightenment by doing so. On the other hand, there are worldly beings who fancy that they have realized what they have not realized or have sworn to what they have not witnessed, and then beget envy

and jealousy in their hearts upon seeing someone who is farther along in training than they are. Because these worldly beings have not yet cut themselves free from their love of self, they are consequently unable to enter the awakening to Immaculacy.

“O My fine disciple, when worldly beings up through the final age hope to realize Buddhahood and there is no one to help them seek realization, their merely increasing their learnedness will only expand their egoistic views. Simply, they must with unsullied diligence subdue their defiling passions and give rise to great, undaunted determination to help others realize That which they themselves have not yet realized and to help these others sever what they themselves have not yet severed. In preparation for the state to come they must cease to beget greed, hatred, craving, pride, flattery, deceit, envy, and jealousy. They must quiet themselves down and rid themselves of all affection for the false selves of others. As Buddha, I tell these persons to gradually bring themselves to perfection, to seek out good spiritual friends, and not to fall into false views. When, in particular, they beget hatred and desire whilst seeking the Way, they will not be able to enter the sea of awakening to Immaculacy.”

Then the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this again, spoke thus in verse:—

“O You Whose Karma is Cleansed, know that
 it is precisely because of their attachment
 to love of the false self that all worldly
 beings have from time immemorial flowed

on through birth after birth, ever spinning around to no purpose.

Not yet having rid themselves of the four aspects of self, they have consequently been unable to realize Bodhi.

They beget hearts filled with hatreds and desires, along with minds well-acquainted with flattery and deceit; as a result, they are greatly deluded and discontent, unable to enter the citadel of enlightenment.

Were they to attempt to arrive at the field of their awakening by first ridding themselves of greed, hatred, and delusion and by not keeping in their hearts their craving for things, they would gradually bring themselves to perfection.

Their own bodies, from the first, have no substantial existence, so what is there to beget hatred, or craving, for?

If such persons seek out good spiritual friends, then they will ultimately not fall into false views; whilst seeking the Way, if they beget the thought of doing it independent of all others, they will not succeed in realizing Buddhahood.”

At this point the Bodhisattva known as He Whose Enlightenment is Universal arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha's feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held

in *gasshō*, addressed the Buddha, saying, “O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, You have willingly discussed meditational ailments to help great assemblies realize the marvelous Original Nature and obtain a great contentment and calm through the dying away of willful thoughts and intentions. O World-honored One, worldly beings up through the final age little by little keep distancing themselves from the Buddha, so that what is insightful and virtuous lies concealed, whilst false teaching more and more flourishes and prospers, making worldly beings unsure whom to seek out, what Teaching to rely on, what practices to do, what bad training habits they should be rid of, and what ‘giving rise to the intention to realize Buddhahood’ means. Please help this blind flock not to fall into erroneous views.”

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, he again knelt, hands in *gasshō*. The World-honored One then spoke to the Bodhisattva Whose Enlightenment is Universal, saying, “Excellent, excellent, My fine disciple! You have ably asked Me about such ways of training and practice so that you will be able to bestow on all sentient beings up through the final age your undaunted vision of the Way and help these beings succeed in the Holy Way. Listen carefully now, and I will explain them for you.” The Bodhisattva Whose Enlightenment is Universal, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly listened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, when worldly beings up through the final age, whilst they seek out a good spiritual friend, are on the verge of giving rise to the great intention to realize Buddhahood through their desire to train and practice, they must seek out one whose thoughts and insights are wholly appropriate. The mind of such a one does not stick to appearances, nor does it become attached to the realms of ‘those who hear but do not apply’ and ‘those who practice only for their own sake’. Although such a spiritual friend may exhibit the dust and turmoil of sensory stimuli and defiling passions, his heart will always be immaculate; although he may point out what faults there be, he praises pure living and noble actions; he does not abet worldly beings in entering into immoral or subverted practices. By seeking out such a person, worldly beings will succeed in realizing unexcelled, complete enlightenment. When they meet such a person, they must make him offerings of sustenance, and not begrudge offering up even their own lives. This good spiritual friend will always manifest immaculacy whilst within the four modes of deportment—namely, moving, standing, sitting, and reclining—and even though he may display all manner of faults and afflictions, his heart will harbor no boastfulness, arrogance, or pride. He is worthy of the offering up of wealth, wife, child, household, or whatever else someone may hold to be his own. O My fine disciple, when you do not give rise to evil thoughts in regard to this good friend, you will be able ultimately to succeed in realizing true enlightenment, and the flowering of your heart

will blaze forth, illumining all realms in the ten quarters.

“O My fine disciple, the wondrous Dharma of which this good spiritual friend speaks from certainty will surely be clear of the four bad training practices. And what are these four? The first is the practice of trying too hard. When someone says something like, ‘I am doing all sorts of practices within my heart and mind because I want to seek for Fully Perfected Enlightenment,’ I regard it as a bad practice, since this Fully Perfected Enlightenment, by Its nature, is not something fashioned from deeds.

“The second is the practice of letting things just take their course. When someone says something like, ‘We of the present do not try to cut ourselves free from birth and death, nor do we seek nirvana, nor do we concern ourselves with thoughts about the rising and perishing of nirvana or samsara; I want to search for Fully Perfected Enlightenment by not interfering with things and by just following along with the way things are,’ I regard it as a bad practice since this Fully Perfected Enlightenment, by Its nature, is not something to be had by indifference or casualness.

“The third is the practice of trying to bring a halt to all thoughts and feelings. When someone says something like, ‘I will now forever bring all thoughts within my own mind to a halt, for I want to search for Fully Perfected Enlightenment by grasping the fundamental natures of all things and making them equally quiescent,’ I regard it as a bad practice, since this Fully

Perfected Enlightenment, by Its nature, involves neither stopping the illusory nor joining up with Truth.

“The fourth is the practice of trying to eradicate all desires. When someone says something like, ‘I will now cut off all my defiling passions forever, since body and mind are void and there is nothing that really exists, to say nothing of the empty and vain realms of the senses and their sensory stimuli; hence I wish to search for Fully Perfected Enlightenment by eradicating everything forever,’ I regard this as a bad practice, since this Fully Perfected Enlightenment, by Its nature, is not nihilism. The one who steers clear of these four bad practices will then recognize what Immaculacy is. Making this your approach to study is called ‘right contemplation’; to practice otherwise is what is called ‘false contemplation’.

“O My fine disciple, those worldly beings up through the final age who desire to train and practice must spend their lives making offerings to sustain their good spiritual friend and being of service to their good spiritual companions. A good spiritual companion who would have close and cordial relationships must free himself of arrogance, superiority, and pride. Even when keeping himself distant and aloof, he must cut himself free from any anger, vexation, or resentment. Whether he is following what his heart desires or not, whatever he displays remains just as empty space. He thoroughly understands that body and mind are equal, and that all sentient beings are substantially the same and without essential differences. When he practices

and trains in this manner, he will no doubt enter Fully Perfected Enlightenment.

“O My fine disciple, when worldly beings up to the final age are not able to realize the Way, they are not free because of the seeds of ‘self and other’ and ‘hatred and desire’, which have existed from beginningless time. When someone looks upon these two sets of ‘hateful enemies’ as though they were his own loving parents, whilst harboring no duality within his heart, then he will rid himself of his bad training practices. It is no different for ‘self and other’, ‘hatred and desire’, when they arise in relation to things. O My fine disciple, when worldly beings up through the final age desire to search for Fully Perfected Enlightenment, they must rouse the intention in their hearts by saying to themselves something like, ‘I will make the utmost effort to help all sentient beings to ultimately enter Fully Perfected Enlightenment; since there is no “one who gets enlightened” within Fully Perfected Enlightenment, I will rid myself of all the delusory aspects of “self” and “being a human being”.’ By giving rise in your heart to the intention to realize Buddhahood in this way, you will not fall into erroneous views.”

