**The Avatamsaka Sutra**

**CHAPTER15**

Translated in the Tang Dynasty by the Tripitaka Master Srãmana Siksananda of Khotan

**Explanation by VM. Hua**

**The Ten Dwellings**

Sutra

At that time, Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva received the Buddha’s awesome power, and entered the Samadhi of a Bodhisattva’s Limitless Skill-In-Means. Through the power of samadhi, in each of the ten directions, beyond world systems as many as motes of dust in one thousand Buddhalands, there were Buddhas as many as fine motes of dust in one thousand Buddhalands, all with the same name. That name was Dharma Wisdom. They everywhere appeared before him and spoke to Dharma Wisdom, saying, “Good indeed, good indeed good man, that you are able to enter the Samadhi of a Bodhisattva’s Limitless Skill-In-Means!

Commentary:

This chapter speaks about the Ten Dwellings. The Bodhisattva’s Ten Dwellings are discussed in detail in this chapter. This is the fifteenth chapter of the Sutra. The Ten Dwellings, Chapter Fifteen. At that time, that is, when the Fourteenth Chapter had finished being spoken, Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva Dharma Wisdom, received the Buddha’s awesome power—he also trusted to and received the great awesome power of the Buddhas of the ten directions--and entered the Samadhi of a Bodhisattva’s Limitless Skill-In-Means.

When a Bodhisattva or a Buddha wants to speak Dharma, first he enters samadhi. Entering, dwelling, and leaving samadhi: samadhi is entered, dwelt in, and left. What is samadhi? It is concentration. It is just entering a state of concentration. When Bodhisattvas are about to speak Dharma, they first enter samadhi and observe the causes and conditions of living beings. In accordance with whatever method should be used to save them, the Bodhisattva speaks the Dharma. For a Bodhisattva, the causes and conditions of speaking Dharma are to first enter samadhi. The Buddha is the same. Before speaking Dharma, he first enters samadhi for awhile.

When people lecture on the Sutras and speak Dharma, it is also best if before hand they could sit for two hours; then whether or not they enter samadhi, they would still have purified their minds and rid themselves of random thoughts. Then when they lecture on the Sutras, their genuine wisdom will manifest. So, if you do not first sit in stillness for awhile before you lecture the Sutras, when you speak, you won’t have any genuine wisdom. Your Sutra lecture will be very dry and uninteresting. If you can enter samadhi, the doctrines you speak will flow from your self-nature, just like water gushing forth without cease. This is an advantage of entering samadhi.

From precepts, samadhi arises, and from samadhi, wisdom comes forth. How do you enter samadhi? First, you must follow rules. Why can’t you enter samadhi? Because you don’t follow the rules, like one of my disciples. If he followed the rules, he would have entered samadhi long ago. He’s been here so long and doesn’t know what entering samadhi is, since he hasn’t ever done it. This is because he is greedy to play. Whenever something fun is going on, he’s happy. But he feels that cultivating the Way is not of any great interest. Bodhisattvas enter the Bodhisattvas’ Limitless Skill-in-Means Samadhi. The Samadhi is the Skill-in Means Samadhi. What is skill-in-means? It is clever, provisional expedient devices: using the Dharma doors that appeal to living beings and speaking Dharma to them accordingly to cause all living beings to be filled with Dharma bliss. There is not just one kind of Dharma door. They are limitless. Provisional means temporary; clever means ingenious—conditional, artful devices to teach all living beings. Through the power of samadhi, Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva entered samadhi and used the power of samadhi.

In each of the ten directions, in the other worlds of the ten directions: every direction has countries as numerous as motes of dust in one thousand Buddhalands. Beyond world systems as many as motes of dust in one thousand Buddhalands; beyond that there are a further one thousand Buddhalands. There were Buddhas, there are so many Buddhas as many as fine motes of dust in one thousand Buddhalands, as many as the motes of dust in the thousand Buddhalands gone beyond, all with the same name. And what is the name? That name was Dharma Wisdom. They are all called Dharma Wisdom. There are Buddhas as numerous as the motes of dust in one thousand Buddhalands beyond worlds as many as the motes of dust in Buddhalands, and Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva made use of the samadhi power of these Buddhas. With so many additional Buddhalands, and so many Buddhas, the response and the Way intertwine, and that many Buddhas all have the same name.

So somebody wondered how in the Amitabha Sutra two Buddhas could have the same name. Here, not only two, but also Buddhas as many as the motes of dust in one thousand Buddhalands all have the same name, Dharma Wisdom. Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva welcomes Dharma Wisdom Buddhas: They everywhere appeared before him. These Buddhas all appeared in front of Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva and spoke to Dharma Wisdom, saying, “Good indeed, good indeed good man, you have entered samadhi and are about to speak Dharma. This is very good, very good indeed, that you are able to enter the Samadhi of a Bodhisattva’s Limitless Skill-In-Means! For the sake of living beings, you have entered this limitless skill-in-means concentration in order to teach and transform them. This is the very best thing—there is nothing finer that you can do than to enter and leave samadhi in order to teach living beings. There is nothing better than this.”

Sutra:

“Good man, in each of the ten directions, Buddhas as many as fine motes of dust in one thousand Buddhalands all use their spiritual power and together help you enter it. It is also because of the power of past vows of Vairochana Thus Come One, his awesome spiritual power, and the power of the good roots which you have cultivated, that you enter this samadhi, and that cause you to speak Dharma.

Commentary:

This passage of the Sutra text describes how Buddhas as numerous as the dust motes in one thousand Buddhalands speak to Dharma Wisdom at the same time. What were the causes and conditions that enabled him to enter the Limitless Skill-in-Means Samadhi, dwell in that samadhi, and then leave the samadhi to speak Dharma? The ten directions Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as numerous as fine motes of dust in one thousand Buddhalands all come to the Bodhimanda. When the Buddha comes, the Bodhisattvas come along. Each Buddha has Bodhisattvas as numerous as the dust motes in one thousand Buddhalands that follow him to the Bodhimanda.

All these Buddhas simultaneously praise the Bodhisattva Dharma Wisdom, saying, “Good man, in each of the ten directions, Buddhas as many as fine motes of dust in one thousand Buddhalands all use their spiritual power and together help you enter it. We have come here using the great spiritual power cultivated in the past—the power of the wisdom light—which we add to yours, to help you to enter this Limitless Skill-in Means Samadhi. When you leave samadhi and speak the limitless Dharma doors of the ten directions as numerous as the dust motes in one thousand Buddhalands who are helping you, it is also because of the power of past vows of Vairochana Thus Come One. It is also because of the power of the past vows of the clear, pure Dharma-body Vairochana Tathagata—the past vows he made and cultivated. What vows did he make? Vairochana Buddha in the distant past vowed that if anyone was practicing the Bodhisattva path and wanted to enter any kind of samadhi, he would help him to fulfill the power of his samadhi, so that he would be able to enter, dwell in, and leave that samadhi in order to speak Dharma. Vairochana Buddha in limitless aeons past made a vow like this. He also vowed that when each Buddha realized Buddhahood and spoke the Avatamsaka Sutra, he would help all the Bodhisattvas who wanted to enter samadhi and then speak this Dharma to realize the power of their samadhi. So, it says the vows in the distant past.

His awesome spiritual power…It is also Vairochana Thus Come One’s great, awesome spiritual power. And also because of the power of good roots, the strength of the good roots you cultivated in the past, cultivating the Six Perfections and Ten Thousand Conducts, the power of the good roots of blessings and wisdom, the good roots which you have cultivated, that you enter this samadhi, entering the limitless Skill-in-Means Samadhi, and that cause you to speak Dharma,” which cause you to be able to speak Dharma for all living beings in this Avatamsaka assembly.

Sutra:

For the purpose of increasing the wisdom of a Buddha, deeply entering the Dharma Realm, understanding well the realms of living beings, unobstructed entry, unimpeded conduct, attaining unequalled skill-in-means, entering the nature of all-wisdom, awakening to all Dharmas, knowing all faculties, and being able to hold and speak all dharmas, there are said to arise ten kinds of dwellings of all Bodhisattvas.

Commentary:

In cultivation you can’t have the smallest fault, or causes which obstruct the Way will arise. Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva first entered samadhi. His entry was facilitated through the help of all Bodhisattvas. Later he dwelt in samadhi, and that too was through the help of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Later he left samadhi, also through the aid of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The Bodhisattvas in worlds as many as the dust motes of ten thousand lands aided him. It was also his own good roots which he had cultivated and the past vows of Vairochana Buddha which made these feats possible. Various causes and conditions were instrumental in Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva’s speaking the Dharma.

For the purpose of increasing the wisdom of a Buddha. Speaking what dharma? A dharma to cause all living beings to increase in the Buddha’s wisdom. Just to hear the Dharma and become enlightened is to attain the Buddha’s wisdom. Deeply entering the Dharma Realm. All living beings have not united as one with the Dharma Realm. We are a part of the Dharma Realm but haven’t genuinely understood the Dharma nature and the principles of the Dharma Realm. If you can understand those principles, that is to deeply enter the Dharma Realm. Understanding well the realms of living beings—all living beings in the nine Dharma Realms: Bodhisattvas, Sound Hearers, Those Enlightened to Conditions, gods, asuras, human beings, animals, hungry ghosts, hell beings—each has its own nature. Each kind of living being has its own kind of causes and conditions, and retributions.

Unobstructed entry—entering into all true principles without obstruction, understanding all true principles. Unimpeded conduct—there are no obstructions, no obstacles for the living beings in their cultivation. Attaining unequalled skill-in-means—causing all living beings to obtain unsurpassed Skill-in-Means, which go beyond all comparison. Entering the nature of all-wisdom—deeply penetrating the nature of all wisdom and having wisdom like the sea. Awakening to all Dharmas—this is clearly understanding all dharmas. Knowing all faculties—also to know the root nature of all living beings, which living being has which root nature, which living being has which disposition. And being able to hold and speak all dharmas—being able to remember all Buddhadharmas, to maintain and recite and read all dharmas, and to cultivate in accord with Dharma. So it is said--there are said to arise ten kinds of dwellings of all Bodhisattvas, the Dharma doors of the Ten Dwellings of the Bodhisattvas.

Sutra:

“Good man, you should receive the Buddhas’ awesome spiritual power and proclaim this Dharma.

Commentary:

The Buddhas in worlds to the number of one thousand Buddhalands’ fine motes of dust all called to Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva saying, “Good man, you should receive the Buddhas’ awesome spiritual power. You now receive the aid of the Buddhas. They help you with their mouths by praising you; they help you with their minds so you obtain benefit and all advantages; they help you with their bodies and cause you to obtain the great awesome spiritual power, and proclaim this Dharma. You should obtain the assistance of body, mouth, and mind from the Buddhas. You should speak the wonderful Dharma of the Ten Dwellings and cause all living beings to resolve their minds on Bodhi.”

Sutra:

At that time all the Buddhas gave Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva unobstructed wisdom, unattached wisdom, uninterrupted wisdom, undeluded wisdom, non-differentiating wisdom, unerring wisdom, limitless wisdom, unsurpassed wisdom, non-negligent wisdom, and unarrested wisdom. Why is this? It is because through the power of this samadhi the Dharma is that way.

Commentary:

At that time all the Buddhas…At that time all the Buddhas to the number of dust motes in one thousand Buddhalands simultaneously gave Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva unobstructed wisdom. This refers to the four kinds of unobstructed eloquence: 1) unobstructed phrasing: the expressions and words that are spoken are limitless and boundless; 2) unobstructed meaning: the meanings spoken are eloquent without bounds; 3) unobstructed dharmas: limitless dharmas are spoken with boundless expedient devices; 4) unobstructed delight in speaking: at all times and places he can proclaim the Dharma to cause living beings to hear the Dharma, cultivate, and certify to the result. These four kinds of unobstructed eloquence are called unobstructed wisdom. If you obtain unobstructed wisdom, you can debate with anyone and gain a victory. Unattached wisdom. If you are attached, then you cannot obtain liberation. If you are eloquent, you should not be attached with regard to it. You think you are eloquent and feel everything is too common to merit your attention; you look down on everyone—this is an attachment. With attachment as your state, your territory is still very small. You don’t have boundless and limitless wisdom. Therefore, if you have unattached wisdom, this means you are not attached to the power you have.

Uninterrupted wisdom . Sometimes wisdom is suddenly there; suddenly you are intelligent. Sometimes it is cut off, and you are stupid. Your wisdom does not always manifest. But uninterrupted wisdom continues without cessation. The wisdom is always apparent, never lacking. Undeluded wisdom. Sometimes one has wisdom, and sometimes one is stupid. Undeluded wisdom means that one is always wise—there is no stupidity, no ignorance, and no darkness. At all times the light of wisdom shines. This is undeluded wisdom.

Non-differentiating wisdom. This wisdom is always the same. It does not change. There is no time when it changes or becomes different. Unerring wisdom. This means that you do not make mistakes about anything. What you say is correct. You do not say things which lack principle, which are unreasonable. There are no mistakes and no errors. That is called unerring wisdom.

Limitless wisdom. This wisdom is inexhaustible and unlimited in its function. It never decreases; it is never cut off. Unsurpassed wisdom. This wisdom is the highest and most sublime. It gushes forth like a bubbling fountain. This function of wisdom has five kinds of virtues: a) It is deep like thunder. It can shake the deaf and move the blind. It wakes people up and reverberates like thunder. This is an analogy, of course. b) It is clear and resonant and is heard afar. c) It is a poignant and elegant sound. It causes people to listen with sympathy. Its elegance is like that of the “good-sounding bird” which everyone likes to hear, preferring it to music. Everyone likes it. d) Entering their minds, it can cause living beings to give rise to reverence. e) All who hear this superior wisdom sound never weary of it but listen to it with delight. The more they hear it, the more they want to hear. Non-negligent wisdom. People who have no vigor don’t want to cultivate. They are negligent. If you obtain this wisdom, you are never lazy but are vigorous at all times. And unarrested wisdom. No matter what state you meet with, it cannot take away this wisdom. No state can rob you of this wisdom.

Why is this? Where did these ten wisdoms come from? It is because through the power of this samadhi the Dharma is that way. The Dharma is also like that. He should obtain the Buddhas’ aid and have these ten kinds of wisdom powers as a result, because the Dharma is this way. Before speaking the Ten Dwellings Chapter, it should be like this. That is the rule of the Dharma. That is the way it should be.

Sutra:

At that time, each of the Buddhas extended his right hand and rubbed the crown of Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva’s head. Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva then arose from samadhi.

Commentary:

Then the Buddhas as numerous as dust motes in one thousand Buddhalands came to help Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva and gave him ten kinds of wisdom: unobstructed wisdom, unattached wisdom, uninterrupted wisdom, undeluded wisdom, non-differentiating wisdom, unerring wisdom, limitless wisdom, unsurpassed wisdom, non-negligent wisdom, and unarrested wisdom. Those ten types of wisdom were bestowed upon Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva so he could speak Dharma for all living beings, because the rules of speaking Dharma were thus.

At that time, each of the Buddhas extended his right hand, each Buddha stretched out his right hand, and rubbed the crown of Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva’s head. So many Buddhas extended their hands; how could so many hands all fit on top of Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva’s head? This represents the unobstructedness of one and many. Each Buddha’s right hand personally patted Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva on the crown; there was no one who did it prior or subsequent to any other. They all did it simultaneously. There was no near or far. This is what is meant by unmoving, they arrive; not acting, they accomplish things. Many do not obstruct one; one does not obstruct many. One and many are unobstructed. They mutually benefited and aided Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva. They helped him by rubbing the crown of his head and augmenting his wisdom, by getting rid of his stupidity and causing his good roots to grow, and by eradicating his karmic obstructions. They benefited Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva so that he could in turn benefit all living beings. For all these reasons, they rubbed him on the crown. Whereas before he was in samadhi, Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva then arose from samadhi. When they patted him on the head, he was dwelling in samadhi, but after he was rubbed on the crown, he arose from his Limitless Skill-in Means Samadhi.

Sutra:

And spoke to all the Bodhisattvas, saying, “Disciples of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas dwell in places as vast and great as the Dharma Realm and like empty space. Disciples of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas dwell in the household of all Buddhas of the three periods of time.

Commentary:

And spoke to all the Bodhisattvas, saying—Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva arose from samadhi and spoke to all the Bodhisattvas. Why didn’t he speak to all of the Buddhas? It was because the Buddhas don’t have to listen to the Dharma Bodhisattvas speak. They have already transcended the realm of the Dharma spoken by the Bodhisattvas. So Dharma Wisdom spoke to the Bodhisattvas.

“Disciples of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas dwell in places as vast and great as the Dharma Realm and like empty space. What place to Bodhisattvas with the great Bodhi hearts live in? What is their Dharma position? It is vast like the Dharma Realm and like empty space, nothing is bigger. The Bodhisattvas’ Dharma body also fills space and the Dharma Realm.

“Disciples of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas dwell in the household of all Buddhas of the three periods of time. Disciples of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas dwell throughout the ten directions and the three periods of time in the home of all Buddhas. They are the Buddhas’ princes. The Bodhisattvas should glorify the Buddhas’ position and succeed to the position of Unsurpassed Proper and Equal, Right Enlightenment. So the Bodhisattvas dwell in the household of all Buddhas of the three periods of time. The household of all Buddhas refers to the level of fruition of Buddhahood.

Sutra:

“I will now discuss those dwellings of a Bodhisattva. Disciples of the Buddha, there are ten kinds of dwellings of a Bodhisattva which all Buddhas of the past, the future, and the present have discussed, will discuss, and now discuss.

Commentary:

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva called out, saying, “Disciples of the Buddha.” He said, “I will now discuss those dwellings of a Bodhisattva. I will now speak about the ten kinds of dwellings of a Bodhisattva. All you disciples of the Buddha should know that there are ten kinds of dwellings of a Bodhisattva which all Buddhas of the past, the future, and the present, the Buddhas of the past, the Buddhas of the present, and the Buddhas of the future have already discussed, will discuss, and now discuss. They have already spoken about the ten kinds of dwellings of a Bodhisattva in the past. In the present I will speak about the ten kinds of dwellings of a Bodhisattva, and all of you should be very attentive to what I say to you.”