Then the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this again, spoke thus in verse:—

“O You Whose Enlightenment is Universal,
 know that when worldly beings up through
 the final age desire to seek out a good
 spiritual friend, they must search for one

whose views are appropriate and true, one whose intentions are far from those who hear the Dharma but do not apply It, as well as from those who apply It only for their own sakes, and one who has rid his teaching of the four bad practices of striving too hard, being too casual, trying to stop all thoughts, and trying to eradicate all desires.

When he is friendly and cordial, there is no trace of arrogance, superiority, or pride; when he stays aloof, it is not out of resentment, hatred, or vexation.

When he sees all manner of realms of desire, his heart produces what is most rare—repentance and gratitude—and thereby is he like the Buddha in His emergence into the world.

He does not perpetrate or abet acts that run counter to what is moral and good, since his rootedness in the Precepts, which he keeps to, is ever immaculate.

He ferries all sentient beings to the Other Shore so that they may ultimately penetrate Fully Perfected Enlightenment.

Without any trace of ‘self’ or ‘being a human being’, he relies on True Wisdom, for then he will be able to pass beyond false and topsy-turvy views and know by direct experience what parinirvana truly is.”

At this point the Bodhisattva Whose Enlightenment is Fully Perfected arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha's feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held in *gasshō*, addressed the Buddha, saying, "O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, for the sake of our companions You have expounded extensively on a variety of skillful means for helping sentient beings up through the final age realize great spiritual benefits. O World-honored One, whilst we have now been awakened by You, after Your parinirvana, when worldly beings up through the final age have still not been awakened, what kinds of spiritual retreats should they undertake to cultivate the immaculate realms of Fully Perfected Enlightenment? Which of the three types of pure contemplation within this Fully Perfected Enlightenment should be taken up first? My prayer, O Great Compassionate One, is simply that You will bestow Your spiritual benefits in great abundance for the sake of the great assembly as well as worldly beings up through the final age."

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, he again knelt, hands in *gasshō*. The World-honored One then spoke to the Bodhisattva Whose Enlightenment is Fully Perfected, saying, "Excellent, excellent, My fine disciple! You have capably asked Me, as Tathagata, about such skillful means by which a great abundance of spiritual benefits may be bestowed upon sentient beings. Listen carefully

now, and I will explain them for you.” The Bodhisattva Whose Enlightenment is Fully Perfected, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly listened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, whilst I, as Buddha, abide in the world, as well as after I have entered parinirvana, up to the time when My Dharma has effectively reached Its end, there will be sentient beings who possess the spirit to follow the Greater Course, who trust to the Heart of the Buddha’s great and subtle Fully Perfected Enlightenment, and who desire to train in, and practice, the Way. When communities of My disciples reside peaceably and at ease in monasteries and other places of spiritual training, they should pursue their daily tasks with reflectiveness, since they are engaged in study of the Great Matter, as I have already told you.

“When they are not pressed by their other affairs, they should construct a training hall and establish terms of training. In establishing them, one hundred twenty days are deemed a long term, one hundred days a middling term, and eighty days a short term. They should set up a retreat for purifying the heart during which My presence, now, should serve as suitable for their thoughts and reflections, but when I am no longer amongst them they should set up statues and likenesses of Me as Buddha. When they beget correct remembrance by preserving these images in their heart and mind whilst reflecting upon them with their eyes, then it will be the same as in the days when I continued to abide with them. They should make displays

of banners and flowers, which symbolize their standards of training and their spiritual blossoming. As the three weeks of this retreat pass, they should make prostrations before the names of the Buddhas in the ten quarters and seek Their pity as they do their *sange*, so that their hearts will then find ease and lightness when they encounter Them in the good realms. When the three weeks have passed, they should continue their mindfulness with singleness of intent.

“When the summer begins and they go into retreat for the three months of the rainy season, they should let the immaculate Bodhisattvas stop and abide with them in sanctuary. In their hearts they should stay clear of those who merely come to listen but do not train, because the community of disciples is not a sometimes thing. Upon arriving for the opening day of the summer retreat they should say something like the following before the Buddha or His image, ‘I, the monk or lay person so-and-so, seated in the vehicle of Bodhisattvahood, will cultivate tranquillity and freedom from my defiling passions so that I too may enter the Truth of Immaculacy and abide therein. I take the great Fully Perfected Enlightenment to be my true monastery and sanctuary, with my body and mind both, equally, dwelling peacefully within the spiritual knowledge of Buddha Nature. Because the True Nature of nirvana is without ties or attachments to anything, I now pray respectfully that I may not rely solely on listening to the voicing of the Dharma, but will spend this three-month retreat with the Tathagatas of all the ten quarters and with the great Bodhisattvas.

Also, for the sake of the Great Cause for which we cultivate the supreme and wondrous awakening of a Bodhisattva, I will not let myself be distracted from the purpose of the retreat through entanglements with my fellow trainees.’ O My fine disciple, I call this the dwelling at ease which a Bodhisattva displays during a summer retreat. When the days of the three terms have passed, they should go about their duties unhindered.

“O My fine disciple, when those sentient beings up through the final age who seek the Bodhisattva Way and attempt to participate in the three terms do not hear about *samadhi*, *samapatti*, and *dhyana*, they will ultimately not be able to grasp all realms. O My fine disciple, when sentient beings cultivate *samadhi* they will grasp what the Great Calm really is, without giving rise to personal opinions and notions. When they take this serenity of theirs to the utmost, they will awaken by extending their beginner’s calm from their own solitary body to the whole universe; their experience of enlightenment will also be like this. O My fine disciple, when someone’s enlightenment fills everywhere in the whole universe, then there will be but one, all-inclusive sentient being within the whole universe; when this one gives rise to single-mindedness, then all within the universe will be capable of fully knowing; it will be the same with the hundreds of thousands of universes as well. Failing to hear of this, they will ultimately not be able to grasp all realms.

“O My fine disciple, when sentient beings cultivate *samapatti*, they should first rely on the various Gates of the Tathagatas in the ten quarters and of the

Bodhisattvas in all realms. As they gradually train and practice, they should strive to practice *samadhi*, give rise to great, far-reaching vows, and plant their own spiritual seeds. Failing to hear of this, they will ultimately not be able to grasp all realms.

“O My fine disciple, when sentient beings cultivate *dhyana*, they should first keep to the Gate to meditational breathing whilst clearly taking cognizance of the thoughts in their mind as being born, abiding, and perishing, as well as of their number and of their differences in time and place. Throughout all their four modes of deportment they should likewise differentiate their numerous thoughts without failing to recognize them clearly, thereby progressing gradually until they succeed in realizing the hundreds of thousands of universes within a single drop of rain, and still it will be no different from their eyes observing the usefulness in things. Failing to hear of this, they will ultimately not be able to grasp all realms.

“I call these the foremost skillful means that arise from the three types of contemplation. When sentient beings at all times and in all places cultivate these three types, diligently practice them, and make progress, then I call this My emerging into the world as a Tathagata. When worldly beings up through the final age whose roots are shallow wish in their hearts to seek the Way, they will nevertheless be unable to succeed due to obstructions from ancient karma. These must work diligently at doing *sange* and continually give rise to hopefulness by first ridding themselves of hatred and greed, envy and jealousy, flattery and deceit, and by

searching for a heart that ever excels. The three types of immaculate contemplation should be followed by the study of the One Great Matter for which someone trains. When someone does not succeed in these contemplations, he must study them further with his heart and mind, never letting up on them, whilst gradually seeking confirmation.”

Then the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this again, spoke thus in verse:—

“O You Whose Enlightenment is Fully Perfected, know that when all sentient beings desire to travel the unsurpassed Way, they must first commit themselves to the three terms of training, do *sange* for their beginningless karma whilst spending three weeks in retreat, and later apply correct thinking and reflection.

Whatever is not within the realm of what they have heard about they will not be able to grasp.

Samadhi clarifies what reaching true serenity is, *samapatti* what correct reflection and mindfulness are, and *dhyana* what the bright Gates to meditation are; these are called the three contemplations of Immaculacy.

When you are able to practice them diligently, this is called the Buddha’s emergence into the world.

Those who have not yet tasted success because their roots are still too shallow must continue in their diligence to give their hearts over to *sange* for all their defilements which know no beginning.

When their obstructions have dissolved and evaporated, the Buddha's realm will manifest itself before their very eyes."

At this point the Bodhisattva Foremost in Wisdom and Virtue arose from his sitting place within the great assembly and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha's feet, circled Him three times to the right and then, kneeling with hands held in *gasshō*, addressed the Buddha, saying, "O Most Compassionate, World-honored One, for our sake and for that of worldly ones up through the final age, You have made us aware of such inconceivable matters. O World-honored One, what names do You give to this Teaching of Yours on the Great Course? What should we practice from It? What merits and virtues will accrue to sentient beings who put It into practice? What will help me to protect those who study this Scripture and train in accordance with It? What spiritual stages will be attained through propagating this Teaching?"

When he had finished speaking, he prostrated himself fully upon the ground and, after having asked thrice in this manner, again knelt, hands in *gasshō*. The World-honored One then spoke to the Bodhisattva Foremost in Wisdom and Virtue, saying, "Excellent,

excellent, My fine disciple! For the sake of Bodhisattvas and worldly beings up through the final age, you have skillfully asked Me about the meritorious names of this Scriptural Teaching. Listen carefully now and I will explain them for you.” The Bodhisattva Foremost in Wisdom and Virtue, with great joy, opened himself to receive the Teaching whilst the great assembly listened in complete silence.

“O My fine disciple, this Scripture is what Buddhas as numerous as the hundreds of thousands of millions of billions of sand grains of the Ganges have given voice to and what Tathagatas of past, present, and future have protected and preserved, do protect and preserve, and will protect and preserve. It is what Bodhisattvas in the ten quarters take refuge in. It is the immaculate eye of the twelve parts of the Holy Canon. I call this Scripture ‘The Great, Far-reaching Watercourse of Fully Perfected Enlightenment’. I also call it ‘The Sutra Which Clearly Explains the Matter’, ‘The Samadhi of Vajrasattva, Lord of That Which is Mysterious and Subtle, He Whose Very Being is the Jewel’, ‘The Tathagata’s Realm of Certitude’, and ‘What the Self-nature within the Tathagata’s Treasure House Womb Discerns’. You should receive and keep to It. O My fine disciple, this Scripture alone reveals the realm that I inhabit as a Tathagata. Only a Buddha as Tathagata is capable of exhaustively proclaiming and voicing It. When Bodhisattvas and worldly beings up through the final age rely on practicing It, they will gradually make progress toward the stage of

Buddhahood. O My fine disciple, I also call this Scripture 'The Great Vehicle for the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment', since sentient beings who, in trust, accept this teaching on sudden enlightenment will, accordingly, open to full awareness and also accumulate flocks of disciples who will do their training step by step. By analogy, it is just as a great sea's not deferring from accepting the smallest of streams up to the point where both gadflies and asuras may drink of its waters until they are able to be completely filled.

"O My fine disciple, even if someone were enthusiastically to fill up three thousand great thousand-fold universes with the seven priceless treasures and use this hoard for almsgiving, it does not compare to someone who, hearing what the Scripture is called, hearkens to the meaning of even one of Its sentences. O My fine disciple, even if someone were to teach sentient beings as numerous as the hundreds and thousands of sand grains of the Ganges to realize the fruits of arahant-hood, such does not compare to someone who gives voice to this Scripture by explaining half a poem from It. O My fine disciple, when someone, hearing what this Scripture is called, does not let his heart of faith wander off into delusion, then you must know that this person not only plants the seeds of blessedness and wisdom for one or more Buddhas but also sets down good and virtuous roots for untold Buddhas by hearkening to the teachings of this Scripture. O My fine disciple, you must protect the worldly beings up through the final age who are trainees in the Way and

not allow Mara and his minions or those who follow non-Buddhist paths to vex and torment their bodies and minds so that they give up, or regress from, their practice.”

Then the World-honored One, desiring to proclaim the meaning of this again, spoke thus in verse:—

“O You Who are Foremost in Wisdom and Virtue, know that this Scripture is what Buddhas give voice to and I, as a Tathagata, guard and keep to, since It is the very eye of the Holy Canon.

I call It ‘The Great Far-reaching Watercourse of Fully Perfected Enlightenment Which Reveals My Realm as Tathagata’.

When you train in accordance with It, your progress will advance apace until you reach the stage of Buddhahood.

It is as the sea, which absorbs all the rivers of the world, and all who drink from it will be filled.

Even though someone were to bestow the seven priceless treasures as alms, having piled them up until they filled three thousand universes, this deed would not compare to the hearing of this teaching.

Were the untold masses to turn their hearts around and attain arahanthood, such would not compare to the hearing of half a poem from It.

All you up through the final age, protect those
who proclaim and voice It, so that none
will give up, or regress from, their training.”

Then, from within the assembly the three Vajra lords known as He Whose Jewel is Foremost in Its Fiery Brilliance, He Whose Jewel Pulverizes All Obstructions, and He Whose Jewel is Sapphire Blue, amongst others from the eight thousand beings of the Vajra ranks along with their retinues, arose from their sitting places and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha’s feet, circled Him three times and addressed Him saying, “O World-honored One, when, later, worldly beings up through the final age are able to keep themselves to this great and certain Course, we will protect and watch over them as well as their ceremonial halls and places of training just as we would protect our own eyes. We of the Vajra ranks will govern over the community of disciples, protecting them day and night, and helping to keep them from withdrawing or regressing from where they are in their training. These Sangha families will never know calamities or hindrances, what is pestilential and plaguing will vanish, true wealth and treasure will be in abundance, and they will want for nothing.”

Then the Great Lord Brahma and the twenty-eight celestial lords from the realms of sensuous desire and of form, along with the lord protector of Mount Sumeru and the guardian lords of the four directions, arose from their sitting places and, having made a full

obeisance at the Buddha's feet, circled Him three times and addressed Him saying, "O World-honored One, we too will guard and protect those who keep to this Scripture and will continually help their hearts and minds to be calm and at ease so that they do not regress in their training."

Then, a guardian lord of massive power whose name is Kumbhandha, along with his hundred thousand guardian lords, arose from their sitting places and, having made a full obeisance at the Buddha's feet, circled Him three times and addressed Him saying, "O World-honored One, we, too, will guard and protect those who keep to this Scripture; day and night we will maintain and watch over them, helping to keep them from withdrawing or regressing from where they are in their training. When fierce and terrible spirits trespass within a radius of one yojana of the area wherein they dwell, we will make them crumble away to dust."

The Buddha's presenting of this Scripture had come to an end; all the Bodhisattvas, devas, nagas, and fierce spirits, along with the eight classes of retainers, as well as Lord Brahma and his celestial lords en masse, were all filled with great joy at having heard what the Buddha had said, and trusting in what they had received, offered themselves up to the practice of It.

*Bodhidharma's
Discourse on Pure Meditation.*

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION.