Sutra:

What are the ten? They are:

The Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve;   
The Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation;   
The Dwelling of Cultivation.   
The Dwelling of Noble Birth;   
The Dwelling of Endowment with Skill-in-Means;   
The Dwelling of Rectification of the Mind;   
The Dwelling of Non-Retreat;   
The Dwelling of Pure Youth;   
The Dwelling of Dharma Prince;   
The Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown.

Those are the names of the Ten Dwellings of a Bodhisattva, which are discussed by all Buddhas of the past, the future, and the present.

Commentary:

What are the ten? In Speaking of the Ten Dwellings of a Bodhisattva, what are the Ten Dwellings? They are as follows:

The Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve; the first is called “Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve,” which means that a Bodhisattva in the past, in cultivating and practicing the six paramitas and ten thousand practices, has planted good roots. When those good roots ripen, he produces a great thought for Bodhi. He dwells within the great thought for Bodhi. And so this dwelling is called The Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve—dwelling in the great thought for Bodhi.

The Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation. This also refers to how in the past a Bodhisattva eliminated all the greed, hatred, and stupidity, the ignorance and affliction in his mind, little by little lessening and never increasing them. Therefore, it is called the Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation. It is not like common people who on the one hand eliminate a little affliction, and on the other hand add a little, so that day by day there is more affliction added than is eliminated. That is not regulating the ground. But he is able to eliminate all the faults in his mind. That is what is meant by The Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation.

The third is The Dwelling of Cultivation. Cultivation is constantly practicing all kinds of doors of conduct. Because you cultivate, you have all kinds of good roots, and as a result you are born into the household of the Buddha. When born into the household of the Buddha, you are both honored and noble. That’s The Dwelling of Noble Birth.

The Dwelling of Endowment with Skill-in-Means. Because of being born into the Buddha’s household, you are therefore endowed with all skill-in-means and have expedient Dharma doors. Therefore, you are endowed to teach and transform living beings.

The Dwelling of Rectification of the Mind. At that time you dwell in the samadhi of proper thought. The Dwelling of Non-Retreat. Non-retreating consists of non-retreating in thought, non-retreating in position, and non-retreating in practice. Non-retreating in thought is not to retreat from the thought for Bodhi. Non-retreating in position is not retreating to the Two Vehicles. Non-retreating in practice means at all times cultivating without retreating, unlike we ordinary people who cultivate a day and then retreat for a few days saying, “I can’t take it; I’ve got to rest.”

The Dwelling of Pure Youth. What is meant by The Dwelling of Pure Youth? It means always being like a child, and never growing up. That is one meaning. You can also say that life after life, one does not marry. One continually protects one’s original face. That means being like a virgin lad or a virgin maiden. In any case, it means not marrying. The boys don’t associate with girls, and the girls don’t associate with boys.

The Dwelling of Dharma Prince. If you can attain the Dwelling of Pure Youth, then you can become a disciple of the Dharma King. The Buddha is the King of Dharma. The Bodhisattva is the disciple of the Buddha, that is, the prince of the Dharma King. Being in line to succeed the Buddha, he can go on to accomplish Buddhahood. That is the dwelling of Dharma Prince.

When you obtain the Dwelling of Dharma Prince, you are about to become a Buddha and attain The Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown. The Buddhas of the ten directions then anoint your crown and aid you. This enables a Bodhisattva to be endowed with the Four Unlimited Minds—kindness, compassion, joy, and renunciation. That’s the Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown. The Buddhas of the ten directions use their right hands to anoint the crown of that Bodhisattva, using the water of the Buddha’s Dharma to anoint the Bodhisattva’s crown. That enables the Bodhisattva to accomplish Buddhahood.

Those are the names of the Ten Dwellings of a Bodhisattva which are discussed by all Buddhas of the past, the future, and the present. All the Buddhas of the past, of the present, and of the future speak this kind of Dharma door for people to hear, enabling all who listen to produce the great thought for Bodhi, and in the future to obtain the ten kinds of dwellings.

I. The Dwelling of First Bringing Forth The Resolve

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. What is meant by the Bodhisattva dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve? This Bodhisattva, seeing the Buddha, the World Honored One, whose form and countenance are upright and majestic, whose physical characteristics are perfect and delight the viewer, who is difficult to encounter...

Commentary:

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva said, “Disciples of the Buddha,” all of you disciples of the Buddha, do you know or do you not know What is meant by the Bodhisattva dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve—the first of the Ten Dwellings of a Bodhisattva?

This Bodhisattva, seeing the Buddha, the World Honored One. The Bodhisattva Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve is contingent upon ten kinds of conditions. When a Bodhisattva sees the Buddha whose form and countenance are upright and majestic, the Buddha has thirty-two marks and the eighty subtle characteristics. His form and countenance are upright and adorned. This is the first condition.

Whose physical characteristics are perfect. The second condition is that the Buddha’s physical characteristics are perfect. The Buddha’s face is like the pure, full moon; also like a thousand suns emitting light. His physical appearance is perfect and so the third condition is that his characteristics delight the viewer. Everyone likes to see the Buddha, who is difficult to encounter. The fourth condition is that it is not easy to meet the Buddha, because it is uncertain how many millions of kalpas pass before he enters the world. When he enters the world, it is to benefit living beings, and so it is said that it is not easy to meet the Buddha.

Sutra:

“…and has great awesome powers. Or that Bodhisattva may see the spiritual fulfillments, or hear predictions, or listen to instructions, or see all living beings undergoing intense suffering, or hear the Thus Come One’s vast, great Buddhadharma, and then produce the thought for Bodhi and seek all wisdom.

Commentary:

And has great awesome powers. The fifth condition is that the Buddha has ten powers, ten inconceivable powers, and is fearless—unafraid of anything. The ten powers can subdue heavenly demons and those of outside-way sects. Or that Bodhisattva may see the spiritual fulfillments. The sixth condition is the spiritual fulfillments. The Penetration of Spiritual Fulfillments is also called the spiritual fulfillment “wheel”.

Or hear predictions. The seventh condition is hearing the Buddha confer predictions. Or listen to instructions. The eighth condition is listening to the Buddha’s teaching. Or see all living beings undergoing intense suffering. The ninth condition is that, when seeing living beings undergoing suffering, the Bodhisattva feels compassion and decides to undergo suffering on their behalf. Sometimes people who have never been taught the Dharma do this. They act this way because in the distant past they planted the seeds of great compassion. Or hear the Thus Come One’s vast, great Buddhadharma. This is the tenth condition, with its inconceivable state. And then produce the thought for Bodhi and seek all wisdom. Because of seeing these ten conditions, Bodhisattvas on the First Dwelling resolve their minds on Bodhi, seek the Buddha’s wisdom, and thereby abide in the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Sutra:

“This Bodhisattva produces the resolve which is conditioned by ten Dharmas that are difficult to obtain. What are the ten? They are: the wisdom of what is and is not the case; the wisdom of the retributions of good and evil karma…

Commentary:

“This Bodhisattva produces the resolve which is conditioned by ten Dharmas. This Bodhisattva is a Bodhisattva in the First Dwelling. Conditioned means following, going down the road as it is. According to this road, by means of these conditions, that are difficult to obtain, he abides in the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve. What are the ten? They are: the wisdom of what is and is not the case. The wisdom of knowing what is in accord with principle and what is not in accord with principle. What is in accord with principle leads to enlightenment; what is not in accord leads to confusion. In accord means that which transcends the turning of the three worlds. Turning in the three worlds is what is not in accord. Diligently cultivating morality, samadhi, and wisdom is what is in accord. One puts to rest greed, hatred, and stupidity, knowing that they are not in accord.

If you can rely on the four truths, the twelve links of conditioned co-production, the six perfections, and the ten thousand practices to cultivate, that is what is in accord. If you see through it all and put it down, that is in accord. Obtaining self-mastery is to transcend what is not in accord. What is not in accord is the hells, the hungry ghosts, the animals, and the asuras. What are in accord are the Bodhisattvas, the Buddhas, the Sound-Hearers, and those Enlightened to Conditions. If you want to speak in detail, you can go on infinitely, because the doctrines of the Sutras are completely fused and unobstructed. You can explain in many ways, and they all have principle. Wisdom does not need to make discriminations in order to understand. It is understanding what is and what is not in accord without making discriminations.

The wisdom of the retributions of good and evil karma. Good is doing good things—it is what benefits people. What harms people is called evil. If you can do various things to benefit living beings, that is to amass small good acts into a large act of goodness. It is like making a mountain out of motes of dust. Suppose you just need one more clod of dirt to complete a mountain, but at that point, if you quit, the mountain does not get made. If you do good, you must do it completely. If you leave out just a little bit, then it’s not complete.

You should not do even the smallest evil;   
You should not fail to do even the smallest good.

Also,

Mt. T’ai does not reject even a single mote of dust.   
Although the motes of dust are small, when accumulated,   
they become something big.

Mt. T’ai is made of dust motes piled up together. Without the motes of dust, there would be no Mt. T’ai. Though the motes of dust are small, they combine to make Mt. T’ai. Without the motes, Mt. T’ai is level with the ground. So, Mt. T’ai doesn’t reject the motes of dust. Although the motes of dust are small, when accumulated, they become something big. In doing good things you must do them bit by bit. Evil also accumulates bit by bit, so you should not do even a little bit of evil. People hold precepts to prevent evil.

Do no evil, and prevent errors.

That is, do all good deeds. Why should you not do evil and only do good? Because if you do good you get a good reward; if you do evil, you obtain an evil retribution.

The karma accumulated in one thousand   
Kalpas does not melt away.   
When the causes and conditions rebound,   
You undergo the retribution.

So be especially careful! With this wisdom you can commit no evil and can only do acts of good.

Sutra:

“…the wisdom of all faculties, whether superior or inferior; the wisdom of the variety of different understandings; the wisdom of the variety of different realms; the wisdom of where all paths lead; the wisdom of all dhyanas, liberations, and samadhis; the wisdom of past lives without obstruction; the wisdom of the Heavenly Eye without obstruction; and the wisdom of having universally exhausted outflows in the three periods of time. Those are the ten.

Commentary:

These ten dharmas, which are hard to obtain on the part of a Bodhisattva, are called ten wisdoms; on the part of the Buddha, they are called ten powers. Bodhisattvas don’t have solid samadhi power and so with them these are only wisdoms, not powers. The Buddha’s samadhi power is ultimate, so the wisdom becomes power.

The wisdom of all faculties, whether superior or inferior. The Bodhisattva can recognize the superiority and inferiority of the roots of all living beings’ faculties and of his own. The six sense organs are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. As to the six, there are those which are superior and those which are inferior. The eyes, for instance, can see in front but not behind, whereas the ears can hear sounds from all around. Some living beings have some deficiency in their six sense organs; that is what is meant by inferiority. Some living beings have perfect sense organs; that is what is meant by superiority. Some have both superiority and inferiority in their six organs; they eyes can see in front but not behind, while the ears can hear sounds in front, behind, and on both sides. This criterion applies to the others as well. Wisdom such as this discriminates the superiority and inferiority of the organs, but this understanding is not based on discrimination. Rather, it is illuminated by wisdom which is devoid of discrimination such as that made by consciousness.

The wisdom of the variety of different understandings. Different understandings refers to being clear about all dharmas—understanding the real mark of all dharmas—being clear about everything.

The wisdom of the variety of different realms. The variety of realms of living beings is understood. Each kind of living being is known.

The wisdom of where all paths lead. This is ultimate knowing, ultimate wisdom. The wisdom of all dhyanas, liberations, and samadhis. There are four dhyanas, eight samadhis, and nine successive stages of samadhi. There are eight liberations. This is the wisdom of knowing these samadhi powers. The wisdom of past lives without obstruction. Past lives refers to former lives of people, and the lives before those—life after life. This wisdom is the ability to know them all. It is being able to know what a person was in his former life and on back, back into the distant past—to know the causes and conditions, the retributions and effects.

The wisdom of the Heavenly Eye without obstruction. The Penetration of the Heavenly Eye can see all the basic natures of the gods. And the wisdom of having universally exhausted outflows in the three periods of time. The three periods of time are the past, present, and future. People living in the present are still linked to the three periods of time. This present life and our past lives are connected. This life and the karmic retribution of future lives are connected. How? It is through outflows in the three periods of time. Outflows are bad habits and faults which flow out into the three realms of desire, form, and formlessness. Why are there outflows? Because of desire and ignorance. If you have no ignorance or desire, you have no outflows. But outflows may be few or many, small or great.

Few outflows means that you have too many bad habits. Great outflows means that you cannot control them, so your desire becomes a great outflow. Small outflows means although you have outflows, you can control them and return to what is proper. The outflow of ignorance is not understanding why you have these bad habits and faults. Perpetual false thinking is also an outflow. If the things you want to do are not proper, they are outflows. The outflows in the three periods of time means that this life is connected with both past lives and future lives. Plant a cause with outflows, and you reap a fruit of affliction. When the outflows are exhausted, it means they are gone; then there are no more outflows.

Those are the ten. These are the ten dharmas which are difficult to obtain, by means of which a Bodhisattva produces the mind and dwells in the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten dharmas. What are the ten? They are: diligently making offerings to the Buddhas; happily dwelling in birth and death; guiding the world and effecting the eradication of evil karma; using the supremely wonderful Dharma to constantly instruct; praising the unsurpassed Dharma; studying the Buddhas’ merit and virtue; being born in the presence of all Buddhas and constantly being gathered in and received by them; expediently proclaiming in the stillness of samadhi; praising the leaving far behind of the revolving wheel of birth and death; and acting as a refuge for suffering living beings.

Commentary:

The Bodhisattva Dharma Wisdom called out once again, “All of you disciples of the Buddha. This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten dharmas. This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten dharmas. Which Bodhisattva? The Bodhisattva at the First Dwelling. “Encourage” means to exhort all living beings. “Study” means to study and practice. He should exhort and teach all living beings to study these ten Dharma doors. What are the ten? What are the ten Dharma doors?

They are: diligently making offerings to the Buddhas. The first Dharma door teaches all living beings to vastly cultivate the giving of offerings to all Buddhas.

“But”, you say, “there are so many Buddhas. How could I make offerings to each one? If I were to go before each Buddha to make offerings, I would not finish in my entire lifetime. I would not fulfill my vow. Why? Because human life has a limit, whereas the number of Buddhas is uncountable. In the ten directions and three periods of time there are limitless, boundless Buddhas. To say nothing of one lifetime, I couldn’t make offerings to each one of them in a hundred, a thousand, or myriads of lifetimes.”

So what’s to be done? We should take the Dharma realm as our mind, take the Dharma realm as our substance, and take the Dharma realm as our mark. To bow to one Buddha is to bow to limitless Buddhas; to make offerings with sincerity to one Buddha is to make offerings to limitless Buddhas. We should contemplate: “I am here making offerings to Amitabha Buddha or Shakyamuni Buddha, or some other Buddha, and in this one offering I make offerings to them all. In making offerings to all, it is still just one offering.” Contemplate our bodies going to the end of space and the Dharma realm to vastly cultivate making offerings in the presence of the Buddhas. This is called “diligently making offerings to the Buddhas.” “Diligently” means not being lazy. We should make offerings every day, at all times, every moment. We should use our bodies, mouths, and minds, and with the purity of these three karmic vehicles make offerings to all the Buddhas in the ten directions and three periods of time. That is “Diligently making offerings to the Buddhas.”

Happily dwelling in birth and death. The Bodhisattva is happy to dwell in birth and death. He abides in birth and death and yet does not retain the mark of birth and death. He is not attached to birth and death. Those of the Two Vehicles are determined to end birth and death, but the Bodhisattvas save all living beings and then after that become Buddhas. So I have said to you all, every one of you: if you see my face, or hear my name, or take refuge with me, and if you have faith, I have vowed that you will all become Buddhas before I do. As long as one of you hasn’t become a Buddha, I will wait for you. I will wait for one life, two lives, one great aeon, two great aeons, three great aeons, one hundred great aeons, ten thousand great aeons—I will wait for you. So this has a similar meaning to the Sutra text where it says they “Happily dwell in birth and death.” Although abiding in birth and death, they have ended birth and death. Therefore, birth and death and Nirvana are the same. The Bodhisattva dwelling in the first of the Ten Dwellings is happy to dwell in birth and death. He does not detest birth and death.

Those of the Two Vehicles detest birth and death. “Ah, birth and death is too dangerous! I don’t want to get involved in it again.” They are like frightened children who have taken a loss and don’t want to do so again. Those of the Two Vehicles can’t stand the idea that they haven’t ended birth and death, and so they insist on doing so. The Bodhisattvas are happy to dwell in birth and death. Then they give themselves over to…

Guiding the world and effecting the eradication of evil karma. “Guiding” means that they are a place of refuge for living beings. They lead the whole world, causing all living beings to cast the deviant aside and return to the proper—go back from confusion and return to enlightenment. They cause all living beings not to do evil and to offer up all kinds of good acts. That is, to cause them to get rid of bad karma.

Using the supremely wonderful Dharma to constantly instruct. They rely on the most wonderful Buddhadharma—the most supreme Buddhadharma—to teach and transform all living beings.

Praising the unsurpassed Dharma. They extol the unsurpassed Dharma doors.

Studying the Buddhas’ merit and virtue. They cultivate and study the merit and virtue of all the Buddhas.

Being born in the presence of all Buddhas and constantly being gathered in and received by them. They are always born during the time when a Buddha is in the world and are always received and accepted by those Buddhas.

Expediently proclaiming in the stillness of samadhi. They use the Dharma door of provisional and clever expedients to proclaim all the doctrines of the teachings, and they cultivate the samadhi which is still and quiet.