Bodhidharma, the great Indian Ancestor, is credited by the Zen Tradition with having introduced the practice of Serene Reflection Meditation into China some time near the beginning of the sixth century C.E. It is said that after he arrived in South China by sea, he went to the court of the emperor Wu of the Liang dynastic family, where he found great commitment on the part of both the emperor and his courtiers to attempting to follow the Buddhist Scriptures to the letter. Unfortunately, their motive for doing so appeared to be the personal acquisition of merit, with the hopes that such an amassing would insure their attaining a more favorable rebirth. Not surprisingly, Bodhidharma met with a cool reception when he attempted to point out that merit did not accrue through such an approach, so he left South China for the north, and ultimately took up residence in Shao-lin (J. Shorin) Monastery. While his presence there was welcomed, he apparently puzzled the other monks by his spiritual practice, which led them to refer to him as 'the Indian monk who just sits looking at a blank wall'. In the present text, Bodhidharma makes clear through his dialogue with his chiefmost disciple Hui-k'o (J. Eka) that he was not simply 'sitting and staring at a blank

wall', but was engaged in the fundamental practice of 'pure meditation'. In addition to instructing Hui-k'o on how this pure meditation is done, he also explains how to interpret Scriptures so that his disciple will arrive at Their spiritual meaning and not fall into emulation of the emperor and courtiers of Liang.

In his dialogue Bodhidharma uses some terms that may mislead the present-day Western reader when rendered into English without commentary. The first concerns the term 'meditation'. When Buddhist Scriptures were first introduced into China around the first century C.E., there was, evidently, no word in Chinese that translators felt was a useful equivalent to the Buddhist practices of meditation. As a consequence, *dhyāna*, the Buddhist Sanskrit word for 'meditation' (as well as *jhāna*, its Pali counterpart), was left untranslated in texts. That is, the word was 'spelled out' by using two Chinese characters whose pronunciation (*ch'an-na*) approximated that of the Sanskrit and the Pali. Later, this Chinese transliteration was shortened to *ch'an*, and the original Chinese meaning of the character fell from use in favor of its newer meaning of 'Buddhist meditation' and, more specifically, the type of meditation which Bodhidharma describes in his dialogue. Bodhidharma, however, uses this transliterated, foreign word *ch'an* only once (p. 373), and in that instance to refer to the form of meditation he is recommending. His preference is for a phrase that describes the practice in colloquial language: *kuan-hsin* (J. *kanjin*), which literally means, "Look at what your mind is doing," and describes what he himself

was basically engaged in as he sat 'facing a blank wall'. By offering Hui-k'o this descriptive definition of *dhyāna*, he keeps his disciple focused on practice (as the responsive questions of Hui-k'o make clear), so that their dialogue does not turn into a purely intellectual discussion of the theoretical significance of a technical, 'foreign' word.

Because those in Western twentieth-century cultures have been exposed to multiple psychological theories, there is a danger of confusing Bodhidharma's practice of 'looking at one's own mind' with some modern psychological technique for personal analysis through introspection, as well as with other meditational practices which employ an object, image, or topic that is meditated on. Hence, his term has been rendered in the present translation primarily as 'pure meditation',* with the hope that this will help maintain the necessary distinction between spiritual and psychological goals while, at the same time, preserving the clear link between Bodhidharma's spiritual practice and the specific approach to serene

* 'Pure meditation' refers to meditation carried on without deliberate thought or holding the mind focused on anything in particular: whatever comes into consciousness is allowed to arise without pushing it away or holding onto it—'just looking at what the mind is doing'. The term does not imply that other forms of meditation, which may involve imaging, silent reciting, or contemplation of some subject, are in any sense 'impure'; rather, by contrast, such meditations might be described as 'focused'.

reflection meditation still carried on in the Ts'ao-Tung Ch'an (J. Sōtō Zen) Buddhist Tradition.

Two other terms occur in the dialogue which are related to Buddhist meditation but do not refer specifically to 'pure meditation'. The first is *ting* (J. *jō*), a word having a wide range of everyday meanings in Chinese, but used in many Buddhist texts as a technical term for 'concentration', as well as for the general practice of meditation, based on its common meaning of 'settling' the mind or 'fixing' it on some subject. The second is *ch'an-ting* (J. *zenjō*), which is a combination of the first Chinese character for transliterating *dhyāna* and the preceding character for 'concentration', signifying 'the concentration of the mind as associated with the Buddhist term *dhyāna*'. In the present translation, the term *ting* is rendered as 'meditation' and the highly technical, scholarly word *ch'an-ting* (which is introduced into the dialogue by Hui-k'o) is translated as 'meditative mindfulness'.

BODHIDHARMA'S DISCOURSE ON PURE MEDITATION.

Translated from the Tun-huang Version.

Bodhidharma's disciple Hui-k'o (J. Eka) asked, "When people are committed to seeking the Buddha's Way, what methods of training should they consider?"

Bodhidharma replied, "Since pure meditation* embraces all methods and practices, I call it the essential one."

Hui-k'o asked, "How can one single method embrace all practices?"

Bodhidharma replied, "Pure meditation is the root and source of all methods. All methods are simply 'products of the mind'[†] so, if you are able to

* See pp. 353–354 of the Translator's Introduction to the present text for the meaning of 'pure meditation' as used in Bodhidharma's dialogue.

[†] When the reader sees the term 'Mind', he should realize that that which is referred to is not the psychological understanding of 'mind' but That which lies beyond, and is called the Unborn, Undying, Unchanging, Uncreated in the *Udāna Scripture* (chapter VIII, section iii) found in the Pali Canon. When the term 'mind' appears, the reader

thoroughly comprehend what your mind really is, then all your various practices will be fully equipped (with what they need to be successful). As an analogy, consider a great tree: its branches, blossoms, and fruit all depend completely on its root. Even a severed tree will survive if its root is intact, whereas a fully grown tree, once detached from its root, will die. If you train in the Way with a thorough comprehension of what your mind really is, then you will conserve your efforts as you easily succeed in realizing Buddhahood, but, if you try to train without thoroughly comprehending what your mind really is, then you will squander your efforts to no avail. That is why you should be aware that all good and evil proceed from your own mind, so that should your mind try to seek for something outside and separate from 'yourself', you will miss the point."

Hui-k'o asked, "Why do you describe pure meditation as thoroughly comprehending what my mind really is?"

Bodhidharma replied, "When Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas put into practice the profound Prajna-paramita,* then, since they know that the four elements

should understand that what is referred to is the normal, everyday mind which deals with everyday circumstances, sometimes believing that it is dealing with those circumstances in a spiritual way but not comprehending the depth of faith required to deal with such circumstances wholly spiritually. [JK]

* The enlightened Wisdom which ferries themselves and others to the Other Shore.

and the five skandhas are empty of any substantiality and without any permanent self, they clearly see that their own minds have two distinct conditions. What are these two? The first is the mind immaculate, the second is the mind stained. The mind immaculate is, of course, the True, Real Mind, which is beyond defilement; the mind stained is none other than the mind operating from ignorance, defiled by its passions and cravings. These two conditions of mind have both existed naturally from the beginning. Even though everything is the product of combinations of temporary, ever-changing circumstances and nothing is independently self-produced, even so, the Mind of Immaculacy constantly takes joy in bringing about what will produce spiritually favorable effects, while the conditional body is continually thinking up things to do which produce bad karma. If the True Reality, which is your Buddha Nature, awakes within Itself and does not accept anything that will stain It, this is called 'being saintly'; accordingly, such a one is able to leave suffering far behind and testify to the joys of nirvana. Staining, however, creates karma and produces all sorts of veils which cover and obscure your Buddha Nature. Be aware that this is what 'being mundane' means; accordingly, such a one sinks down headlong, spinning in the three realms of desire, form, and beyond form, and incurs all manner of sufferings. And why so? Because he is screened from seeing his True, Real Body by his stained mind.