Praising the leaving far behind of the revolving wheel of birth and death. Although they themselves are happily dwell in birth and death, they praise the practice of separating far from birth and death and the transcending of the revolving wheel.

And acting as a refuge for suffering living beings. For all living beings who are in misery, they act as a place of refuge, as a teacher and transformer.

In the Tripitaka, there’s a very short Sutra called The Buddha Speaks on the Demise of the Dharma Sutra. It says what it’s like in the Dharma- Ending Age. A few days ago, I told Kuo Chen to look it up. If you want to investigate how it is when the Dharma is about to become extinct, you should look into it. It’s a very short Sutra, but it says that in the Dharma Ending Age, the Shurangama Sutra will be the first to disappear. The Buddha Standing Samadhi Sutra will vanish next, because this Sutra also represents the orthodox Dharma. Why does the Shurangama Sutra disappear first? It’s because the Shurangama Sutra speaks of people’s faults too clearly. The people of deviant views and knowledge can’t remain. When the Shurangama Sutra is in existence, people must have orthodox views and knowledge and follow precepts. When there is no Shurangama Sutra, deviant people don’t get exposed so clearly. So Great Master Ngo I said, “People say that the Shurangama Sutra is false. No matter who says it is false, I think it was spoken by the Buddha. If the Buddha did not speak it, it couldn’t be so logical and orderly. If the Buddha himself manifested now and told me that the Shurangama Sutra was false, I would think it was a demon speaking and wouldn’t believe him.” Because of this, if we want to uphold the orthodox Dharma, we must deeply believe in the Shurangama Sutra and not have as much as a hair of doubt. So the Shurangama Sutra is representative of the orthodox Dharma. As long as there is the Shurangama Sutra, it’s the time of the orthodox Dharma. Without it, it’s the Dharma Ending Age.

So, the left home and lay people at Gold Mountain Monastery can’t doubt it. Don’t listen to the stupid, senseless people who claim it is spurious. You can’t believe them. But people are that way. If you tell them what is proper, they don’t believe it. If you speak of what is improper, they believe it easily. People can learn bad things without studying them—they understand on their own. If someone tries to teach them what is good, grabs them by the ear and says to their face, “Believe in this, it’s real,” they won’t believe, because people are just that strange. Those of deviant knowledge and views are many. Therefore, the Buddha said, “Living beings are easy to save, but people are hard to save.” People are living beings; they are the smartest of the myriad creatures—too smart—so they are hard to save. It is easy to save living beings but not easy to save people, for people have too much false thinking and it’s hard to influence them towards the good.

Sutra:

“Why is that? From a desire to increase and expand the minds of the Bodhisattvas within the Buddhadharma. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another.”

Commentary:

“Why is that? From a desire to increase and expand the minds of the Bodhisattvas within the Buddhadharma. Why? Previously ten kinds of causal conditions were enumerated—ten dharmas which we are exhorted to diligently practice. Why? To cause all the Bodhisattvas—the Bodhisattvas who have just resolved their minds, Bodhisattvas who practice the Bodhisattva Way, the Bodhisattvas who cultivate the six perfections and the ten thousand conducts—to expand their minds, so that in the Buddhadharma their Bodhi hearts get bigger every day.

When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another. No matter when or where, if they hear the Dharma, they can understand on their own, and on hearing the Dharma they can become enlightened. They can hear one thing and know ten; they don’t need to be grabbed by the ear and spoken to face to face. So the Bodhisattvas’ vast Bodhi hearts get bigger for this reason.

II The Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva’s dwelling of the Ground of Regulation? This Bodhisattva produces ten kinds of thoughts towards all living beings.

Commentary:

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva, wishing to speak of the Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation, again calls out, “Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva’s dwelling of the Ground of Regulation? What is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation, the Second Dwelling? This Bodhisattva produces ten kinds of thoughts towards all living beings. This Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation, with regard to all living beings, conceives of ten kinds of thoughts to teach and transform them. Therefore, it is called the Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation.

Sutra:

“What are the ten? They are: The thought of benefitting; the thought of great compassion; the thought of peace and happiness; the thought of peaceful dwelling; the thought of pity; the thought of gathering in; the thought of protection; the thought of identity to oneself; the thought of acting as teacher; and the thought of being a guiding master. Those are the ten.

Disciples of the Buddha, this Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten Dharmas. What are the ten? They are: studying and practicing much learning; being at ease in quietude; drawing near good knowing advisors; speaking in a harmonious and pleasant manner; speaking at the proper time; not being timid or fearful; thoroughly understanding the principle; cultivating in accord with Dharma; leaving stupidity and confusion far behind; and peacefully dwelling and not moving. Why is that? From a desire to increase the Bodhisattvas’ great compassion towards all living beings. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another.

Commentary:

There are ten thoughts. “What are the ten? They are: The thought of benefitting, this is to benefit all living beings, not oneself. The thought of great compassion is always being greatly compassionate at heart to living beings. Compassion pulls them out of suffering. The thought of peace and happiness. If living beings are not at peace, you resolve to cause them to be peaceful and without fear, with the thought of peaceful dwelling , causing all living beings to peacefully dwell steadfast in the Bodhi Way. The thought of pity. Bodhisattvas constantly have thoughts of pity towards all living beings. They see that all living beings are upside down, stupid, confused, and senseless, and so they pity them.

The thought of gathering in. Bodhisattvas always wish to accept and receive living beings. If living beings have some flaw, they gradually lead them to change, using thoughts of acceptance.

The thought of protection. Bodhisattvas resolve to protect the Proper Dharma and cause it to remain permanently.

The thought of identity to oneself. Bodhisattvas resolve that if one person has no food, it is the same as if they themselves have not eaten; if one person has no clothing, it is the same as if they themselves have no clothes to wear. Seeing living beings in pain, it is as if they too, were in pain.

The thought of acting as teacher. Bodhisattvas always wish to keep in mind that they should teach and transform living beings and act as their good knowing advisors.

And the thought of being a guiding master. This is the mind of the Buddha. The Bodhisattvas are as compassionate and generous as the Buddha. Those are the ten. These are the ten kinds of thoughts that a Bodhisattva should resolve himself upon.

“Disciples of the Buddha,” Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva calls out again, “ this Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten Dharmas. Bodhisattvas on the Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation must exhort others to study these dharmas. Then, should they themselves not study them? No, they too must study them and encourage others to do so as well.

What are the ten? They are: studying and practicing much learning. They themselves should recite Sutras and listen to lectures, study Buddhism and encourage others to do the same.

Being at ease in quietude is to dwell in a still and quiet place to cultivate.   
Drawing near good knowing advisors is also to avoid bad friends.

Speaking in a harmonious and pleasant manner. Bodhisattvas speak in a pleasant way so that people like to hear them.

Speaking at the proper time. When Bodhisattvas speak, they do so when it is appropriate, and when it is not, they don’t speak. They know when it is time to speak and when it isn’t time to. They don’t casually chat. They know when the time is right and when the opportunity is right; otherwise, they don’t carry on all day long doing a lot of totally useless talk.

Not being timid or fearful. Bodhisattvas shouldn’t have any fear in their hearts, and they should exhort others not to have fear.

Thoroughly understanding the principle—they understand the general principles of all the Sutras.   
Cultivating in accord with Dharma—they rely on the Dharma which the Buddha spoke to cultivate.

Leaving stupidity and confusion far behind. They destroy ignorance, and peacefully dwelling and not moving, are secure and unmoving in their cultivation of concentration.

Why is that? Why are they like that? From a desire to increase the Bodhisattvas’ great compassion towards all living beings. They exhort them to study these Dharmas so that the Bodhisattvas’ compassion with regard to all living beings will increase.

When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself. When they hear the Buddhadharma, they will understand it on their own. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another. It is not necessary for the Good Knowing Advisor to exert himself and be like a softhearted old woman who scolds in order to teach and transform them.

III. The Dwelling of Cultivation

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. What is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Cultivation? This Bodhisattva uses ten kinds of conduct to contemplate all dharmas.

Commentary:

After Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva finished speaking of the Second Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation, he talked about the Third Dwelling, The Dwelling of Cultivation. So he said, “Disciples of the Buddha. What is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Cultivation?” What is called the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Cultivation? How do they cultivate? This Bodhisattva uses ten kinds of conduct to contemplate all dharmas. He contemplates all dharmas using ten kinds of methods of cultivation. Cultivation—at all times one should cultivate. Walking, standing, sitting, and lying down is all cultivation. At all times our minds should constantly practice giving. Giving means giving to others; it is not telling others to give to oneself. Left-home people always give, but if they do it by telling others to give to them, and do not give to others, they give to themselves. However, the most important things to give away are your greed, anger, and stupidity.

You should also constantly cultivate holding precepts. That is not doing any evil and reverently practicing all good—stopping evil and preventing error. To stop evil is to diligently cultivate precepts, samadhi, and wisdom. And to prevent error is to put to rest greed, hatred, and stupidity.

If you constantly hold precepts, that is the Dwelling of Cultivation. Patience means at all times one should practice patience. It is not just being patient when being hit or scolded, but being patient with whatever it is you don’t like—bearing up, enduring. You should be patient when what you don’t like happens. When a situation comes up, you should recognize it and not be turned by it. That is patience. If you can cultivate the practice of patience at all times—and have patience with heat, patience with cold, patience with hunger, patience with thirst, patience with wind, patience with rain—then you can bear all the states you don’t like. It is said that when the tide goes against you and you can accept it, then you will nourish your Bodhi roots. If you can’t bear it, you won’t attain the Paramita of Patience. If you can be patient, you can attain paramita and arrive at the other shore.

Vigor refers to vigor of both body and mind. For instance, you think, “Morning and evening recitation—I certainly will do them. If I don’t that is being lazy. If I do, that is vigor.” Body and mind must both be vigorous. At all times you should think, “I should diligently cultivate precepts, samadhi, and wisdom and put to rest greed, hatred, and stupidity. Aside from morning and evening recitation, I will be vigorous at sitting in meditation.” If you sit in meditation and fall asleep, that is not Ch’an. Besides sitting in Ch’an, all the work you do should be done with vigor. To work vigorously and straightforwardly is also cultivation. Cultivation is just to keep you from engaging in false thinking. All the Dharma doors are for the purpose of counteracting your false thinking. You must be vigorous in body and in mind. Ch’an samadhi is also cultivation. In the midst of your busy schedule you should cultivate Ch’an samadhi. Why?

If you have samadhi, you can give rise to wisdom. You must sit for a long time, and then it’s Ch’an. When you sit and your legs start to hurt, don’t wiggle or move them. You must endure the pain. When the pain passes, it won’t hurt any longer, but if you don’t wait for the pain to pass, then every time you sit in meditation, it’s going to hurt. When you have finally sat through the pain, your legs will no longer hurt. The longer you can sit the better.

After sitting a long time,   
it turns into Ch’an.   
After staying in one place   
for a long time,   
You develop affinities.

So you have to use an extended period of time to cultivate Ch’an samadhi, and that too is the Dwelling of Cultivation.

You should also practice Prajna, which is to study of all Sutras and develop your wisdom. But you must have proper knowledge and proper views, not deviant knowledge and deviant views—or you’ll end up with deviant wisdom; if you have proper knowledge and views, you’ll have proper wisdom. Diligently study Prajna and don’t be lazy. In cultivation, what is to be feared is laziness. If you are lazy, your Bodhi fruit will dry up. So diligently cultivate precepts, samadhi, and wisdom; and eradicate greed, hatred, and stupidity. The Dwelling of Cultivation is diligently cultivating the six paramitas and ten thousand modes of conduct. There are said to be ten conducts. These ten engender a hundred conducts, which in turn produce a thousand conducts, which further give birth to ten thousand conducts. The Avatamsaka Sutra speaks of dharmas in tens to represent the dharmas as being multi-layered and endless, inexhaustible, layer upon layer without end.

Thus it is that this Bodhisattva uses ten kinds of conducts to contemplate all dharmas, to observe the Real Mark of all dharmas.

Sutra:

“What are the ten? They are: Contemplating all Dharmas as impermanent.

Commentary:

“What are the ten? What are the ten methods for contemplating and practicing the Dharma-doors for cultivation? They are: Contemplating all Dharmas as impermanent. The first practice is to contemplate all dharmas as impermanent. When Shakyamuni Buddha was cultivating on the cause ground he met a rakshasa ghost, and this rakshasa ghost ate people. The ghost spoke a two line verse, saying, “All dharmas are impermanent, characterized by production and extinction.” When the Buddha heard these two lines of verse, he was very happy and said, “What you are saying is Buddhadharma. There should still be two more sentences. When the Buddha spoke, he spoke in four-line verses, so please speak them for me.” The rakshasa ghost stared with his red eyes and said, “You want to hear Dharma; I need to eat! I’m so hungry, I can’t speak Dharma. If you let me eat you, then I will speak the Dharma.” Shakyamuni Buddha said, “Okay, but first I have to hear the Dharma. If I don’t hear the Dharma and have to die, my heart won’t be content.” “O.K.”, said the rakshasa ghost.

“When production and extinction are extinguished,   
That still extinction is bliss.”

After the rakshasa finished speaking, he wanted to eat, but Shakyamuni Buddha said, “Now wait a minute…”

The rakshasa said, “What? Are you backing out?”

“No, you can eat me, but first I have to carve the verse on a tree, and in the future, people will be able to cultivate according to it.”

“O.K.”, said the ghost, and the Buddha carved it into the tree trunk; but then he still wanted the rakshasa to wait. He said, “Wait a minute.”

The rakshasa ghost said, “Wait for what? You’ve written it already.” Shakyamuni Buddha said, “The words on the tree will be eroded by the wind and rain. Wait while I chisel the verse in stone, and then it will not disappear.”

The rakshasa ghost thought it over and said, “Fine”, and Shakyamuni Buddha carved it into a rock. Then he said, “O.K., rakshasa ghost, you can eat me now,” and he shut his eyes waiting to be eaten. He waited perhaps five minutes, and the rakshasa ghost hadn’t eaten him. When he opened his eyes, he found that the rakshasa ghost was gone! Then he looked into the sky and saw that the rakshasa ghost was actually a god who had come to test him. “Good indeed, good indeed”, he said. “You would give up your life for the sake of two lines of verse. You are really vigorous!”

So, all dharmas are impermanent. Dharmas characterized by production and extinction are all impermanent. Non-produced and non-extinguished dharmas are also impermanent. All and everything in the world is impermanent. Basically, in the principle substance of the Real Mark, there is nothing permanent or impermanent. There is nothing which is permanent; there is also nothing impermanent, when you speak of it in terms of the genuine Dharma.

In cultivating, there are ten kinds of related contemplations to practice:

* Contemplate impermanence.
* Contemplate all as suffering.
* Contemplate all as without self; all dharmas are without self.
* Contemplate food as impure. Food is all unclean. Its seeds, causes and conditions are all impure. For example, we eat food which grows out of the earth, and the earth is basically very dirty, but we don’t look into it very deeply and think it’s okay to eat these things. Meat is even more impure.
* In all worldly things, there is nothing worth clinging to and nothing which is pleasurable.
* Death. In the future, you will die.
* After dying there is impurity. Worms grow in the corpse and eventually it turns into a skeleton. It’s impure in all kinds of ways.
* Annihilation—going out of existence.
* Separation.
* The end. Non-existence. Everything whatsoever is this way.

So, the first practice is to contemplate impermanence. What is impermanent?

Every thought is impermanent. When the following thought arises, the former thought ends. When yet another thought arises, the former thought is done. There is impermanence in every thought. There is production and extinction in every thought. Therefore, you must first contemplate impermanence.

Sutra:

“All dharmas as suffering; all dharmas as empty; all dharmas as without self; all dharmas as without creation; all dharmas as without flavor; all dharmas as non-real names; all dharmas as without location; all dharmas as apart from discrimination; and all dharmas as lacking actuality. Those are the ten.

Commentary:

“All dharmas means that within every dharma, these qualities may be found in part.

As suffering. There are limitless and boundless kinds of suffering. In general, they may be spoken of as the three sufferings:

* The suffering within suffering,
* The suffering of decay, and
* The suffering of process.

The suffering within suffering means that within suffering more suffering is generated. Suffering is added to suffering. Suffering—suffering without end; endless suffering piled upon suffering. This is the hardship of poverty and misery.

The suffering of decay means that originally you weren’t suffering; you enjoyed a bit of the taste of happiness. But then things went bad. Those who are wealthy and honored may suddenly have an accident, be robbed, or fire or earthquakes may strike, or perhaps a hurricane will hit and destroy all of their riches. The wealthy endure the suffering of decay.

The suffering of process means that, if one does not suffer either of the first two, still one grows up, grows old, and then dies. The unceasing change in every thought is the process of life which no one can avoid.

There are also the eight sufferings:

* Suffering of birth,
* Suffering of old age,
* Suffering of sickness,
* Suffering of death,
* Suffering of separation from loved ones,
* Suffering of being near those you hate,
* Suffering of not getting what you seek, and the
* Suffering of the blaze of the five heaps.

How can birth be said to be a form of suffering? When we are born, it is as painful as for a live turtle to have its shell ripped off. Then, when you get old, you grow deaf and blind. Your teeth fall out and so your food seems tasteless. Both your legs retire. You’d like to go east, but they won’t go east; you’d like to go west, but they won’t go west. You aren’t free to move around at all. Then, if you get sick, so sick that you can’t even move, that, too, is suffering. Sickness, in all its forms, is suffering.

Dying is as painful as for a live cow to be flayed. When a man and woman love each other, some special circumstance may arise, forcing them to separate. This is also suffering. On the other hand, you may not like someone, you may try to get away from him, but then you run into someone exactly like him. People all have ambition and greed. If your greed is frustrated, if you don’t get what you seek, that is suffering. If you don’t attain your aim, that is suffering. The five heaps: form, feeling, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness, are like a raging fire which no amount of water can douse. If you were to speak in detail, sufferings are limitless and boundless. Thus, all dharmas are suffering. However, people in the Saha world think that suffering is bliss. They don’t understand that it is suffering and think that it is happiness. They say, “The world is really fine. What’s all this talk about suffering?” Actually, they are badly mistaken. They don’t recognize suffering when they see it, and mistake it for happiness.

Because all dharmas are impermanent, they are also involved with suffering. Since they are all involved with suffering, they are also to be contemplated as empty and all dharmas as without self. All dharmas are empty, because they have no substantial nature. They are therefore devoid of any existence. Dharmas do not exist of themselves. There are dharmas only because there are people. If there were no people, there would also be no dharmas. All is empty and suffering and without self. Common folk are attached to the self. They can’t put down the idea of a self. If you can view all dharmas as empty, you will know that all dharmas have no self. There is nothing in reality which is the “self”, and there is nothing which belongs to the self. So don’t be attached to the self.

All dharmas as without creation. Since they have no self, all dharmas have no creator.

All dharmas as without flavor. None of the dharmas has the flavor of happiness. If they lack creation, how could they have a flavor? All dharmas as non-real names. No dharmas have a real appellation. All dharmas as without location. Since they have no self, they also have no dwelling place. And all dharmas as apart from discrimination. In all dharmas, you should not engage your discriminating mind. If you have no thoughts of discrimination, then the Real Mark, the principle-substance of all dharmas, manifests.

And all dharmas as lacking actuality. All the above mentioned dharmas have nothing real, firm, and actual to them. They are all illusory—illusory in their production and illusory in their extinction. Therefore, the Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation, the Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Cultivation, and the Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve, should exhaustively contemplate these ten kinds of methods of practice. Those are the ten.

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten dharmas. What are the ten? They are: Contemplating the realm of living beings; the Dharma Realm; the realm of worlds; contemplating the realm of earth; the realm of water; the realm of fire; the realm of wind; contemplating the realm of desire; the realm of form; and the formless realm.

Commentary:

The Great Master Dharma Wisdom called out again, “Disciples of the Buddha. You ought to know, this Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Cultivation, should encourage the study of ten dharmas. He should exhort all beings to study ten methods of practice, and he himself should study them. What are the ten? They are: Contemplating the realm of living beings; the Dharma Realm; the realm of worlds. To “contemplate” means to regard and examine, to employ contemplative wisdom in observing the realm of living creatures.

The realms of living beings are limitless and boundless. Take a look: above are the Bodhisattvas, Sound Hearers, and Ones Enlightened to Conditions. Bodhisattvas are limitless and boundless; Sound Hearers are limitless and boundless; Ones Enlightened to Conditions are also limitless and boundless. So, too, are the gods in the heavens, the asuras, human beings, animals, hungry ghosts, beings suffering in the hells—all these creatures are of countless varieties. Living beings are infinite in kind. If you understand them all—all the different realms of living beings—you can take them all across. It is said,

One exhausts the nature of people;   
One exhausts the nature of oneself;   
One exhausts the nature of things.

The meaning of this saying is: “People have their limits. I have my limits. I know their limits and I know my own. I also know the limits of all things.”

The realm of living beings is unlimited and unbounded. The Dharma Realm, to the end of empty space, is also unlimited and unbounded. Worlds—that is, this world, other worlds, and infinite worlds—if you observe them you’ll realize that they, too, are without limit. However, if you understand them, you’ll know that all these realms are not separate from the thoughts of the mind. The realm of beings, the Dharma Realm, the world-realms, are all created from the minds of living beings. So it is said,

If one wishes to understand fully   
All Buddhas of the three periods of time,   
One should contemplate the nature of the Dharma Realm:   
Everything is made from mind alone.

Contemplating the realm of earth; the realm of water; the realm of fire; the realm of wind. Not only must you understand the causes and conditions at work in the realm of living beings, the realm of the Dharma, and the realm of the worlds, but you must also observe the realms of earth, water, fire, and air—the four elements. Each of the four elements has a major factor which contributes to its creation. The major factor in the element of earth is its quality of bulk. The earth is made of differing sections: mountains, rivers, and the various shapes it takes. The false thinking involved in contemplating the bulk and shape of the earth is the major factor for the arisal of the realm of earth—inner and outer. Inwardly, the element of earth is present in our bodies. Outwardly there is the earth, which is our planet.

False thinking in terms of moisture, or wetness, is the major factor for the arisal of the realm of water—again, inner and outer. Inwardly there are liquids in our bodies and outwardly there is water on the earth.

False thinking in terms of utility is the major factor in the arisal of the realm of fire. Fire is useful in the ability to burn things. Inwardly, our bodies are warm and outwardly there is fire on the planet.

False thinking in terms of floating is the major factor in the arisal of the realm of wind—inner and outer. Earth, air, fire, and water combine to make our bodies. When they disperse, each returns to its origin. Moisture returns to the element of water; heat returns to the element of fire; solidity returns to the element of earth; air returns to the element of wind.

Contemplating the realm of desire; the realm of form; and the formless realm. The realm of desire refers to the living beings in the realm of the six desire heavens, and the limitless and boundless causes and conditions surrounding them.

Although beings in the realm of form have form, they have no material substance. They can manifest a “form”, but they have no real substance. They cannot be seen with ordinary human eyes. One must first have the penetration of the heavenly eye in order to see the gods in the heavens of form. In the formless realm they don’t even have the appearance of form. All they have is consciousness.

The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Cultivation should exhort all living beings to cultivate these ten dharmas. He should study them himself as well.

Sutra:

“Why is that? From a desire to make bright the wisdom of the Bodhisattvas. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another.

Commentary:

“Why is that? The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Cultivation contemplates ten kinds of dharmas in his cultivation. Why is this? From a desire to make bright the wisdom of the Bodhisattvas. This is because he wishes to lead the Bodhisattvas on the Dwelling of Cultivation to have bright wisdom, great wisdom. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another. When they hear the Dharma, they can return the light and reverse the illumination, look within, and thus understand the doctrines—the Dharma. Day by day their wisdom increases in brilliance, and therefore they do not necessarily need a Good Knowing Advisor’s teaching. They can look within and unite with the doctrines of the Dharma, and practice it themselves; and not because of the instruction of another.

IV. The Dwelling of Noble Birth

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. What is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Noble Birth? This Bodhisattva is born from within the sagely teaching. He accomplishes ten dharmas. What are the ten? They are: Never retreating; deeply bringing forth pure faith in the presence of all Buddhas; well contemplating dharmas; comprehensively knowing all living beings; countries; worlds; karmic actions; retributions; birth and death; and Nirvana. Those are the ten.

Commentary:

“Disciples of the Buddha. Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva called out again, “All of you great disciples of the Buddha, don’t you know what is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Noble Birth? What is the fourth of the Ten Dwellings, that of Noble Birth? This is a rhetorical question. This Bodhisattva is born from within the sagely teaching. This Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Noble Birth is born out of the sagely teaching the Buddha spoke. He accomplishes ten dharmas. Within this dwelling, the Bodhisattva accomplishes ten kinds of dharmas. What are the ten? They are: Never retreating. A Bodhisattva only goes forward with vigor and never retreats. He diligently cultivates the six paramitas and ten thousand conducts and is never lazy. He never takes a rest and he never fears suffering. Cultivation is just going forward with vigor. Don’t retreat. There’s a common saying which is appropriate:

If you stand still,   
You fall two and a half miles behind.

If you just stand there, you’ll fall way behind everyone else. If you’re vigorous, you won’t fall behind. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Noble Birth attains non-retreat in position, thought, and practice. He is at the position of the Dwelling of Noble Birth and doesn’t retreat to the Two Vehicles to be a Shravaka or Pratyekabuddha again.

Non-retreat in thought means that his every thought is one of bringing forth the Bodhi heart and one of heroic vigor. In every thought he is never lazy, never retreats, and is never upside down. He would never be turned by ignorance, greed, hatred, or stupidity. Non-retreating in practice means that in every life he practices the Bodhisattva Way and cultivates the six paramitas and ten thousand conducts. So he doesn’t retreat in his cultivation. Because he has the three non-retreats, he never, never turns back and therefore, he is capable of deeply bringing forth pure faith in the presence of all Buddhas. He always worships and respects all Buddhas, praises the Thus Come Ones, cultivates the giving of offerings, repents of and reforms all karmic faults, and follows the Buddhas in study. He cultivates these practices in the presence of all Buddhas. Deeply—that is the opposite of shallow. It means very, very profoundly. The pure faith is a clear and pure belief which does not waver between faith and doubt. You must not have a hair’s breadth of doubt about the Buddhadharma or you won’t obtain a response. You must not have a speck of doubt; that is pure faith. Well contemplating dharmas— he is skilled at contemplating the Dharma Realm, that is, always understanding how the nature of the Dharma Realm does not go beyond the mind.

Comprehensively knowing all living beings. He clearly knows the basic dispositions of living beings, countries and worlds. The worlds in the ten directions are created, dwell, decay, and become void. Karmic actions. The karma living beings create—the good and evil karma, and all karmic activity—and, retributions—the retributions they receive. Birth and death. How they are born, how they die, and how to end birth and death: share-section birth and death and change birth and death. Share-section: you have your share: I have mine. Change birth and death: those of the Two Vehicles have ended the share-section birth and death but not change birth and death. Change birth and death is found in thought after thought—the unceasing production and extinction of thoughts. Bodhisattvas can end change birth and death. These two kinds of death must be forever terminated.

And Nirvana. Nirvana is birth and death; birth and death are Nirvana. Birth and death: birth follows death; death follows birth. Nirvana is ending birth and death. Most people think that Nirvana is “still extinction”. Actually, Nirvana is the attainment of permanence, bliss, true self, and purity—the four virtues of Nirvana. In this state there is no birth and death. Those are the ten. The Bodhisattvas on the Dwelling of Noble Birth should accomplish these ten dharmas.

The birth and death of people depends on the karma they have done. If they have done good karma, they ascend; if they have done bad karma, they descend. When one dies, at the very end the eighth consciousness leaves the body. At that time, if it goes from the upper part of the body, one is born in the three good paths; if it goes from the lower half, one is born in the three evil paths. How do you know which way it leaves? The place from which it leaves is still warm. If the soles of the feet are warm, it left from there. From this you can determine in which path a person has been reborn. This is a general statement. But if you do good, you will be born in the three good paths; if you do evil, you will be born in the three evil paths. That is certain. During the first forty-nine days after death, people go through a lot of judgements. After they are judged, if their good karma is heavier, they’re born in the three evil paths. If you would like to not die, you must first be a living dead person. That means your eyes don’t see things, your ears don’t hear, your mouth doesn’t say anything; you are just like a living dead person. If you can be a living dead person, you can end birth and death. It’s not that easy to be a living dead person.

The eyes see forms outside,   
but inside there is nothing.   
The ears hear defiling sounds,   
but the mind does not know.

That’s the way a living dead person should be.

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten dharmas. What are the ten? They are: comprehensively knowing the Dharmas of all Buddhas of the past, future, and present; cultivating and amassing the Dharmas of all Buddhas of the past, future, and present; perfecting the Dharmas of all Buddhas of the past, future, and present; and comprehensively knowing the sameness of all Buddhas. Why is that? From a desire to progress within the three periods of time and obtain sameness of mind. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another.

Commentary:

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva feared that all the Bodhisattvas within the Avatamsaka Dharma Assembly would not be attentive to the Dharma, so he called out, “Disciples of the Buddha. This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten dharmas. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Noble Birth—that kind of Bodhisattva—should exhort others to cultivate the ten kinds of Dharma doors and also cultivate them himself. If you only exhort others to cultivate and you yourself do not cultivate, that is intellectual zen. If you want to exhort others to do it, first you have to do it yourself. What are the ten? What are the ten Dharma doors? They are: comprehensively knowing the Dharmas of all Buddhas of the past, future, and present; that is, understanding and knowing clearly the Dharmas spoken by all Buddhas of the past, present, and future. All should be understood.

Cultivating and amassing the Dharmas of all Buddhas of the past, future, and present. It is not enough just to know; you have to actually put them into practice. If you know one part of Buddhadharma, you should put one part into practice. If you know two parts, you should put two parts into practice. To “amass” means to gather from few to many, from small to great. To cultivate the Dharma of the six paramitas and ten thousand conducts, you must do so level by level, practice upon practice. Cultivate and accumulate the Dharma doors of all Buddhas of the past, present, and future.

Perfecting the Dharmas of all Buddhas of the past, future, and present. Upon knowing them, you have to cultivate, and then you can be certified. You must take the six paramitas and ten thousand practices—all the Dharma doors—and cultivate them to perfection. Perfect means not deficient. All is full and complete. There is neither a bit too much nor a bit too little. This is just the same as the adornment with blessings and wisdom of all Buddhas. The six paramitas and ten thousand practices are perfected.

And comprehensively knowing the sameness of all Buddhas. You also clearly know that all Buddhas are impartial and that all the Bodhisattvas’ dharmas are also impartial. Why is that? From a desire to progress within the three periods of time and obtain sameness of mind. Why do you want to encourage the study of these ten kinds of Dharma doors? It is to cause the Bodhisattvas of the three periods of time—past, present, and future—to make progress and to have impartial minds.

When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself. They understand the Dharma which they hear as soon as they hear it, not from the teachings of another. There is no need to have someone teach them. Hearing one, they understand a thousand. So, there is no reason for others to teach them.

V. The Dwelling of the Endowment With Skill-In-Means

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. What is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of the Endowment With Skill-In-Means? All the good roots that this Bodhisattva has cultivated are used to save and protect all living beings; to benefit all living beings; to make all living beings happy; to have sympathy for all living beings; to liberate all living beings; to cause all living beings to separate from all disasters; to cause all living beings to escape from the suffering of birth and death; to cause all living beings to produce pure faith; to completely subdue all living beings; and to cause all living beings to certify to Nirvana.

Commentary:

“Disciples of the Buddha.” Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva again called, “All of you disciples of the Buddha, What is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of the Endowment With Skill-In-Means? All the good roots that this Bodhisattva has cultivated , the good roots the Bodhisattva who is on the Dwelling of the Endowment with Skill-in-Means has planted through his cultivation of the six paramitas and the ten thousand conducts, in cultivating blessings and wisdom—all of those good roots--are used to save and protect all living beings.” He is not out for himself. When all of you read this section of text you should return the light and look within, and see if all the good roots you plant and the things you do are for the sake of saving and protecting all living beings. You should not listen to the Sutra as if you were listening to pleasant songs or music and not look within yourself. When you hear this section of text, you should ask, “Why do I cultivate? Is it for the sake of saving and protecting all living beings, or is it that I am a Self-Ending Arhat? Is it the case that I eat and get full myself and want to end my own birth and death? Or is it that I benefit others and the public? Do I save and protect myself, or do I save and protect all living beings? Am I selfish or profit-seeking?” You should ask yourself, “Why do I cultivate?” It’s to save and protect all living beings. Why do I practice the Bodhisattva Way? To benefit all living beings, that is, to benefit others, not myself.” You shouldn’t think all day long, “I’d like to eat some good food, wear some nice clothes, and live in a nice place and be better off than anyone else—enjoy myself more than anybody else.” That’s not it at all. You cultivate in order to benefit all living beings.

You should benefit all living beings, to make all living beings happy. “When living beings encounter disasters, I wish to save them. If they are suffering, I want to cause them to be happy. I wish to make all living beings happy. I’m not out to make myself happy.” If you think, “I am a living being myself, you know. I should make myself happy,” that’s just being selfish, and it is not cultivating the Bodhisattva Way. Those who practice the Bodhisattva Way are only aware of other living beings; they are not aware of themselves. They do everything in their power to benefit living beings. They also do the things they can’t do. They do what can’t be done, no matter what it is. They forget about themselves and don’t think, “What’s in it for me?” If you can really be like that, then you immediately have become a Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of the Endowment with Skill-In-Means. If you have the thoughts of a Bodhisattva, you are a Bodhisattva. If you have the heart of a Buddha, you are a Buddha. So, it is said,

If you’re determined to be a sage,   
you are a sage.   
If you’re determined to be a hero,   
you are a hero.   
If you’re determined to be a loyal minister,   
you are a loyal minister.   
If you are determined to be a great teacher,   
you are a great teacher.   
If you are determined to be a Buddha or Bodhisattva,   
you are a Buddha or Bodhisattva.

It all depends on whether or not you have the determination. So it’s said, “Buddhas are created from people, and Bodhisattvas are cultivated from people.” We, too, are people. Why don’t we think of becoming Buddhas or Bodhisattvas? We should resolve to do so. How? By making all living beings’ happy; and you also need to have sympathy for all living beings. This means seeing living beings’ suffering as your own suffering. “If one living being hasn’t eaten his fill, it’s as if I haven’t fulfilled my responsibility in feeding him. If one living being is cold, it’s as if I haven’t given him clothing to wear.” You must consider others as yourself. Consider the bodies of others as your own. You must have sympathy for all living beings, to liberate all living beings. If living beings are suffering, you must save and liberate them, to cause all living beings to separate from all disasters. Even if it’s impossible, we should still think of a way to cause all living beings to escape all disasters. If we can’t save them all at once, we’ll save them one by one. Whenever a living being has a disaster, we will rescue him from it.

To cause all living beings to escape from the suffering of birth and death.

“If there is a single living being who has not become a Buddha, I will not enter Nirvana.”

“I will cause all living beings to escape the bitter sea of birth and death and ascend the other shore—that is, Nirvana.” To cause all living beings to produce pure faith. Their faith will be clear, pure, and undefiled.

To completely subdue all living beings. “I will get rid of all their afflictions. The stubborn living beings will quit being stubborn, and the afflicted will get rid of their afflictions. They will be tamed. They will renounce the deviant, return to the orthodox, turn back from confusion, and return to enlightenment.”