"The Scripture on the Ten Stages of Bodhisattvahood says, 'Within sentient beings there is the

adamantine Buddha Nature, which is as the orb of the sun. Its bodily form is radiant and all-encompassing, vast, great, and unbounded, but when It is veiled by the leaden clouds of the five skandhas, It is just as a lamp placed within an urn: Its light is unable to be seen.' It also says in the *Nirvana Scripture*, 'All sentient beings have Buddha Nature, but because It is cloaked by ignorance, they do not realize liberation. Buddha Nature is innately enlightened; however, Its own enlightenment enlightens others. When Its wisdom and compassion are fully illumined and It has parted from what has veiled It, this state is then called liberation.'

"Know, therefore, all that is good takes enlightenment to be its root and relies on this Root of enlightenment. Consider It to manifest as the tree of all meritorious spiritual qualities and then, by your relying on It, the fruits of nirvana will fully ripen. It is in this way that meditation can indeed be described as 'thorough comprehension of what mind really is'."

Hui-k'o said, "You have just stated that all meritorious spiritual qualities of the Buddha Nature, which are of That Which Is, depend on enlightenment as their root, but I wonder what could be the root for all the evil done by the mind when blinded by ignorance?"

Bodhidharma replied, "Although the mind of ignorance has eighty-four thousand passions and cravings which defile it, as well as evils as immeasurable and unbounded as the sands of the Ganges, ultimately all depend on the three poisons and have them as their root and source. These three poisons are greed, hatred,

and delusion. These three fundamental poisonous impulses, of themselves, are able to encompass all evils. As an analogy, again consider a great tree: though it has but one root, it produces branches and leaves whose number is unlimited. From within these three poisonous roots, evil deeds are begotten whose number is past counting and whose nature is beyond any simile. In this way, as impulses within one's basic nature, they function as three poisons, and when they manifest through your six sense faculties—which they surely will—they are known as 'the six thieves'. These six thieves are also known as our six forms of perceptual consciousness, since they go in and out via the sense faculties, greedily attaching themselves to any of the myriad realms and skillfully accomplishing their evil actions as they deny the True, Real Body; hence, the name 'the six thieves'. All sentient beings throw their bodies and minds into confusion and disorder as a result of the three poisons and through the employment of the six thieves, thus these beings sink down into birth and death, spinning through the six pathways of existence as they experience misery and woe. These thieving poisons are a veritable river that arises from a small spring and flows on unceasingly until its rushing torrent spreads everywhere indiscriminately for thousands of miles. Were someone to cut off the river at its source, its many currents would all cease to flow; were someone who seeks liberation to rid himself of these three poisons as well as his employment of the six thieves, he could rid himself of all suffering."

Hui-k'o asked, "The three worlds of desire, form, and beyond form, as well as the six realms of existence, are vast and without limit. How can I avoid the suffering they bestow by just looking at my mind?"

Bodhidharma replied, "The karmic retribution associated with the three worlds is actually produced by the Self-nature of the Immaculate Mind. Were there no mind to begin with, then there would be no three worlds. The three worlds are none other than the three poisons. Greed is the world of desire, hatred is the world of form, and delusion is the world beyond form. It is because of these three impulses that we bind ourselves to the fulfillment of the karmic recompense from our evil deeds and ceaselessly spin about on the wheel of transmigration. Thus they are called the three worlds. Also, the karma created from the three poisons is either more or less grievous, so that the realms, as perceived, are not all alike but divide up and revert to the six abodes of perception, which are therefore called the six realms."

Hui-k'o asked, "How do these more or less grievous conditions divide into the six?"

Bodhidharma replied, "If a sentient being does not comprehend the true cause of his karma, yet cultivates what is good while his mind is still in delusion, he will not escape the three worlds but will give rise to the three less grievous realms. What are these three? First: if someone thoroughly cultivates the ten virtues whilst vainly chasing after pleasures, he will not escape from the world of greed and will be reborn in the realm of the devas. Second: if he fully keeps to the Five

Precepts so as not to kill, steal, covet, lie, or sell the wine of delusion whilst vainly giving rise to attachments and hatred, he will still not evade the world of anger and will be reborn in the realm of humans. Third: if he deludedly clings to the phenomenal world, trusts in false views, and chases after good fortune and blessings, he has not yet escaped from the world of delusion and will be reborn as an asura. Such are the three types called the three less grievous.

“What are the three more grievous ones? If someone follows the three poisonous impulses in order to promote evil deeds, he will fall into the three more grievous realms. First: if the deeds arising from his greed are serious, he will fall into the realm of the hungry ghosts. Second: if the deeds arising from his anger are serious, he will fall into the realm of the hells. Third: if the deeds arising from his delusion are serious, he will fall into the realm of the animals. In this way the three more grievous ones, along with the three less grievous ones, comprise the six realms. Understand, therefore, that all karmic suffering is produced by one's own mind, but if one is able to keep his thoughts from wandering off whilst abandoning the false and the wicked, the karma, which has been sending him spinning through the three worlds and the six realms, will spontaneously dissipate. This ability to eliminate one's sufferings is what is called liberation.”

Hui-k'o asked, “According to what the Buddha said, He passed through three vast asamkyeya aeons of immeasurable effort and suffering until He realized

Buddhahood, so why do you now teach that merely ridding oneself of the three poisons is what liberation signifies?"

Bodhidharma replied, "The words spoken by the Buddha, namely, 'the three vast asamkyeya aeons', refer to the three poisonous impulses. In Chinese, the word 'asamkyeya' means 'unmeasurable'. These three poisonous impulses within each and every mind possess evil thoughts as numerous as the sands of the Ganges; each of these thoughts contains an aeon of time and, as the sands of the Ganges, are all together unmeasurable. The three poisons becloud and screen the Buddha Nature, which is of the Absolute, so, unless we do go beyond these countless evil thoughts of the three poisons, how can we speak of 'having realized liberation'? Now when we are able to free ourselves from the three types of poisonous impulses—greed, hatred, and delusion—this then is called 'crossing over the three vast asamkyeya aeons'. Sentient beings in these final days of the Teaching who are foolish, deluded, and dull in their faculties do not understand the Tathagata's non-literal use of the phrase 'three vast asamkyeya aeons', so they conclude that realizing Buddhahood will take them ages beyond reckoning. How could this fail to raise doubts and impediments in trainees so that they turn their backs on enlightenment?"

Hui-k'o asked, "Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas have realized Buddhahood by keeping to the Three Pure Precepts and the Six Paramitas; you would now have trainees only persist in pure meditation without

training themselves in the Precepts and other spiritual practices, so how will they realize Buddhahood?"

Bodhidharma replied, "It is the Three Pure Precepts, combined, that control the three poisonous impulses. Controlling the three poisonous impulses is immeasurably good. It is by using the Precepts, combined, that one is able to control the three poisons and produce immeasurably good effects. They are called 'the Three Precepts, combined' because they are brought together by the mind under all circumstances. 'Paramita' is a Sanskrit word which in Chinese we speak of as 'what reaches to the Other Shore'. This is because, when the Paramitas are put into operation, the six sensory faculties are immaculate and unstained by worldly dusts (namely, forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tactile objects and mental objects). It is in this way that they bring beings out from the river of defiling passions to reach the shore of enlightenment and thus are called the Six Paramitas."

Hui-k'o asked, "According to what the Scriptures say, the Three Pure Precepts are our vow to cut off all evil, our vow to cultivate all good, and our vow to ferry all sentient beings to the Other Shore, but you now say, 'Control the three poisonous impulses.' How can this not be a deviation from, or perversion of, the meaning of the Scriptures?"