And to cause all living beings to certify to Nirvana. All living beings will be caused to certify to the wonderful doctrines of Nirvana and attain the happiness of permanence, bliss, true self, and purity.

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten dharmas. What are the ten? They are: knowing the boundlessness of living beings; knowing the limitlessness of living beings; knowing the numberlessness of living beings; knowing the inconceivability of living beings; knowing the limitless forms of living beings; knowing the immeasurability of living beings; knowing the emptiness of living beings; knowing the non-creation of living beings; knowing the lack of existence of living beings; and knowing the lack of a self-nature of living beings.

Commentary:

The great Bodhisattva Dharma Wisdom once again called out,

“Disciples of the Buddha.” He said, “The Bodhisattva in the position of Dwelling in the Endowment with Skill-in-Means, this Bodhisattva, should encourage the study of ten dharmas. He should exhort the study of ten kinds of Dharma doors. What are the ten? They are: knowing the boundlessness of living beings. This Bodhisattva should know that living beings are without bounds. There are twelve categories of living beings and each kind is boundless. Knowing the limitlessness of living beings. And he should know that all living beings—the twelve kinds of living beings—are innumerable. There is no way to count how many there are. Knowing the numberlessness of living beings. He should know that living beings have no limit and no number. Knowing the inconceivability of living beings. He should know that living beings are ineffably wonderful. The upside-downness and false thoughts of all living beings are inconceivable, and the fruits of the Way obtained through cultivation are also inconceivable.

In the past, in Thailand, there was a high monk, a Ch’an master, who studied the Theravada teachings. He lived in the mountains and never came down. He just ate whatever he happened upon. It is said,

In his food he did not seek to be full.   
In his dwelling he did not seek comfort.

One eats, but it’s not for certain that one gets one’s fill, and the place where one lives is not necessarily agreeable. So he lived in the mountains and one day when he was in samadhi, a state arose. What was the state? It was inconceivable.

Someone told him, “Tomorrow your old partner is coming to get you and probably give you a lot of trouble. Let’s see what you’ll do.” “Old partner” referred to his wife from a former life, his former spouse. “She is coming to seek you out. If you don’t recognize what’s right before your eyes, you’ll have to start anew.”

So he waited to see what his old partner would be like. The next day, at about the time when he was taking his midday meal, a man who looked like a professor came, accompanied by his daughter. The professor was over fifty, and the girl in her twenties. The professor came up and talked with him and said, “It’s too bitter for you here. This kind of bitter cultivation is hard to take.”

The young girl said to her father that she wanted to marry the old cultivator. Why? She saw how much he was suffering. If he stayed there and cultivated, when he got old there would be no one to take care of him, and in the future it would be very wretched for him. So she wanted to marry him.

The old cultivator said, “No. People who cultivate the Way must not have sexual desire. They cut off desire.”

The young girl began to cry. After all, the old cultivator had been very impolite to her. So she started to cry. The professor got angry and grabbed the old cultivator’s bowl, chop sticks, rice, and flour and took them away, remarking on his being uncivil in having turned down his daughter.

The old cultivator continued to sit in meditation. But as soon as he began to meditate, the image of the young girl weeping appeared before him and there was nothing he could do to get rid of it. “Okay,” he said, “Forget it. I’ll just go on a fast and starve to death and leave it at that.” He began to fast, with the intention of starving himself to death, and so he didn’t even drink water. The first day the young girl still appeared all the time. The second day she also appeared. The third day she appeared off and on. By the fourth day, the image was gone and he was able to regain his former skill, and he didn’t have to starve.

From this it can be seen that living beings’ karmic retributions and their karmic results are inconceivable. Some cultivators of the Way on the one hand cultivate, and on the other strike up false thinking. They cannot control their thoughts of sexual desire. They always have unclean thoughts. Although this may be said to be the karmic retribution from previous lives—the habits accumulated during many lifetimes, many kalpas—still it is because one’s samadhi power is not sufficient and one’s precept power is not strong. How much less to speak of one’s wisdom power! Living beings’ states are inconceivable.

Knowing the limitless forms of living beings. The limitless forms and appearances of living beings, the shapes of their bodies, are not the same. Knowing the immeasurability of living beings. Above it said that living beings are limitless. Now it says they are immeasurable. Basically you cannot know them all by thinking with the mind. Knowing the emptiness of living beings. Living beings are also empty. Birth, dwelling, change, extinction—they are all empty. Knowing the non-creation of living beings. Basically living beings are empty, so how can they create anything? Nothing is created, and there is no one who creates. It is certainly not the case that living beings were created by God. Who made God? You say God made living beings? I could just as well say I made God. Ultimately, who made whom?

Knowing the lack of existence of living beings. You should know that their nature is basically empty. Basically they have no existence. And knowing the lack of a self-nature of living beings. All living beings fundamentally are Buddhas, so there is only a Buddha nature. They have no individual nature, no nature of their own.

Sutra:

“Why is that? From a desire to bring one’s mind to increase and advance in supremacy. With no defiling attachment to the Dharma that one hears, one understands it by oneself, not because of instructions from another.

Commentary:

“Why is that? Why do you want to know all living beings’ boundlessness, limitlessness, numberlessness, inconceivability, limitless forms, immeasurability, basic emptiness, non-creation, and non-existence, and that living beings have no nature of their own? From a desire to bring one’s mind to increase and advance in supremacy. It is for the sake of Bodhisattvas who are upon the Dwelling of Endowment with Skill-in-Means, to cause their minds to be even more supreme, to be even more clear, so that they will have superior wisdom and contemplation and be supreme in everything.

With no defiling attachment to the Dharma that one hears. Whoever is not defiled by attachment to emotional love is one who dwells in the perfection of expedient means. But not having defiling attachments is not easy. If you don’t have massive defilements in your mind, you have small defilements in it. If you don’t have small defilements in your mind, there a still a lot of seeds of defilements in the field of the eighth consciousness. It is not easy to be without them. One understands it by oneself. When the Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of the Endowment with Skill-in-Means hears the Dharma, no matter what Bodhimanda he is in, he will suddenly become enlightened, and he will suddenly comprehend. And it is not because of instructions from another. It will not be necessary for another person to help him become enlightened.

VI. The Dwelling of Rectification of the Mind

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. What is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Rectification of the Mind? The mind of this Bodhisattva, upon hearing ten kinds of dharmas, is in samadhi and does not move. What are the ten? They are: hearing praise of the Buddha, hearing slander of the Buddha, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move.

Commentary:

“Disciples of the Buddha.” Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva again called out, “ What is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Rectification of the Mind? The mind of this Bodhisattva, upon hearing ten kinds of dharmas, is in samadhi and does not move. As it is said,

The eight winds blow and do not move me,   
As I sit upright on a purple golden lotus.

What are the ten? What are these ten kinds of dharmas? They are: hearing praise of the Buddha, hearing slander of the Buddha, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. This says if you praise the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three periods of time, or if you slander the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three periods of time, that Bodhisattva in the Dwelling of Rectification of the Mind nonetheless maintains proper concentration. So whether or not you slander the Buddha or praise the Buddha, his mind is firmly fixed and does not move with regard to the Buddhadharma. “If you praise, go ahead and praise. If you slander, go ahead and slander,” is their attitude.

The believers believe,   
The slanderers slander.   
Each creates his own karma.

Bodhisattvas who dwell in Rectification of the Mind are unmoving in mind. They have no thoughts of praise. If people are wise, when someone praises them they are not happy, and when someone slanders them they don’t become afflicted. It is said,

Slandered or praised, he does not move his mind.

If someone scolds you and says you are really awful, your mind does not move. If someone is without samadhi and you give them a single word of praise, they embrace the praise and run off to the heavens. They are extremely happy. If you say they are bad, they take hold of that “bad” and run off to the hells. Running to the heavens is laughter. If you are always laughing, that is the heavens. If you are always crying, that is the hells. So people who cultivate the Way should not be emotional. Don’t be like one of my young disciples who is so utterly spineless that is you say one sentence he cries. You say two sentences and he cries again. All he can do is cry. He cries too much. That’s meaningless! Basically, as old as he is, he should already be able to defeat all the great philosophers in debate, but here he is and he can’t even combat his crying.

Sutra:

“Hearing praise of the Dharma, hearing slander of the Dharma, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Hearing praise of the Bodhisattvas, hearing slander of the Bodhisattvas, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Hearing praise of the dharmas cultivated by Bodhisattvas, hearing slander of the dharmas cultivated by Bodhisattvas, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Hearing it said that living beings have limits, are limitless, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Hearing it said that living beings are defiled, are undefiled, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Hearing it said that living beings are easy to save, are difficult to save, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Hearing it said that the Dharma Realms have limits, are limitless, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Hearing it said that Dharma Realms are created, are destroyed, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Hearing it said that Dharma Realms exist, that Dharma Realms do not exist, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. These are the ten.

Commentary:

“Hearing praise of the Dharma, hearing slander of the Dharma, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. The Bodhisattva dwelling in Rectification of the Mind is more or less like wood and is not much different from clay. But he is still a living being with feelings, which makes him a little different from wood or clay. However, in the fact that his mind does not move, he is like unmoving wood and unmoving clay.

The Bodhisattva Dwelling in Rectification of the Mind hears living beings either praise the Dharma or slander the Dharma and he does not move. It is not that when he hears you praise the Buddha he is happy, and when he hears you slander the Buddha, he is unhappy; or that when he hears you praise the Dharma he is happy, and when he hears you slander the Dharma he is unhappy—just being moved by outer states. His mind and nature do not move. Hearing praise of the Bodhisattvas, hearing slander of the Bodhisattvas, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move.

The “Bodhisattvas” refers to the Sangha. Above, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha—the Triple Jewel—was discussed. When he hears people praise the members of the Sangha, his mind does not delight in it. If he hears someone slander the Bodhisattvas—the Sangha—he does not become afflicted. He just dwells in the Buddhadharma with his mind in samadhi and remains unmoving. That’s how firm his samadhi power is—unmoved by praise or slander. Hearing praise of the dharmas cultivated by Bodhisattvas, hearing slander of the dharmas cultivated by Bodhisattvas, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Hearing praise or slander of the Bodhisattvas’ practice of the Dharma, his mind is in samadhi in the Buddhadharma and he does not move. He hears you praise the Bodhisattvas or slander the Dharmas that Bodhisattvas practice—using all kinds of devices to slander or praise—and his mind is in samadhi in the Buddhadharma and does not move.

Hearing it said that living beings have limits, are limitless, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. He hears that living beings have a limit or have no limit, but his mind does not move. He is not turned by that state. Hearing it said that living beings are defiled, are undefiled, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Hearing that living beings are defiled or undefiled, he simply dwells in the Buddhadharma, and his mind is unmoving and in samadhi.

Hearing it said that living beings are easy to save, are difficult to save, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. On hearing that living beings are not easy to take across or that they are, he does not move his mind. The eight winds blow but do not move him. If faced with praise, ridicule, suffering, bliss, benefit, destruction, gain, or loss—he does not move his mind.

Hearing it said that the Dharma Realms have limits, are limitless, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Hearing that Dharma Realms have limits or do not have limits, his mind does not move.

Hearing it said that Dharma Realms are created, are destroyed, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. Some people say that the Dharma Realm has a time of coming into being and others say it has a time of destruction, but the Bodhisattvas Dwelling in Rectification of the Mind do not move their minds. In the Buddhadharma their minds are in samadhi and do not move.

Hearing it said that Dharma Realms exist, that Dharma Realms do not exist, within the Buddhadharma one’s mind is in samadhi and does not move. On hearing that there are Dharma Realms or that there are no Dharma Realms, he is within the Buddhadharma and does not move his mind. That is, the person turns the state, the state does not turn the person. These are the ten. These are the ten kinds of Dharmas of not being turned by states.

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, this Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten dharmas. What are the ten? They are:

All Dharmas have no marks;   
All Dharmas have no substance;   
All Dharmas cannot be cultivated;   
All Dharmas have no existence;   
All Dharmas have no true actuality;   
All Dharmas are empty;   
All Dharmas have no nature;   
All Dharmas are like an illusion;   
All Dharmas are like a dream;   
All Dharmas have no differentiation.

Commentary:

This passage tells cultivators to cultivate and not to attach to dharmas. Attachment to dharmas is the same as attachment to self.

If you see matters and awaken to matters,   
You transcend the world.   
If you see matters and are confused by matters,   
You fall upon the defiling wheel.

Right within marks you must separate from marks; right within defiling objects you must leave defiling objects. In the world you must transcend the world. How do you transcend the defiling objects while in their midst? Basically you are due to have defiled false thoughts, but you don’t have them. Your body is in the midst of defiling objects, but your mind transcends them. In your mind there is no defilement. Just like a flower in a well which is not defiled by dust, so it is that all thought is empty. The myriad thoughts are empty. How free! The attachment to dharmas is as important to break as the attachment to self. You should not have an attachment to dharmas. Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva calls out, “Disciples of the Buddha. You are all disciples who follow the Buddha’s teaching.” This Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Rectification of the Mind refers to one does not know how many Bodhisattvas. There is not just one, that’s certain.

Therefore, it says, “this” Bodhisattva, meaning this kind of Bodhisattva. This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten dharmas. He should exhort others diligently to cultivate and also do so himself. He himself should cultivate these ten kinds of Dharma doors. If he does not practice, then that is just “head-mouth” Zen—telling others to practice and not doing so himself. You must be an example and actually, truly practice these ten dharmas. What are the ten? They are: All Dharmas have no marks. Basically dharmas have no marks, but if you attach to them, then dharma marks appear. If you are not attached, then people and dharmas are empty. That is no mark. All Dharmas have no substance. Why are all dharmas said to be without marks? It is because all dharmas are separate from marks. Within marks one leaves marks. All dharmas are also without a substantial nature. Therefore it says, “Even Dharma must be renounced.” Even the proper Dharma must be renounced, “How much more what is not Dharma.” If you attach to what is not genuine Dharma, that is a mistake. If you attach to a fundamental substance, then that is even more of a mistake. All Dharmas cannot be cultivated. Don’t attach to which dharmas can be cultivated, because whether dharmas are cultivated or not cultivated depends upon you as a person, not upon the dharmas. The dharmas do not cultivate. That’s not to say that since they cannot be cultivated that we shouldn’t cultivate. It means that the dharmas themselves do not need to be cultivated.

All Dharmas have no existence. All dharmas are basically empty, so what further existence do they have? Therefore it says that they have no existence. All Dharmas have no true actuality. Why are all dharmas said to have no existence? It is because they have no true actuality. The dharmas are methods, just rules.

All Dharmas are empty. If you certify to the emptiness of all dharmas, there simply is nothing at all.

Originally there is not one thing,   
so where can the dust alight?

If you certify to that state, what attachments could you have? What greed, what hatred, what stupidity? All dharmas are empty! Basically there is not one thing, so all dharmas are empty. If you attain certification to that state, then you always have permanence, bliss, true self, and purity. If you truly realize that all dharmas are empty, there are no afflictions whatsoever. If dharmas are empty, how can there be any affliction?

All Dharmas have no nature. Why are all dharmas said to be empty? It is because all dharmas have no nature of their own. The dharmas exist because people exist, and therefore dharmas are useful. If people are empty, of what use are dharmas?

People can promote the Dharma;  
It is not that the Dharma promotes people.

All Dharmas are like an illusion. You should also know that all dharmas are like an illusion, a transformation; they are not real. All Dharmas are like a dream.

A person’s life is a dream.   
A person’s death is a dream.   
In the dream he seems to be   
rich and honored.   
Awakening from the dream,   
he’s as poor as before.

In your dream you get rich, become an official, a mayor, or a president. But when you awake from the dream, you are still in the poorhouse. What does it mean to be poor? It means you do not have the Way. Without the Way you are poor.

Everyday people have dreams,   
Yet they never awaken from those   
yellow rice dreams.

A person put a pot of yellow rice on to cook and then fell asleep. In his dream he became emperor, a high official, a mayor, a top scholar, a Ph.D., and amassed great wealth, had many wives and children, and passed through an entire lifetime—about seventy years. But when he awoke from the dream, the rice wasn’t even ready yet. If you don’t awaken from your dream, you will dream on and on. So all dharmas are like a dream.

All Dharmas have no differentiation. They are not differentiated at all.

Sutra:

“Why is that? From a desire to bring one’s mind to ever increase in vigor, and obtain non-retreating patience with the non-production of dharmas. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another.

Commentary:

When people listen to Sutras they should not use their discriminating mind to listen. We should have no discrimination concerning the Buddhadharmas. “Why is that? Why should we be that way? Why should we break all attachments to dharmas? From a desire to bring one’s mind…It is desiring to cause the Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Rectification of the Mind, and the living beings he teaches…to ever increase in vigor—step by step to have supreme progress.

In the beginning there are things to do,   
But in the end it is non-action.

In the beginning of cultivation you need to rely a bit on marks, but ultimately you must leave marks. This means that people who cultivate must take up the thought of cultivation. But when they accomplish their aim, they must put down that one thought and not have a single thought at all. What worries, what impediments could you have then?

Without impediments you are far apart   
from upside down dream thinking.

Why do you have upside down dream thinking? It is because you have impediments. Impediments in greater terms means that you cannot put down the world. In lesser terms it means you cannot put down the body and mind. The world: “What about my country? What about my family?”

On a small scale, it’s the mind and body.   
On a large scale, it’s the world.

My body…hah! “If I don’t eat for two days, I feel that my body is insulted. Three days and I cry. Four days and I die. The fifth day I go off to rebirth.” You see, that’s being afraid—afraid of this, afraid of that. Go to the mountains and you’re afraid of tigers. Go to the sea, and you’re afraid of whales. “What if they eat me? What will I do?” Take a plane into space and you wonder, “Will it crash?” So you hurry and recite the Buddha’s name, “Namo Amitabha Buddha, Namo Amitabha Buddha, Namo Amitabha Buddha…” Why? For fear this body will die. It is because you cannot put down your body. You are afraid of death. You see what a great impediment it is! If you have no impeding obstructions, then everything is fine. Like one of my disciples: now he has no impeding obstructions. His father is in New York, and he pays no attention to him. He writes no letters and makes no phone calls. That’s having no impeding obstructions. When his young friends invite him to parties or out to play, he doesn’t go. That’s to a certain extent having no impeding obstructions. But then look at Kuo Hui. Although he is called Kuo Hui, Fruit of Return, all he does is think about running away. He wants to go take a look at this and that. That’s not being able to put it down. That’s having impeding obstructions. He hasn’t returned. If he had really returned he wouldn’t have any impediments. If you have no impediments then you have no fear—you are not afraid of anything. Why are you afraid? It is because you have impediments. That is why you are afraid of this and afraid of that. If you didn’t have any impediments, you wouldn’t be afraid of anything. Consider what it would be like if inside there was no body and mind and outside there was no world. Then what could there be to impede you? What could you attach to? To evolve is to make your mind free from impediments. You reach a point where you obtain non-retreating. You obtain irreversible position, irreversible thought, and irreversible conduct, and in all things you do not retreat. What don’t you retreat from? From the patience with the non-production of dharmas. What’s meant by the patience of non-production of dharmas? It means that you don’t see a single dharma produced, and you don’t see a single dharma destroyed. What does that mean? It means that everything is empty. It means that you have experienced the emptiness of dharmas.

People are empty, Dharmas are empty.   
And in the midst of that,   
The self-nature is resplendent.

At that time, everything is clearly understood. At that time, it’s called the patience with the non-production of dharmas, and you can bear it. That’s because when you experience it, basically there is a bit of not being able to stand it, a bit of not being able to bear it. But you are able to bear it. You shouldn’t think that when you don’t see a single dharma produced, and you don’t see a single dharma extinguished, that that is easy to experience. It’s not easy. If you really reach it, and experience it, then you have no worries, no concerns, and you are far from upside down dream thinking. It is ultimately Nirvana.

When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself. Whatever Dharma they hear, they understand it by themselves. They understand it all. They are enlightened on their own. No matter what Dharma you speak, it enlightens them. “The coarse and fine all return to the primary meaning.” When you experience that, then if people scold you or praise you, it’s all the same. It’s just as above when it said, “One’s mind is in samadhi and does not move.” The “not moving” is what Confucius referred to as the Mean.

Before happiness, anger, sorrow,   
and joy arise—that’s the mean.

However, at that time it’s also samadhi. It is also not moving.

Not from the teachings of another. It is not necessary that anyone teach you. The Dharma you hear enables you yourself to awaken and tally with true principle. That is called non-retreating from the patience with the non-production of dharmas. When the Bodhisattva reaches this state, would you say it was wonderful or not? If you ask this and that before you experience it, the questions are useless. To experience it is unspeakably wonderful. It means to be an outstanding person and excel one’s peers,” to be different from ordinary people.

You Americans are all outstanding among your peers, all very intelligent, and you very much like to enjoy yourselves. You are a lot smarter than I am. When I started to cultivate, I recited the Earth Store Sutra and the Dharma Flower Sutra while kneeling on bricks. Basically there were cushions, but I didn’t use them. I was that stupid. My knees broke open and bled. I said, “If you bleed, bleed. I’m not paying any attention.” The incense I burned while I recited was a two-hour stick. I see you now not only sit on Ch’an benches which have foam rubber on them, but also you put more pillows on top of that, and when you kneel you’ve got to have a cushion. You can’t stand to suffer, so you are much more intelligent than your teacher. At that time, I was such a dolt that I didn’t want cushions. I wanted my knees to break open and bleed. I thought it was appropriate. This proves that you are more intelligent than your teacher.

VII. The Dwelling of Non-Retreat

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. What is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Non-Retreat? This Bodhisattva, upon hearing ten kinds of dharmas, is firm and does not retreat. What are the ten? They are: Hearing that there are Buddhas, that there are no Buddhas, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Hearing that there is Dharma, that there is no Dharma, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Hearing that there are Bodhisattvas, that there are no Bodhisattvas, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat.

Commentary:

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva called out again, “Disciples of the Buddha, do you know what is called the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Non-Retreat? It is dwelling in the Bodhi mind and not retreating. What is the Bodhi mind? It is the enlightened mind without ignorance, afflictions, and stupidity, which is continually awake to the fact that all is suffering, is empty, impermanent, and without a self. This is the Dwelling of Non-Retreat. “Bodhisattva” is Sanskrit. Translated it means “Enlightened Sentient Being”—one who enlightens all with sentience. Among all sentient beings there is a sentient being who is enlightened. He understands everything. He is not as stupid as common people, who are selfish and out for self-benefit. Bodhisattvas help others, they do not harm them. A Bodhisattva cannot think “What’s in it for me?” before he does something. He is not out for himself but instead benefits all living beings. Bodhisattvas are open-minded, public-spirited, and not selfish; they want to benefit living beings and don’t want to be benefited by living beings.

In this Dwelling they hear ten kinds of dharmas. Why? This Bodhisattva, upon hearing ten kinds of dharmas, is firm and does not retreat. He does not retreat from the thought of enlightenment. What are the ten? They are: Hearing that there are Buddhas, that there are no Buddhas, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. The Bodhisattva who dwells in Non-Retreat, upon hearing people say that there are Buddhas of the past, present, and future, that there are Buddhas in all the three periods of time, does not retreat from the resolve for Bodhi. Or perhaps on the other hand, he hears that there are no Buddhas of the past, present and future—none whatsoever. There are people who try to cheat you by telling you that there are no Buddhas of the past, present, or future. They cheat those who lack knowledge and wisdom. Ultimately then, what is a Buddha? The Buddha is a guiding Master for living beings of the past, present, and future. He understands everything. Bodhisattvas who truly recognize the Buddha do not move or retreat when they hear others say that there are no Buddhas. It is not that if they hear the Buddha exists they cultivate, but if they hear there is no Buddha they retreat and say, “I’ll believe in Catholicism—God is always in my heart, and I am always in his; I am very close to God.”

A Bodhisattva does not retreat. He recognizes what the Buddha is all about. He recognizes true Dharma, so whether people say that there is or is not a Buddha just depends on their knowledge. If you have wisdom, you can recognize the Buddha. An example is a man who is congenitally blind and cannot see the sun. He does not know what its shape is like. Someone tells him the sun is round, so he says, “Oh, it’s round!” But if someone tells him that the sun is square, he will say, “Oh, it’s square!” Someone else says it is very hot and triangular and is shaped like a piece of metal. Another tells him the sun is oblong and can shine. Oblong and very warm. He may think it’s round or square or triangular or oblong, but he still doesn’t know what the sun is really like. Why? Because he is congenitally blind and does not truly know the shape of the sun.

The stupid man does not know that there are Buddhas, just as the blind man does not know what the sun looks like. A Bodhisattva recognizes the Buddha, so he is not influenced by the words of others. He has eyes and can see the sun. He doesn’t need to debate about it.

Hearing that there is Dharma, that there is no Dharma, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. People say that there is the Buddhadharma or that there is not the Buddhadharma, and within the Buddhadharma his mind does not move. If you say that the six perfections and the ten thousand practices are false and that he should not cultivate—that there is no Buddha, so how could there be a Dharma and it’s useless to cultivate—on hearing all that he doesn’t give up his resolve for enlightenment.

The Bodhisattva dwelling in Non-Retreat does not retreat no matter what he hears. Hearing that there are Bodhisattvas, that there are no Bodhisattvas, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. If he hears others say that the sagely Assembly of Bodhisattvas and Arhats exists, he does not retreat from Bodhi; if he hears there are no Bodhisattvas, he does not retreat. So when he hears the above, that the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha exist or do not exist, in either case his mind does not retreat.

We were talking about blind people who can’t see the sun. Someone with heavy ignorance who does not believe in the Buddha is like a blind man who cannot see the sun. If people want to turn from Buddhism and find some other religion that’s just fine. If you can find a religion with true principle, this is very good. It is just to be feared that one will not look and will not pay attention to whether or not it has true principles. Then it is just the blind leading the blind—one who is blind himself acting as a guide for others. How can he point out the road for others and lead others along the path? Knowing how to find a religion with principle is a good thing; however, Buddhism encompasses everything. The teachings of Buddhism pervade empty space and the Dharma Realm. There is nothing, not the smallest atom, which is not Buddhism. Even the toilet, the filthiest place, is part of Buddhism; it can’t escape from Buddhism. So whether Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, or Taoism, it makes no difference; all are in the Buddhadharma—they do not escape the Dharma Realm.

The Buddhadharma contains all; there is nothing it does not contain. Good and bad, right and wrong, all are included within it. Whoever can run outside of empty space, outside of the Dharma Realm, is not part of Buddhism. But if you cannot run outside of empty space, then you are part of the Buddhadharma. So, I consider all religions as Buddhism; it is just that their work is not the same. They work in different departments, each at a different job. Each does his own work. Because of this, I’m not afraid if someone does not believe in the Buddhadharma. If you believe, that’s good; if you don’t believe, that’s fine too.

The Buddha said that all living beings have the Buddha Nature. All can become Buddhas. If you don’t believe today, you will believe tomorrow. If you don’t believe this week, you will believe next week; or if you don’t believe this month, next month you will; or if you don’t believe this year, next year you will. You say, “No, I won’t!” Then next life you will. If not then, then next life. At the end of this life you can’t control your rebirth, but if you think, “Oh, I should have tried to be reborn, but if you think, “Oh, I should have tried to be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss!” just this thought will make you believe in your next life—to the point that if you don’t believe this kalpa, you will next kalpa. I will wait for you no matter how long it takes. So I don’t fear that my disciples may not believe in the Buddhadharma, or that you will convert to another religion. I will praise you and say, “Good move, good move!” So, the teaching of my Buddhadharma pervades the Dharma Realm. It takes the Dharma Realm as its substance, name, teaching, and sect.

I will watch wherever you run. Wherever you run, you won’t get out of the universe and escape beyond outer space. Here is another analogy. There is a person who can see the moon. He doesn’t like the moon. When he sees it he gets angry. “Why are you always following me?” He runs off to the North, South, East, and West, and it still follows him. Wherever he runs, he never gets out of the moonlight. He goes to the four continents, Jambudvipa, Uttarakuru, Aparagodaniya, and Purvavideha, and the moonlight always stays right with him. The man who can see wants to do away with the moonlight, but there is no way he can avoid seeing it, unless he bores himself into the ground. When he surfaces, he will still see the moon’s light. The Buddhadharma is like the moon. No matter where you run, you cannot run out of the Buddhadharma. All are contained within its light and within its wisdom. So, confused people do confused things, and people with understanding act with understanding. Basically there is no confusion or understanding, and so nothing is going on.

There is nothing happening at all. You cause all your troubles yourself.

There is nothing going on in heaven or earth.   
But stupid people perturb themselves.

Why don’t I fear that my disciples will run away? Because no matter where you run, you’ll come back. I take the Dharma Realm as my substance. Kuo Hui (Fruit of Return) left, but had to return. He tried to find a reason to stay away, but to no avail. He kept trying to think of ways to not come to Gold Mountain. He didn’t want to return, but he had no way not to come back. I asked him why he returned, and he said that he had no way to avoid it. So I don’t fear that my disciples won’t come back; unless I have cheated you. But if what I say is true and not a lie, then those with wisdom cannot fail to recognize it and will eventually come back. The things that people do in the world are all in order to repay debts. When they have paid off their debts, there is nothing more they need to do. You can say that all religions work for Buddhism, just as in a country all the people work for the president. The principle is the same, but there are those who do not know this, who don’t recognize this doctrine. So those who practice the Bodhisattva Way should help and not harm people. Ask yourself, “Why am I so selfish? Why do I only think of my own interests? Why should I want to harm people?” In every matter you should think of others and their welfare and not harm them.

That’s a Bodhisattva’s thought. Bodhisattvas have no self. They ignore themselves and lead others to accomplishment. This is the thought and conduct of a Bodhisattva. We should each ask ourselves, “Why did I come into the world this time? To wear clothes, eat, and live somewhere? Is that it?” If so, you don’t even measure up to a dog! At least dogs watch the door. There is no value to your being a human being. Why did you come into this world? To help the world, to help it be better day by day. Not to fight and be greedy, hateful, and stupid and only know that “I” exist. If you are that kind of person, hurry up and change. Don’t be confused! You should benefit all living beings, then life has some worth. To be a person one should benefit the world. Be virtuous toward others and benefit all countries on earth.

Once there was an old cultivator who did nothing but eat with his disciples. All day long he did no work. All he did was laugh along with his pals. Once the old cultivator had eaten his fill and had nothing to do, so he played a joke on his young disciple. He said, “Everyone likes to be number one. Everyone wants to be famous and to have a position. Instead, let’s say who is the smallest, the lowliest, who is the most worthless, who is really inferior. Whoever loses the debate will be required to eat a piece of candy and drink a bottle of coke!”

“Okay,” said the disciple. “Let’s do it.”

The master said, “I am a dog.”

The disciple said, “I am the dog’s rump.”

The master thought it over and said, “I’m the dog’s excrement.”

The disciple said, “I’m a worm in the dog’s excrement.”

The master said, “What are you doing there?”

He should have said he was eating the dog excrement, but he said he was taking a bath. The master said, “Oh, I’ve lost. You eat two pieces of candy and drink a coke!”

What do you think about that? Don’t laugh. This is not defiled and not pure. If you have a mind that discriminates, you’ll vomit at this story. If you don’t, it’s no problem.

Sutra:

“Hearing that there is Bodhisattva conduct, that there is no Bodhisattva conduct, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Hearing that Bodhisattvas cultivate and escape, cultivate and do not escape, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat.

Commentary:

Within the Ten Dwellings is the Dwelling of Non-Retreat of which two dharmas have been discussed above. Now we will continue with the third. “Hearing that there is Bodhisattva conduct, that there is no Bodhisattva conduct, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. The Bodhisattva of Non-Retreat does not move his mind no matter what he hears, be it praise or slander. His mind does not retreat. Some people say Bodhisattvas basically don’t exist, how much the less can Bodhisattvas’ conduct be spoken of? Within Buddhism itself the Small Vehicle does not admit that there are Great Vehicle Bodhisattvas in the ten directions. The Great Vehicle Bodhisattva puts his feet firmly on the ground, and if someone says that there is or is not Bodhisattva conduct, he remains in a state of unmoving suchness. He is not controlled by words or moved by circumstances, and he deeply recognizes the Buddhadharma. No matter whether others are compliant or opposing, he does not retreat.

Hearing that Bodhisattvas cultivate and escape, cultivate and do not escape, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. People may criticize him, saying, “Why do you cultivate? Though you might cultivate all the time, you’ll still fall into hell. It’s of no use at all to cultivate. You cultivate, but you cannot leave the Triple Realm of desire, form, and formlessness. If you don’t cultivate, it’s still no problem because you are still within the three realms. Basically people are meant to revolve within the three realms. They have no way to get out of the turning wheel of the six paths. So Bodhisattvas who say they can get out of the three realms by cultivating are cheating people.”

On hearing this sort of thing, he doesn’t move. Whether they can get out of the three realms or not, his mind does not move, because his skill has reached the point where he remains in the position of Dwelling in Non-Retreat. Since he deeply understands the Buddhadharma in his mind, even when there is opposition, no matter what others say, he is not going to be moved by their words. He is not moved by any situation or any state, not only not by just these ten dharmas, but by hundreds, thousands, or tens of thousands of dharmas. None can move him. This is the samadhi power of the Bodhisattva who dwells in Non-Retreat.

The non-retreating Bodhisattva does not withdraw no matter what state he hears of.

The eight winds don’t move him,   
As he sits upright in a purple golden Lotus.

If it exists and you say it doesn’t, that is false. If it does not exist and you say it does, that is also false. If you know yourself what is true, no matter what anyone says, you won’t be turned, because the light of wisdom illumines all empty falseness. So it says of the non-retreating Bodhisattva that within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat.

Sutra:

“Hearing that there were Buddhas in the past, that there were no Buddhas in the past, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Hearing that there will be Buddhas in the future, that there will be no Buddhas in the future, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Hearing that there are Buddhas in the present, that there are no Buddhas in the present, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Hearing that the Buddhas’ wisdom is exhaustible, that the Buddhas’ wisdom is inexhaustible, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Hearing that the three periods of time are a single mark, that the three periods of time are not a single mark, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Those are the ten.

Commentary:

“Hearing that there were Buddhas in the past, that there were no Buddhas in the past, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Some say that there were Buddhas in the past, such and such Buddhas; some say that there were none, because only at the time of Shakyamuni Buddha was there a Buddha, and before this there were none. The Theravada monks say this. The non-retreating Bodhisattva clearly understands the principles of the Buddhadharma and is not moved by external states. His mind can move states; states don’t turn his mind. You and I should take a look and see if this Bodhisattva is higher than we are. You think you are wise, but when someone praises you or slanders you, can you stay the same? If you can, you are probably drunk or asleep. Then perhaps you wouldn’t notice the difference between praise and blame. But if you are wide awake, not drunk, dreaming, or drugged, then although your ears hear them both the same, your emotional response is different, because your state is not as lofty as that of this Bodhisattva.

If one sees existence as non-existence,   
one’s mind is naturally at peace.   
When the nature is in samadhi, demons are   
subdued, and every day is happy.   
If false thoughts do not arise, then every place is peaceful.   
Everything is okay and there is no problem.