Bodhidharma replied, "The Scriptures which the Buddha gave voice to are true speech and certain to be without error. When Bodhisattvas in the past rigorously cultivated religious training in order to deal with the three poisons, they made three vows for keeping

to the Three Pure Precepts: in dealing with the poison of greed they vowed to cut themselves off from all evil by always cultivating the Precepts; in dealing with the poison of anger they vowed to cultivate all that is good and thus they cultivated meditation; in dealing with the poison of delusion they vowed to ferry all sentient beings to the Other Shore and thus always cultivated benevolent discernment. Because they kept to the three types of pure Teaching—Precepts, meditation, and benevolent discernment—they were able to go beyond the evil deeds of the three poisons and thereby realize Buddhahood. Because it is through our controlling of the three poisons that all evils dissolve and evaporate, we call this ‘cutting ourselves free’. By skillfully keeping to the Three Precepts, good becomes all; this is called ‘the cultivation of training for Buddhahood’. By training and skillfully cutting ourselves free, we perfect all our myriad practices and actions. Because self and others have benefited and all sentient beings everywhere are aided, it is called ‘ferrying others to the Other Shore’. Therefore, understand that the Precepts and practices which you cultivate are not something existing apart from your mind. If you yourself are immaculate, then all sentient beings are immaculate, through and through. That is why the Scriptures say, ‘When the mind is tainted, then sentient beings are tainted; when the mind is pure, then sentient beings are pure.’ The Scriptures also say, ‘If you wish to be able to purify the Buddha Lands, you must purify that mind of yours; to the extent that your mind is pure, so the Buddha Lands are pure.’ If you are able to control

the three types of poisonous impulses, the Three Pure Precepts will be naturally perfected.”

Hui-k'o asked, “As it says in the Scriptures, the Six Paramitas are also referred to as the Six Practices, namely, Giving (of Teaching and Wealth), Keeping to the Precepts, Patient Forbearance, Zealous Endeavor, Meditative Mindfulness, and, finally, Wise Understanding and Discernment. You now say that the six sense faculties, when immaculate, are the Six Paramitas. If we harmonize the differences in the terms, what then do the Six Paramitas signify?”

Bodhidharma replied, “If you wish to cultivate the Six Practices, you should purify your six sense faculties. If you wish to purify your six sense faculties, first subdue the six thieves.* If you are able to relinquish the eye thief and abandon the sphere of forms so that your mind will not look about with a hard-hearted and stingy attitude, we call this ‘being giving’. If you are able to restrain the ear thief from being occupied with the dirt and defilement from what is heard and not let it indulgently stray, we call this ‘keeping to the Precepts’. If you are able to abandon the nose thief and treat all ‘fragrances and stench’ as equal, freely blending and tolerating them, we call this ‘patient forbearance’. If you are able to control the tongue thief

* The descriptions, which follow, of what the ‘thieves’ occupy themselves with carry both literal and figurative meaning. With the nose thief, for instance, its concern over ‘odors’ would refer not only to physical odors but also to what the discriminatory mind may ‘sniff out’.

so that it does not covet 'the flavors of perversity', but, free of any tinge of being desultory or bored, you extol and expound the Teaching, we call this 'zealous endeavor'. If you are able to subdue the body thief so that your mind remains profoundly unmoved amidst all its contacts and cravings, we call this 'meditative mindfulness'. If you are able to control the discriminatory thought thief and not yield to ignorance but always cultivate enlightened benevolence and take pleasure in meritorious spiritual qualities, we call this 'wise understanding and discernment'. If you are able to perpetually abandon the six thieves by continually training to purify your six sense faculties, we call this 'practicing the Six Paramitas'. Also, the Paramitas are conveyances. By analogy, the Six Paramitas are as ferryboats which can transport sentient beings so that they reach the Other Shore; therefore, they are called the Six Rafts."

Hui-k'o said, "Scriptures say that when Shakyamuni the Tathagata was a Bodhisattva He drank three ladles and six spoonfuls of milk congee just before He realized Buddhahood. That is, because of His drinking of the milk beforehand, He afterwards attested to the fruits of Buddhahood. How is it then that someone can realize liberation by just doing pure meditation?"

Bodhidharma replied, "What you cite from Scriptures is true and neither vain nor meaningless. Of necessity, He had to drink of the milk before becoming Buddha. Whilst the Buddha did say that He consumed milk, milk is of two sorts: what the Buddha

was ingesting was not the impure worldly kind of milk but the Milk of the Absolute's Immaculate Dharma. The three ladles are the Three Pure Precepts and the six spoonfuls are the Six Paramitas. At the time of his realizing Buddhahood, he ingested just such Milk of the Dharma before attesting to the fruits of Buddhahood. For someone to say that the Tathagata was merely drinking rank-smelling cow's milk sullied by its mixture with the animal's worldly lusts and cravings is the very epitome of slanderous teaching! The Tathagata Himself is the undefiled Embodiment of the Dharma, as indestructible as a diamond, forever detached from all worldly suffering. What possible need would He have for such impure milk to satisfy what He hungered and thirsted for? As is said in Scriptures, 'The Cow that gives the Milk of Dharma is not to be found on the high plateaus, nor is It to be found in the marshy lowlands. It does not feed on grains such as wheat, or on brewer's dregs, or on chaff, mash, or beans. It is not in the same herd with bulls. Its body has the purplish hue of burnished gold.' This 'Cow' is, of course, Vairochana Buddha. Because of the pity from His vast tenderness and great compassion, the Three Pure Precepts and the Six Paramitas are thus within His immaculate Body. His subtle Milk of the Dharma nourishes all sentient beings who seek liberation, hence It is the immaculate Milk of the True Cow. Not only did the Tathagata drink of This to realize Buddhahood, but if all sentient beings partake of It, they will all realize fully perfected enlightenment."

Hui-k'o said, "The Scriptures teach that the Buddha said if sentient beings do various sorts of meritorious and virtuous deeds, such as set up monasteries, cast images, burn incense, strew flowers, light ever-burning lamps, walk in the Way by circumambulating the Buddha's stupa during the six time periods of each day, keep to the monastic diet, and make obeisances, all will perfect themselves in the Buddha's Way. If simply looking at my mind completely encompasses these practices, such acts must be to no purpose."

Bodhidharma replied, "What the Buddha voiced are immeasurably skillful means. Because the dullness of faculties, narrow-mindedness, and degeneracy of sentient beings run extremely deep, He therefore made provisional use of phenomena as metaphors for what goes beyond the phenomenal. If people lack an inner practice and merely seek outside themselves hoping to acquire good fortune, they will get nowhere spiritually.

"The term 'monastery' derives from an Indian Sanskrit word which translates as 'a place of immaculacy'. If you perpetually rid yourself of the three poisons and continually purify your six sense faculties so that your body and mind are deeply clear and you are immaculate both within and without, this is 'constructing the monastery'.

"'Casting images' refers to all sentient beings, in their search for Buddhahood, 'cultivating the practices which lead to realizing enlightenment'. How can anyone possibly say that it is the making of a metal casting which resembles the image of the Tathagata?

For this reason those who seek liberation take their own selves for the furnace, take the Dharma for the fire, and take their wise understanding and discernment for the master founder; the Three Pure Precepts and the Six Paramitas are taken for their casting design. They smelt body and mind with the Buddha Nature, which is of the Absolute, until all enters everywhere into all the patterns created by the Precepts and the monastic regulations. They respectfully practice as they have been taught until there is not the least flaw or crack for 'leakage' and thereby naturally perfect the image of their True Face. What is ultimately called their 'ever-abiding, subtle, and wondrous Body' is not something transient and destructible. If people seek the Way but do not understand how to cast a True Visage in this way, on what grounds will they assert that they have perfected excellent spiritual qualities?