You should all pay attention to the fact that the person translating today hasn’t eaten for three days. If his voice is weak, it’s because he’s extremely hungry, but he is sincere enough to go ahead and try to translate. He’s a novice who has a Master’s degree and who came to Gold Mountain to go hungry. He does all the ceremonies anyway, bows to the Avatamsaka Sutra, and does all of his other chores. If he can do a little, then he can do more. If he can do more, he can do everything. It is an inconceivable state he exemplifies which is part, though not all, of the Bodhisattva path. So don’t be afraid of starving to death. The Buddha will praise you saying, “Good indeed, good indeed, good man, that you are willing to renounce your body for the sake of the Buddhadharma! You are a true disciple.” That I have a disciple like this who is not afraid of starving means that I have not come to America in vain.

Last year we had six people who didn’t eat for eighteen days. Next year it will be for five weeks. If you dare, sign up. Those who want to leave home have to learn the Forty-Two Hands, the Shurangama Mantra, and have to be able to sit in meditation for two hours straight. Also, you should write a statement of why you want to leave home. If it is for the sake of eating well, wearing robes, or getting rich, then I won’t accept the application. If it’s for the sake of saving living beings and saving yourself because you see that living beings’ sufferings are too many, if it’s for the sake of propagating the Buddhadharma to cause it to spread throughout the world so that the blood, energy, and bones of the Buddha pervade every dust mote throughout every corner of the entire world, then I will consider your application. Write the reasons for your leaving home in Chinese or English. These are the rules for leaving home at Gold Mountain.

Hearing that there will be Buddhas in the future, that there will be no Buddhas in the future, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Hearing that now there is a Buddha or there is not a Buddha, he understands the Buddhadharma and is not moved. He does not retreat; he is not moved by the state. Hearing that there are Buddhas in the present, that there are no Buddhas in the present, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Hearing that the Buddhas’ wisdom is exhaustible, that the Buddhas’ wisdom is inexhaustible, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. Hearing those who don’t understand the Buddhadharma say that the Buddhas’ wisdom has a limit, “There will come a time when the Buddhas, too, will be stupid,” people listen and get upset and say, “What shall we do? We’d better not cultivate,” and they retreat. Hearing this talk, the Bodhisattva’s mind is not moved, and he does not retreat.

Hearing that the three periods of time are a single mark, that the three periods of time are not a single mark, within the Buddhadharma his mind does not retreat. “Which should we believe? Is it that they are the same? Or are they different?” People hear such talk and it throws them into a panic. They don’t know what to do. That’s called retreat. That one thought of ignorance arises, and they retreat. Bodhisattvas don’t have that one thought of ignorance.

Those are the ten. These are the ten kinds of dharmas.

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten kinds of vast, great dharmas. What are the ten? They are: proclaiming that one is many, proclaiming that many are one; texts accord with meaning, meaning accords with texts; non-existence is existence, existence is non-existence; marks are no marks, no marks are marks; no nature is the nature, the nature is no nature.

Commentary:

“Disciples of the Buddha.” Dharma Wisdom again called out, “Disciples of the Buddha.” This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten kinds of vast, great dharmas. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Non-Retreat should encourage and teach all living beings to cultivate and study these ten kinds of vast great dharmas, and he should do so himself as well. What are the ten? What are the ten kinds of vast, great dharmas? Why are they called vast and great? It is because these dharmas are so vast and inconceivable that people fail to believe and fail to understand them. What are the ten?

They are: proclaiming that one is many, proclaiming that many are one, saying one dharma is just all dharmas and all dharmas also are just one dharma; saying all fine motes of dust are just created from one fine mote of dust, and all find motes of dust, when again divided up, are still one fine mote of dust. A single fine mote of dust accumulates into many fine motes of dust, the accumulation of fine dust motes being “proclaiming many are one.” The many are also one.

One basis disperses into ten thousand-fold;   
Ten thousand-fold all return to a single basis.

For example, this great earth is a single basis. Ten thousand-folds are born from this great earth. They grow up from it and are created from it. There are buildings, forests, flowers, plants, and trees; and all of them are begotten by this great earth. All of this will in the future return to the one earth. The flowers, plants, and trees—all living beings—are produced because of this great earth. Although they are not identical, still, they again return to the earth. Thus, “One basis disperses into ten thousand-fold; ten thousand-fold all return to a single basis.”

People’s bodies also have a unity, and that unity scatters into the limitless, and the limitless returns to the unity. If that unity can further become zero, then there is nothing at all. “Empty without a single thing.” That is,

Basically there is not even a single thing,   
So where can the dust alight?

Where are you going to find any dust? There is none. There is nothing whatsoever. If you can awaken to this principle of emptiness, certify to this principle of emptiness, and enter this kind of samadhi of emptiness, then there are no afflictions—there is nothing whatsoever. That’s “One is many, and many are one.”

Texts accord with meaning, meaning accords with texts. When explaining Sutra texts one must follow their meaning. As to “meaning accords with texts,” the meaning must be in harmony with the text. The text must accord with the meaning, and the meaning also must accord with the text. There should be no obstruction of text and meaning. For example, if the text says that in the Trayastrimsha Heaven, Shakra, Chief Among Gods, acts as Chief Among Gods, and if you say, “In the Trayastrimsha Heaven, King Yama acts as Ghost Yama and supervises the Ghosts,” that’s incorrect. That which is correct has been erroneously explained. If you say, “In the Trayastrimsha Heaven, Shakra, Chief Among Gods, governs one set of four continents under heaven,” that is an example of the text following the meaning. Governing one set of four continents under heaven is the meaning. “Meaning accords with text.” The Chief Among Gods who governs one set of four continents under heaven—if you want to take this backwards—is still Shakra, Chief Among Gods. That’s a case where “Texts accord with meaning, (and) meaning accords with texts.”

Non-existence is existence. Non-existence is just wonderful existence. Existence is non-existence. It is just true emptiness. True emptiness does not obstruct wonderful existence, so it say, “non-existence”. Wonderful existence is non-existence, so it does not obstruct true emptiness.

True emptiness is wonderful existence;   
Wonderful existence is true emptiness.

Marks are no marks, no marks are marks. If you are apart from all marks, that is all dharmas. Right within marks, marks are no marks. If you can separate from marks, then just that is all dharmas. Right within marks, you should leave marks. Therefore it says, “Marks are no marks, no marks are marks.” It is right within marks that you should see them as empty. No nature is the nature. Previously it spoke of marks, and now it speaks of the nature. The nature and marks are also non-dual. The nature is no nature. It is right within marks that you should understand the nature. Therefore, “No nature is the nature, the nature is no nature.” Right within marks you should see them as empty, and you also want no nature. Within marks is the nature, and within the nature there are marks. The nature and marks are non-dual; the nature and marks are one suchness.

All of these doctrines are vast, great, and inconceivable. Ordinary people are not able to understand them.

Sutra:

“Why is that? From a desire to bring about increase of vigor, and with respect to all dharmas, be well able to escape. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another.

Commentary:

“Why is that? What are the reasons that one should encourage the study of these ten kinds of vast, great dharmas? From a desire to bring about increase of vigor. In order to cause the Bodhisattvas, the Bodhisattvas of the Ten Dwellings, to be progressively superior, to be progressively victorious, and to augment their vigor, and with respect to all dharmas, be well able to escape. To escape means to understand all dharmas. When one hears the Dharma, the Dharma that one hears, one understands it by oneself. Then one is able to understand it on one’s own, not from the teachings of another.

VIII. The Dwelling of Pure Youth

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. What is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Pure Youth? This Bodhisattva dwells in ten kinds of karma. What are the ten? They are: in physical conduct he does not err. In verbal conduct he does not err. In mental conduct he does not err. He undergoes birth as he intends. He knows the various kinds of inclinations of living beings. He knows the various kinds of understandings of living beings. He knows the various kinds of realms of living beings. He knows the various kinds of karma of living beings. He knows the formations and destructions of world-realms. He has spiritual fulfillments and self-mastery, and his conduct is without obstruction. Those are the ten.

Commentary:

“Disciples of the Buddha.” Here Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva calls out again. He says, “What is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Pure Youth? What does this position involve? This Bodhisattva dwells in ten kinds of karma. The Bodhisattva who dwells in Pure Youth is able constantly to dwell in ten kinds of karma and make no mistakes. What are the ten? What are the ten kinds of karma? They are: in physical conduct he does not err. In what he does with his body he does not make mistakes, whether errors or offenses. In verbal conduct he does not err. In his speech he makes no errors. When he talks, he does not say anything wrong. All he says is right. He absolutely does not say anything incorrect. In mental conduct he does not err. In mental activity he does not err. This means that all the considerations within his mind cannot be the striking up of defiled false thinking. All of you think it over: within the thoughts which people cannot see, the Bodhisattva himself is incapable of striking up erroneous false thinking. The Bodhisattva of the Dwelling of Pure Youth should be that way.

He undergoes birth as he intends. He is reborn according to his own intentions. He is reborn in his next life as whatever he intends to be. He undergoes birth as he wishes.

He knows the various kinds of inclinations of living beings. The Bodhisattva of the Dwelling of Pure Youth knows all the desires of living beings. The various kinds of karma done by the various kinds of living beings, the various kinds of retribution that they undergo, what the desires of all living beings are like—all that is known to him.

He knows the various kinds of understandings of living beings. He knows what it is that each and every living being understands. He knows the various kinds of realms of living beings. He further knows what is done by the living beings in each and every realm. Take a look at living beings. In the realm of bees they make honey. Basically, when bees sting people, it’s very painful, but they make honey which is sweet, and everyone likes to eat it. If you eat a bite of honey and get stung by a bee, it’s uncomfortable. But it’s very sweet to eat if the bees do not sting you. Mosquitoes drink people’s blood, and ants can find things to eat anywhere. There are various kinds of karma in various kinds of realms, and within the twelve categories of living beings, there are further many different kinds of realms within each category.

He knows the various kinds of karma of living beings. He also knows the various kinds of karma done by all living beings. For example, why is a dog a dog? It’s because it created the karma of a dog, so it’s a dog. Cats have done the karma of cats, so they are cats. Why do mice steal food all the time? Be careful, all of you. It’s because while they were people, as Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Shramaneras, Shramanerikas, Upasakas, Upasikas, studying the Buddhadharma, they kept going into the kitchen to steal things to eat. They kept on stealing and turned into mice. You see? It’s hilarious and lots of fun. If you’re not concerned about becoming a mouse, just try it out. This is a kind of karma that’s really not bad at all. So then you say, “After this I won’t steal food from the kitchen, but can I look at it?” Looking is stealing. Two of my disciples came into my room and looked at things and strangely enough, some very important things of mine were lost—they disappeared. Sometimes, even if you look, that’s stealing. So you should be such that,

The eyes see forms and inside there is nothing;   
The ears hear defiling sounds, but the mind does not know.

Today, I put a young disciple of mine in a cage, thinking that this would spur him to cultivate and sit in meditation. Who would have thought that he’d still strike up false thinking, listening to a tapping on the window. When he looked, there was nothing there. That was just the good Dharma Protecting Spirits telling you not to have false thinking, but to cultivate well. They were instructing you, don’t you know? As to the various kinds of karma, there is no way to finish speaking of how many kinds there are. You will undergo the same kind of retribution as the karma you create. If you create cat karma, you’ll be a cat. If you do dog karma, you’ll be a dog. If you do mouse karma, you’ll be a mouse. If you do bee karma, you’ll go off to be a bee. You see, “A thousand changes and ten thousand transformations.” If you have spiritual penetrations, you can be whatever you like. Isn’t that wonderful?

He knows the formations and destructions of world-realms. He knows how the world-realms are produced, and how they will be extinguished in the future. This also means knowing how people are born and how they die. He has spiritual fulfillments and self-mastery, and his conduct is without obstruction. He also has the penetration of spiritual fulfillments and transformations of comfort and ease without end. These work without obstruction. Whatever you want to do, you do. If my young disciple had spiritual penetrations, the cage couldn’t hold him and he could come and go as he pleased. So after this, when you come to Gold Mountain Monastery, get right into your cage. Every four hours you can come out for five minutes, at the most, to play. Within those five minutes you can roam to the east and to the west, look to the south and north. Within those five minutes you can find people to talk to, do too much talking, too much looking, and too much playing—anything at all.

Those are the ten. Those are the ten kinds. If the cage can’t contain you, if you don’t need to open the door but can go right through the walls, then you can do as you please. But before you have that kind of attainment, you can’t be so casual. Today I’m telling you this rule.

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten kinds of dharmas. What are the ten? They are: knowing all Buddhalands; moving all Buddhalands; maintaining all Buddhalands; contemplating all Buddhalands; going to all Buddhalands; traveling through countless world realms; receiving countless Buddhadharmas; displaying bodies of sovereign transformation; emitting a vast, great, and all-pervasive sound; and in a single kshana, serving and making offerings to countless Buddhas.

Commentary:

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva again called, “Disciples of the Buddha. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Pure Youth should also encourage the study of ten kinds of Dharma doors. This Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten kinds of dharmas. What are the ten? They are: knowing all Buddhalands; moving all Buddhalands. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Pure Youth should know all the Buddhalands of all Buddhas in all the ten directions and three periods of time. He should know what direction this land is in and what direction that country is in. Knowing what Buddhaland is in what direction, if he wishes to cause a particular Buddhaland of a particular Buddha to quake, he can do so. But it is necessary to first know the location of that land. Maintaining all Buddhalands. He supports any given Buddhaland. Buddhalands also have formation, dwelling, destruction, and emptiness. At that time you should protect them. You should protect the Buddhalands of every Buddha.

Contemplating all Buddhalands. You should also contemplate the causes and conditions to determine what you should protect and what you shouldn’t protect. Going to all Buddhalands. Not only should you contemplate all Buddhalands, but you should also travel to those Buddhalands. Traveling through countless world realms. So the Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Pure Youth travels through limitless worlds. Receiving countless Buddhadharmas. Why does he go to all those worlds? So as to receive and accept the Dharma spoken by all Buddhas. He goes to listen and receive those Buddhas’ Dharmas.

Displaying bodies of sovereign transformation. He displays self-mastery. Where there was nothing he creates something; where there was something, he causes it to disappear. From the small, the great is created by transformation. From the great, the small is created by transformation. According to the inclinations of his mind, he can conjure endless transformations.

Emitting a vast, great, and all-pervasive sound. He speaks the Buddhadharma by emitting his vast and long tongue and sending the sound throughout all Buddhalands. And in a single kshana, serving and making offerings to countless Buddhas. Within a single kshana—a very short time, a single thought—he can serve and make offerings to Buddhas of the ten directions and three periods of time. He has that kind of wonderful function of spiritual penetrations.

Sutra:

“Why is that? From a desire to bring about increase of vigor, and be able to obtain skillful proficiency with all Dharmas. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another.”

Commentary:

“Why is that? Why does the Bodhisattva Dwelling in Pure Youth exhort cultivation of these ten kinds of Dharma doors? It is because he wants to cause Bodhisattvas on the Dwelling of Pure Youth to increase their vigor even more. From a desire to bring about increase of vigor, and be able to obtain skillful proficiency with all Dharmas. He is able to make even more progress in the 84,000 Dharma doors spoken by the Buddha and to be expedient and clever with regard to every Dharma door. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself. Whatever dharmas are spoken by the Buddha in the Dharma assembly, he himself suddenly comprehends and is able to see right through, awaken to, and understand the real and actual appearance of all dharmas, not from the teachings of another.” It is not necessary for the Buddha to come again to teach him in detail.

IX. The Dwelling of Dharma Prince

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha. What constitutes the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling as a Dharma Prince? This Bodhisattva skillfully knows ten kinds of Dharmas. What are the ten? They are: Skillfully knowing how living beings undergo rebirth; skillfully knowing the manifestation and arisal of all afflictions; skillfully knowing the continual flow of habitual energies.

Commentary:

“Disciples of the Buddha.” Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva again called out, “ What constitutes the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling as a Dharma Prince? What constitutes the Bodhisattva abode of the Dharma Prince? Because the Buddha is the Dharma King, the Bodhisattva dwelling as a Dharma Prince is the disciple of the Buddha, the Dharma King. This Bodhisattva skillfully knows ten kinds of Dharmas. The Bodhisattva on this level of accomplishment, about to advance to the Buddha’s position, should study ten kinds of dharmas. What are the ten? What are the ten dharmas he knows in detail? They are: Skillfully knowing how living beings undergo rebirth; he is well versed in the knowledge of all living beings, that is to say, he knows clearly how all living beings create karma and undergo retribution. He knows how they undergo birth and death. He knows the causes and conditions of living beings in all categories.

Skillfully knowing the manifestation and arisal of all afflictions; he also knows why all living beings produce afflictions. He knows why the afflictions appear. Skillfully knowing the continual flow of habitual energies. Living beings’ habits are like waves of water—continual and not cut off. He knows that doctrine, too. All living beings’ past habits join with this life’s habits to form next life’s habitual energies, and it continues without cease. They flow continuously without being broken off. Former causes bring about later effects. How does the Bodhisattva know? It is because he has certified to the attainment of the knowledge of past lives that he is able to know the habitual energies of living beings.

From fully understanding each of their potentials and affinities he can “contemplate the opportunity to entice with the teaching and dispense the medicine according to the sickness.”

Sutra:

“Skillfully knowing the practice of expedient means; skillfully knowing limitless Dharmas; skillfully knowing all awesome deportments; skillfully knowing the differentiations of world-realms; skillfully knowing the events within the boundaries of the past and future; skillfully knowing the proclaiming of worldly truth; and skillfully knowing the proclaiming of truth in the primary sense. Those are the ten.

“Disciples of the Buddha, this Bodhisattva should encourage the practice of ten kinds of Dharmas. What are the ten? They are: The skill-in-means of the position of Dharma King; the rules of the position of Dharma King; the palaces of the position of Dharma King; the undertakings of the position of Dharma King; the contemplations of the position of Dharma King; the anointment of the crown of the Dharma King; the maintenance by power of the Dharma King; the fearlessnesses of the Dharma King; the repose of the Dharma King; and the praises of the Dharma King.