"As to 'burning incense', again, it is not a worldly, physical incense; rather it is the transcendent Incense of the True Teaching which perfumes one's foul-smelling evil deeds, thoroughly fumigating them until they vanish. This Incense of the True Teaching takes five forms. The first is the Incense of the Precepts, which is described as 'the capacity to bring all evils to a halt by skillfully cultivating what is good'. The second is the Incense of Meditation, which is described as 'unwavering trust in the Greater Course so that the heart is beyond turning away and retreating'. The third is the Incense of Wise and Benevolent Discernment, which is described as 'being ever-observant of body

and mind, subjectively and objectively'. The fourth is the Incense of Liberation, which is described as 'the skillful severing of all the bonds of ignorance'. The fifth is the Incense of Liberated Awareness, which is described as 'the luminosity of enlightenment which is never impaired by the hindrances of ignorance'. Such are the Five Incenses to which worldly kinds do not compare.

"In the days when the Buddha was in the world, He had His disciples set just such priceless Incenses burning by means of the fire of their wise understanding and discernment as an offering to all the Buddhas in the ten quarters. Since nowadays sentient beings who are foolish and dull in their senses do not understand the Tathagata's real meaning, they merely apply an external fire to light up the world with such material incenses as sandalwood and frankincense, hoping for blessings and rewards. How can they possibly obtain them this way?

"The meaning of 'scattering flowers' is similar; it refers to the 'flowers' of merit and virtue from your expounding of the True Teaching, which enriches beings as you propagate It for the benefit of all and bestow the majestic splendor from the Absolute's Nature everywhere. The 'Flower' of merit and virtue is what the Buddha extolled as That which is the ultimate, the Ever-abiding which knows no season when It withers and falls. Further, if there are people who strew such Flowers as these, they will receive blessings beyond measure. If you say that the Tathagata had intended for sentient beings to understand

‘scattering flowers’ as ‘beheading blossoms and injuring the vegetation’, you miss His point. And why so? Because those who keep to the Pure Precepts do not assault and insult the myriad forms that comprise the Great Earth, whilst those who mistakenly disregard Them incur great defilement. How much more nowadays, due to their contempt for monastic regulations and the Precepts, do people injure and harm anything and everything in their pursuit of blessings and rewards; they crave gain and thereby wreak harm. How can they be this way?

“Also, the ‘lamp’ signifies the perfected enlightenment of the True Mind, which is the Original Nature, after one has awakened to It, since using the clear comprehension from one’s wise understanding and discernment is like a lamp. This is why all who seek liberation always take their bodies to be the Lamp’s base, their minds to be the Lamp’s fuel dish, and their trust and faith to be the wick, to which they add the Precepts and practices as the oil; the clear penetration from their wise understanding and discernment is analogous to the Lamp’s flame. As such a Lamp of the Absolute’s true enlightenment continually burns, Its light shatters the darkness of ignorance and delusion. By means of this Teaching you can transform the way things are perceived so as to open others to awareness; accordingly this is ‘the One Lamp which sets hundreds of thousands of lamps ablazing’. Due to the Lamp’s continual shining, Its brightness knows no end; due to Its being unending, the Lamp is described as ‘ever-burning’. In the past there was a Buddha

named Dipankara, 'He Who is a Blazing Lamp', the significance of which is the same as this.

"Sentient beings who are foolish and deluded and have not encountered what the Tathagata taught about skillful means mostly practice what is false and meaningless and are attached to, and entangled in, the phenomenal; they end up lighting worldly oil lamps to illumine empty rooms and style this as 'conforming to what is taught'. This cannot possibly be correct, since the Buddha sent forth from between His eyebrows a hair-like beam of light which lit up eighteen thousand worlds; if the light from His body fully illumined all everywhere in the ten quarters, how can the employment of such mundane lamps possibly be spiritually beneficial? When you examine the principle of this carefully, does it not prove to be so?

"Also, 'walking in the Way during the six time periods of each day' refers to constantly practicing the Buddha's Way within your six sense faculties at all times, which is what enlightenment is. Consequently, to cultivate all enlightened practices which bring the six sense faculties under control so that the six sense faculties are immaculate, and to do these practices without ever abandoning them, is called 'walking in the Way during the six time periods of each day'.

"The 'stupa' is one's body. When someone continually has his enlightened benevolent discernment go around patrolling his body and mind unceasingly, moment by moment, as he proceeds through the day, it is called 'circumambulating the stupa'. In the past, saintly monks walked the Way in this manner to

realize nirvana. When those who seek liberation do not meet with this principle, how can they call what they do 'walking the Way'? When I venture to look, I see that my fellow sentient beings who are dull in their sense faculties are not yet doing inner practices, but are clinging to external pursuits so that they circumambulate stupas with their physical bodies, busily running around, day and night, vainly exhausting themselves, and without a single benefit to their True Nature. It is the epitome of 'delusion versus enlightenment' and truly pitiable!

"As to 'keeping to the monastic diet' you must, by all means, grasp its intent; otherwise, its principle will become a vain and meaningless pursuit. A 'diet' is something which regulates; it refers to that which puts body and mind in order so that they do not create restlessness. 'To keep to' means 'to guard and protect' and refers to protecting and maintaining the Precepts and your spiritual practices in accordance with the Dharma for, of necessity, you must restrain the desires that arise from your six sense faculties, control the three poisons, and endeavor to purify your body and mind through enlightened observation. To understand the meaning in this way is what is meant by 'dieting'.

"Also, in keeping to the monastic diet there are five types of 'food'. First is 'the food that is rich in the Dharma', which refers to joyfully offering up your practice whilst relying on the True Teachings of the Tathagata. Second is 'the food of delight in meditation', which refers to conviction within and calmness

without, where body and mind are bright and content. Third is 'the food of mindfulness', which refers to being constantly mindful of the Buddhas, a state where intent and speech are in accord. Fourth is 'the food of resolve', which refers to constantly seeking to fulfill your virtuous resolves whether walking, sitting, standing, or reclining. Fifth is 'the food of liberation', which refers to your mind always being immaculate and unstained by worldly defilements. These 'pure foods' are called 'the foods of a monastic diet'. Furthermore, if there are people who do not ingest five such immaculate 'foods' and say they keep to a monastic diet, they have missed the point.

"What is spoken of as 'fasting' pertains to the food from wicked deeds due to ignorance. If those who are wont to cite Scripture break this fast, which refers to breaking the Precepts, how will they ever realize blessings from that? Moreover, there are foolish and deluded people who have not even encountered a principle such as this. Since their bodies and minds are unrestrained, the various evils they commit are all for the sake of their cravings and desires, as they shamelessly give full rein to their passions. They merely fast outwardly whilst telling themselves that they are keeping to the monastic diet. How does this differ from someone seeing a rotting corpse and saying that it has life when it certainly does not?

"Also, 'making obeisances' (or, literally, 'bowing in veneration') means 'to act in accordance with the Teachings'. Of necessity you must be clear about the Fundamental Substance within and, if you find

yourself in pursuit of anything, give it up and turn yourself around; the Principle will never desert phenomena, since they possess the treasure house of practice. Understanding a meaning such as this is called 'being in accord with the Dharma'. 'Bowing' means 'respecting'; 'veneration' refers to 'paying respect to one's True Nature'. In subduing the darkness of ignorance, the shining forth of one's True Nature is 'bowing in veneration'. Because we would pay reverence to the Teaching, we dare not cause injury or damage; because we would subdue our ignorance, we do not let ourselves be indulgent and wayward. If someone is able to cut himself totally free from desiring evil, whilst continually maintaining mindfulness of what is good, it is always called 'making an obeisance' even though we do not see any physical signs of it. Whatever is made manifest is a physical sign; so, if you desire to help those of worldly ways show humility in their hearts, you must subdue what lies outside yourself by showing some external sign of paying respect. When you put such gestures to use, you let them show, but when you lay them aside, you store them away so that when you again bring them outside they illumine what is within you; by this means outer and inner are in accord. Furthermore, if you do not put the Teaching of this principle into practice, and merely attach yourself to physical and mental things, there will be unrestrained greed and delusion within you as you continually do evil deeds. If what people do is merely external, it will be a meaningless display of physical

signs (of respect), which is not what is meant by 'making an obeisance'. Such people have no shame before the saintly, and baldly deceive ordinary people; they will not escape sinking down to the lowest realms of existence. How can they possibly perfect their spiritual qualities? Since nothing is to be gained by this behavior, how will they seek for the Way?"

Hui-k'o asked, "The Buddha's *Discourse on the Bathhouse* says that when the assembly of monks clean and bathe themselves they receive spiritual blessings beyond measure. Since this relies on a physical action to commence the perfecting of spiritual qualities, will I be in accord with this Teaching if I merely look at what my mind is doing?"

Bodhidharma replied, "The 'bathing' by the assembly of monks is not spoken of as some worldly, physical act. The World-honored One gave voice to His *Discourse on the Bathhouse* at that time for the sake of His disciples, since he wanted to help them receive and keep to His Teaching on cleansing themselves. He therefore made expedient use of a worldly act as a metaphor for expounding the Truth, by speaking of seven things. The first is clean water, the second is a blazing fire, the third is cleansing powder, the fourth is a willow twig, the fifth is sifted ashes, the sixth is a medicinal unguent, and the seventh is an under-robe. He mentioned these seven things as metaphors for seven methods, since all sentient beings can rid themselves of the three poisons as well as the dirt and filth from their blind ignorance by means of these seven methods, which are the splendors of cleansing

oneself. As for these seven methods, the first is the Pure Precepts, with which we wash and cleanse body and mind, just as pure, clean water washes away dust and dirt. The second is called wise discernment, which ardently examines what is internal and external, just as a blazing fire readily heats up that water. The third is called good sense, which differentiates and removes our evils, just as cleansing powder can rid us of dirt and grease. The fourth is called the Truth, which cuts us free from false and vain talk, just as chewing on a willow twig can eliminate bad breath. The fifth is called right trust or true faith, which never has doubts or fears, just as ashes rubbed on the body readily wards off lice and fleas. The sixth is called the gentleness whose strengths are great, just as a medicinal unguent penetrates to benefit the skin. The seventh is called compunction, by which we repent our evil deeds, just as an under-robe covers our unsightly form. Just like the seven methods above, the subtler meanings in this Discourse, which the Tathagata gave at that time for the sake of those possessed of sharp faculties for the Greater Course, were not for ordinary people of little understanding and great coarseness, which is why our contemporaries are unable to grasp what is being taught here.

“This ‘bathhouse’ is none other than your own body. Therefore, set your wise understanding and discernment ablaze, heat up the water of the Pure Precepts, and bathe the absolute Buddha Nature within yourself by accepting and keeping to the seven methods for polishing yourself to a true luster. At

the time of the Buddha, monks were astute and their understanding sharp; all were aware of their saintly intentions and applied them to their training and practice so as to perfect their spiritual qualities and completely ripen the fruits of sanctity. Nowadays sentient beings who are foolish and deluded, their faculties dull, do not fathom this matter for which we train and employ worldly water to wash away whatever is clogging up their bodies, whilst telling themselves that they are abiding by Scripture. How can they so fail to understand?

“Furthermore, our absolute Buddha Nature is not this mundane frame, with all its dust and dirt from our defiling passions, for, from the first, It has been beyond physical characterization. How can anyone possibly cleanse what is an immaterial ‘body’ with ordinary, physical water? If what someone does fails to accord with the Truth, how will he be able to realize It? If someone says that his body is immaculate, he should look at that body very carefully. Was it not born due to the impurities of greed and desire? It is so filled to overflowing inside and out with foul-smelling filth and muck that if you seek Immaculacy by washing that body, it will be just as scrubbing out a moat: its mud will so exhaust you that you will have to desist. Try doing it and you will clearly learn that external washing is not what the Buddha was talking about.”

Hui-k’o asked, “What the Scriptures say is that if we are ever-mindful of the Buddha and recite His name with utmost sincerity of heart, we will realize

rebirth in the Western Pure Land. Since this one gateway is sure to lead us to realizing Buddhahood, why employ pure meditation to seek for liberation?"

Bodhidharma replied, "This 'being mindful of the Buddha' requires right mindfulness; anything less than a full understanding of the meaning of this phrase will be erroneous. With right mindfulness you are certain to realize rebirth in a Pure Land, but with erroneous mindfulness how will you reach there? 'Buddha' means 'being enlightened' and signifies 'the enlightened observation of body and mind which does not let evil arise'. 'Mindfulness' means 'bringing to mind and reflecting on'; it signifies 'firmly holding to the Precepts and the practices whilst not forgetting zealous endeavor'. To come to the meaning of this completely is called 'right mindfulness'. Therefore, understand that mindfulness resides in the mind, it does not reside in words. When someone uses a bamboo trap to get fish, once he has got the fish, he forgets all about the trap; when someone uses words to express an idea, once we get the idea, we forget about the words. When you actually recite the *nembutsu* (which means 'being mindful of the Buddha') and say His name, you must practice the substance of 'being mindful of the Buddha'. If your mind lacks sincerity, your mouth will speak empty and meaningless words, for vain are your intentions and empty your endeavors. What benefits are achieved by this?

"Moreover, if you do the reciting mindfully, the name itself and its meaning will be totally different.

It is with the mouth that we recite, it is with the mind that we are mindful. Therefore, understand that mindfulness arises from your mind whilst the name itself is a gate to enlightened practice. Recitation resides in the mouth and is, accordingly, an aspect of sound. Those who are attached to such external manifestations and appearances, as they seek for blessings, have ultimately missed the point. This is why the Scriptures say, 'The characteristics that the mundane possess are all vain and meaningless.' They also say, 'If someone perceives a self on the basis of some physical form, or seeks for a personal ego on the basis of vocal sounds, this person walks a false path and will not be able to see the Tathagata.' Look carefully at what these quotations are saying and you will know that the characteristics of things are not That which is real and true. What the Buddhas of the past cultivated as spiritual qualities were not something They spoke of as being external. They simply and rightly commented that the mind is both the wellspring of all good and the lord and master of myriad evils, that the constant joy and contentment of nirvana is born from one's own mind, and that transmigration in the three worlds also arises from the mind. The mind is the gateway for appearing in, leaving, and transcending the world. The mind is both the barrier gate and the ferry dock to liberation. Why would anyone who knows the entryway worry about its being hard to realize? What anxiety about arriving would anyone have who is acquainted with the barrier gate and the dock?

“It seems to me that nowadays those of shallow perception merely make efforts on the basis of how things appear. Out of personal vanity they lavish their wealth on piling up land and water with memorial offerings, having images cast, and stupas built; empty-headedly they employ workers to construct grandiose religious structures and gaudily decorate them. They drain their minds, exhaust their strength, and mislead others through their example, and without the least compunction! How will they ever experience an awakening and see that their exertions are an attachment to exertion? When I speak of That which is beyond what they see in front of them, they look blank, as if in a daze. They merely hanker after the little affections of the moment and are unaware of the great sufferings that are on the verge of entering their lives. Vainly do they make themselves sick by laboring in this type of ‘spiritual cultivation’. They turn their backs on what is proper and keep returning to what is false, deceiving themselves by saying that they will gain blessings. If, however, you can focus your mind so that you illumine what is within, the constant light of your awareness and scrutiny will eradicate the three poisons and forever make them melt away and disappear, so that the six thieves will not invade you and create disturbances. Your numberless spiritual qualities, all manner of spiritual adornments, and untold Gates to the Dharma will all be naturally perfected through and through. Go beyond the mundane and attest to That which is saintly. It is before your very eyes,

not off in the distance. Awakening is but an instant away. Why stay troubled until your hair has turned gray? Would that I had explained for you the subtle mysteries of the Gate to the Dharma in depth, rather than discussed the mind in barest outline, detailing but such a scant portion of the reason for which we train.”