Commentary:

In dwelling as a Dharma Prince, the Bodhisattva has other dharmas such as skillfully knowing the practice of expedient means. He is aware of what expedients he should use—he well knows what dharmas he should manifest. He knows what body and appearance to assume to speak dharma and take people across. Whatever dharma he should use to teach and transform people is the very dharma that he uses. Skillfully knowing limitless Dharmas. The Bodhisattva illumines the real mark of all dharmas. He deeply enters the Sutra Store and has wisdom like the sea. He well knows limitless, wonderful dharmas. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Dharma Prince understands and comprehends them all.

Skillfully knowing all awesome deportments—the Bodhisattva is well versed in the 3,000 awesome deportments and 80,000 minor practices. Skillfully knowing the differentiations of world-realms. He is very well versed in whatever difference worlds have; he knows all worlds’ productions, dwellings, destructions, and emptiness. Skillfully knowing the events within the boundaries of the past and future. He knows well the events of the boundaries of before and afterwards. He also knows how former thoughts of living beings arise and how later thoughts arise in people’s minds. Skillfully knowing the proclaiming of worldly truth. He knows what worldly dharmas to speak for common people, also skillfully knowing the proclaiming of truth in the primary sense. He also knows how to speak world-transcending dharmas. He knows how to express the world-transcending primary meaning for living beings so they will cultivate the primary meaning. Those are the ten.

“Disciples of the Buddha,” Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva again calls out, “this Bodhisattva should encourage the practice of ten kinds of Dharmas. What are the ten? They are: The skill-in-means of the position of Dharma King —all the clever methods of speaking established by the Dharma King, and how such expedient devices are established when one has assumed the position of the Dharma King. The rules of the position of Dharma King —all of the rules of deportment of the Dharma King, how he should conduct himself and what ceremonies and rituals he should perform. The palaces of the position of Dharma King—how a Dharma King should dwell in the palaces.

The undertakings of the position of Dharma King—which modes of propriety a Dharma King must employ when undertaking each kind of ritual should also be known, along with the contemplations of the position of Dharma King. At the level of Dharma King, one contemplates the causes and conditions. That is to say:

In entering (the palace), he observes his father, the Emperor,  
and contemplates the one of his voice and his facial expression   
In coming out, he observes the host of ministers,  
and contemplates their respective worthiness or negligence.

The anointment of the crown of the Dharma King—the rite of being anointed on the crown by all Buddhas when one assumes the position of Dharma King. The maintenance by power of the Dharma King—how the Dharma King powerfully maintains all dharmas. The fearlessnesses of the Dharma King—how the Dharma King is fearless and afraid of nothing. The repose of the Dharma King—how the Dharma King sleeps—even that should be known. And the praises of the Dharma King—what the Dharma King should praise. The Bodhisattva dwelling on the Dwelling of Dharma Prince is well versed in the knowledge of all of these Dharmas. He should study these dharma rules himself and also encourage other beings to study these dharma regulations.

Sutra:

“Why is that? From a desire to bring about increase of vigor and unobstruction of mind. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another.”

Commentary:

Why is that? Why does the Bodhisattva on the level of the Dwelling of Dharma Prince wish to study these ten dharmas? It is from a desire to bring about increase of vigor. It is because he wishes to cause Bodhisattvas dwelling as Dharma Princes to make wholesome progress and have unobstruction of mind—to have no obstructions in their minds and to have no attachments .

When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another. He hears this Dharma himself and can understand it. There is no need to have a Buddha go out of his way to expend effort in teaching him.

X. The Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown? This Bodhisattva attains the accomplishment of ten kinds of wisdom.

Commentary:

“Disciples of the Buddha”, Dharma Wisdom, the Great Knight, addresses them again and says, “what is the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown? When the Bodhisattva is about to realize the position of Dharma King, he must first be anointed. All the Buddhas of the ten directions use sweet dew to anoint the Bodhisattva’s crown. This Bodhisattva attains the accomplishment of ten kinds of wisdom. He must accomplish ten kinds of inconceivable wisdom in order to reach the level of the Bodhisattva Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown.

Sutra:

What are the ten? They are: Quaking numberless world-realms; illumining numberless world-realms; sustaining numberless world-realms; going to numberless world-realms; adorning and purifying numberless world-realms.

Commentary:

What are the ten? What are the ten kinds of wisdom which a Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown should accomplish? They are: Quaking numberless world-realms. The wisdom of the Bodhisattva is such that he knows what should be done and what should not be done. He has a kind of awesome spiritual power of wisdom and knows what worlds should quake, and he manifests six kinds of earthquakes to subdue all living beings. The six are: quaking, roaring, crashing, shaking, surging, and rising. Quaking is quaking of the earth, but the manifestations of an earthquake by Bodhisattvas cannot harm anyone. Rather, it can cause all living beings to awaken. Roaring means the earth emits a roaring sound. Crashing is as when mountains crash together; shaking makes the earth move; surging means the earth spews out water or fire: rising means that the earth pushes up. Those are the six kinds. In the numberless world-realms some worlds should quake, some should not. How many should? Limitless numbers. How many should not? Also limitless numbers.

Illumining numberless world-realms. The light of the wisdom of the Bodhisattva dwelling in Anointment of the Crown illumines how many worlds? Numberless worlds. Sustaining numberless world-realms. Worlds go through phases of formation, dwelling, destruction, and emptiness. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown can cause the world to abide a little longer. He uses the power of his spiritual penetrations to protect and support the world and keep it from being destroyed. Going to numberless world-realms. In limitless worlds there are limitless Buddhas. The Bodhisattva goes to all those worlds to make offerings to and serve all those Buddhas. Adorning and purifying numberless world-realms. He can adorn and purify its worlds and thereby cause them to be extremely adorned and pure. The Bodhisattva dwelling in Anointment of the Crown has this kind of wisdom.

Sutra:

“Instructing numberless living beings; contemplating numberless living beings; knowing the faculties of numberless living beings; bringing about the entry of numberless living beings, and taming and subduing countless living beings. These are the ten.

Commentary:

“Instructing numberless living beings. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown uses his ten kinds of wisdom to guide all living beings, instruct all living beings, and cause numberless living beings to bring forth the great Bodhi heart so that in the future they’ll accomplish the Buddha’s path. However, in instructing numberless living beings, he must first observe their causes and conditions, so he uses the wisdom of contemplating numberless living beings to teach and transform living beings. Knowing the faculties of numberless living beings. All living beings have their own dispositions. Some are more deeply confused, some are less confused. Those who have planted more good roots are more intelligent, and those who have planted fewer good roots are more stupid. So he has to know the faculties of all living beings in order to use various methods to save these living beings.

Bringing about the entry of numberless living beings, causing limitless living beings to enter the Bodhi path, and taming and subduing countless living beings. He uses the inconceivable kinds of wisdom to subdue living beings, because the living beings of the Saha world and those of other worlds are very obstinate. Stubborn living beings are hard to tame and hard to subdue, but the Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown subdues them all the same. These are the ten. These are the ten dharmas, the ten kinds of wisdom the Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown employs.

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, this Bodhisattva’s body and bodily karma, spiritual penetrations, transformations, wisdom of the past, wisdom of the future, wisdom of the present, accomplishment of Buddhalands, states of mind, states of wisdom, all cannot be known. Even the Dharma Prince Bodhisattva cannot know them.

Commentary:

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva again called, “Disciples of the Buddha, this Bodhisattva’s body and bodily karma, spiritual penetrations, transformations, wisdom of the past, wisdom of the future, wisdom of the present, accomplishment of Buddhalands, states of mind, states of wisdom, all cannot be known. The body and the body karma created by the Bodhisattva dwelling in the Anointment of the Crown, all are manifested by means of spiritual penetrations and transformations. This is an inconceivable state. He uses the wisdom cultivated in the past, the wisdom cultivated in the present, and the wisdom to be cultivated in the future to create, adorn, and purify Buddhalands. Moreover, all living beings’ states of mind and all living beings’ wisdom, cannot know the state of this Bodhisattva. Even the Dharma Prince Bodhisattva cannot know them. Even the Bodhisttva about to become a Buddha, the Dharma Prince, can’t know the wisdom, the body karma, the spiritual penetrations, the wisdom of the past, present, and future, the means of accomplishing Buddhahood, the states of mind, and the states of wisdom of the Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown.

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, this Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten kinds of wisdom of all Buddhas. What are the ten? They are: Wisdom of the three periods of time; wisdom of the Buddhas’ Dharmas; wisdom of the non-obstruction of Dharma Realms; wisdom of the boundlessness of Dharma Realms; wisdom which fills all world-realms; wisdom which universally illumines all worlds; wisdom which sustains all worlds; wisdom which knows all living beings; wisdom which knows all dharmas; and wisdom which knows all boundless Buddhas. Why is that? From a desire to increase the wisdom of all modes. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another.

Commentary:

The Great Lord Dharma Wisdom called again, “Disciples of the Buddha, this Bodhisattva should encourage the study of ten kinds of wisdom of all Buddhas. What are the ten? They are: Wisdom of the three periods of time. The three wisdoms are those of the past, present, and future. Wisdom of the Buddhas’ Dharmas—the Dharma spoken by all Buddhas. Wisdom of the non-obstruction of Dharma Realms—the Dharma Realm of the non-obstruction of noumena and phenomena. Wisdom of the boundlessness of Dharma Realms; wisdom which fills all world-realms; wisdom which universally illumines all worlds; wisdom which sustains all worlds; wisdom which knows all living beings; wisdom which knows all dharmas; and wisdom which knows all boundless Buddhas. Why is that? From a desire to increase the wisdom of all modes—to cause the Bodhisattvas dwelling in Anointment of the Crown to increase the wisdom of all modes. When one hears the Dharma, one understands it by oneself, not from the teachings of another.” It’s not necessary for the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to teach them.

Sutra:

At that time, because of the Buddha’s spiritual might, world-realms as many as the fine motes of dust in ten thousand Buddhalands in each of the ten directions quaked and trembled in six ways.

Commentary:

When Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva had finished the previous passage, at that time, because of the Buddha’s spiritual might—because of Shakyamuni Buddha’s great, awesome might--world-realms as many as the fine motes of dust in ten thousand Buddhalands in each of the ten directions quaked and trembled in six ways. The six kinds of earth quakes are: 1) quaking, 2) roaring, 3) crashing, 4) shaking, 5) surging, 6) rising. In each direction there were worlds as numerous as dust motes in ten thousand Buddhalands, and in each of them there were six kinds of earthquakes.

Sutra:

Shaking, pervasive shaking, equally pervasive shaking; rising, pervasive rising, equally pervasive rising; surging, pervasive surging, equally pervasive surging; quaking, pervasive quaking, equally pervasive quaking; roaring, pervasive roaring, equally pervasive roaring; crashing, pervasive crashing, equally pervasive crashing. The heavens rained down wonderful flowers, heavenly powdered incense, and heavenly flowered garlands.

Commentary:

There are six kinds of earthquakes: shaking, surging, and rising, which belong to the appearance of movement; and quaking, roaring, and crashing, which belong to sound. The six kinds divide into twelve kinds and then more specifically into eighteen kinds. Shaking, pervasive shaking, equally pervasive shaking. Shaking means one place shakes and another does not. Pervasive shaking means shaking in one Buddhaland. Equally pervasive shaking means shaking in all Buddhalands at once. Rising, pervasive rising, equally pervasive rising. Rising refers to rising within one world and not rising in another world, or else rising in another world and not rising in this world. Pervasive rising refers to pervasive rising in all worlds. Equally pervasive rising refers to universal rising throughout all worlds. Surging, pervasive surging, equally pervasive surging. Surging refers to the sensation of surging in this world but not in another. Pervasive surging refers to that sensation in all the worlds within one Buddhaland. Equally pervasive surging refers to that sensation in all the worlds in all Buddhalands. Quaking, pervasive quaking, equally pervasive quaking. Quaking means quaking in just one world. Pervasive quaking means quaking in all the worlds within one Buddhaland. Equally pervasive quaking means universal quaking in all the worlds within all Buddhalands. Roaring, pervasive roaring, equally pervasive roaring. Roaring refers to roaring in one place and not in another, or in another and not in this. Pervasive roaring refers to all the worlds in one Buddhaland roaring at once. Crashing, pervasive crashing, equally pervasive crashing. Crashing refers to crashing in one place only. Pervasive crashing refers to crashing in all the worlds in one Buddhaland. Equally pervasive crashing refers to all the worlds in all Buddhalands crashing together at once.

At that time the heavens rained down wonderful flowers. It rained, but not water, rather it was a rain of wonderful celestial flowers, heavenly powdered incense—as well as heavenly powdered incense, and heavenly flowered garlands—flowers which were plaited into garlands. That’s what was happening .

Sutra:

Heavenly blends of incense, heavenly jeweled garments, heavenly jeweled clouds, and heavenly ornaments. All the musical instruments of the heavens sounded without being struck. There was an emitting of celestial lights and there were wonderful sounds. In the same way as here in the Four Continents, in Lord Shakra’s Palace on the summit of Mount Sumeru where the Dharma of the Ten Dwellings was spoken with manifestations of spiritual transformations, so too, throughout all world-realms in the ten directions it was the same way.

Commentary:

Heavenly blends of incense—there were also various fragrances. Heavenly jeweled garments—the precious clothing used by gods, heavenly jeweled clouds—the clouds of jewels, and heavenly ornaments—all the wonderful ornaments . All the musical instruments of the heavens sounded without being struck—all the heavenly music. No one needed to make music, because the instruments played by themselves. There was an emitting of celestial lights—heavenly lights of all kinds, and there were wonderful sounds—all the wonderful sounds of the heavens. In the same way as here in the Four Continents—as it was in this world of four continents: Jambudvipa, Aparagodaniya, Uttarakuru, and Purvavideha—the four empires ruled by the four heavenly kings, in Lord Shakra’s Palace on the summit of Mount Sumeru—and also in the palace where Lord Shakra lives atop Mt. Sumeru where the Dharma of the Ten Dwellings was spoken with manifestations of spiritual transformations, so too, throughout all world-realms in the ten directions it was the same way. It was just the same as here in the Saha World, where Shakyamuni Buddha spoke the Dharma of the Ten Dwellings.

There was once a laywoman whose son was a businessman who lived in Yunnan, China, and who often went to Nepal on business trips. At the time, transportation was not as convenient, so he rode a horse, donkey, or mule, and each trip was difficult. His mother had heard that in Nepal there were sharira and told her son to bring her back one next time he went. Her son agreed. When he got to Nepal, the businessman became so absorbed in business that he forgot the sharira. When he got back, his mother asked if he had brought one back for her, and he had to admit that he had been so caught up in business that he forgot, but promised to remember next time.

Shortly afterwards he had to go to Nepal again. She said, “This time bring one back so I can make offerings to it.” “I definitely will,” he said. But he forgot again, because the trip was so hard, and it took all his brains to manage his business. When he got back she asked for the sharira, “I didn’t bring it”, he said. “Wait until next time.”

Then he was on his way again. This time his mother took a knife and pointed it at her heart and said to her son, “If you don’t bring back a sharira this time, I am going to cut my own heart with this knife; I’m going to kill myself, so you’d better take note.” So seeing this he figured he would certainly remember no matter what, but in fact, he did forget it again, until he was about five or six miles from home. He didn’t dare go closer, but paced back and forth, “If I go home like this, my mom’s going to kill herself.” But he couldn’t not go home. He was utterly without recourse. There on the road he saw a dead little dog, and his cheating heart took over. “Dogs have teeth, so I’ll take out the smallest dog tooth.” He took a brick and knocked it out and polished it until it was round and went home.

His mother asked for her sharira and he said, “I got a bit one, a nice one”, and gave her the dog’s tooth. She was extremely happy. After making offerings to it for a year, what happened to the dog’s tooth? Every time she bowed to it, it emitted light. She bowed and bowed, and soon it always emitted light. When she was about to die, she was not sick but knew when she was going to go off to rebirth.

It’s obvious to see from this that the doctrine that all is made from the mind is true. She would have given her life for the sharira, and this type of sincerity is the utmost. Although it was a dog’s tooth, it could emit light. Why do I tell you of this? Each of you, no matter what Dharma door you cultivate, must be utterly sincere and true-hearted in your cultivation, and then you will have a response. I’m getting ready some sharira, perhaps tomorrow, or perhaps the day after. I have these sharira which are not dog’s teeth; they are real, true sharira which a Bhikshuni brought back from Nepal.

She brought back a hundred of them and made offerings to them, and they multiplied into over ten thousand, because she was very sincere. On the mountain she lit incense and bowed to the Buddhas and felt that this was not enough. She cut off one ear, and then the other, as offerings to the Buddhas. She was so sincere that the sharira multiplied at such a rate as this. She sent some to her teacher who gave some to me. But they are very, very tiny. He gave them to me, and I’m giving them to you. But you have to be sincere. If not, even genuine sharira become false. If you are sincere, the false sharira become genuine. However, these are real ones.

Also, now we are building the Bodhimanda, and everyone must be sincere and dedicate the merit for the success of the Bodhimanda. Whether we buy the place or build it ourselves, we all have to be sincere. The work here will soon be finished, and after that we are going to build a great Bodhimanda. Because you have been with me a long time, you have heard, “My Buddhism takes the Dharma Realm as its teaching.” My substance is the substance of the Dharma Realm, and so the things I do are vast and extensive, reaching to the ends of space and the Dharma Realm. What is great must have a great foundation, so that in the future the Buddhadharma can expand into all worlds and extend into all corners. But first and foremost, one has to be sincere. Whoever wants to be sincere can, and whoever doesn’t—no one will force you. Sincerity means doing things straight and well.

What we do and cultivate is for the sake of building the Bodhimanda. If we want to recite the Buddha’s name, then we do it for building the Bodhimanda. Those who recite Sutras or mantras should dedicate it to the building of the Bodhimanda. The same applies to bowing to the Buddha or bowing to the Sutras. Take the merit and virtue from all this and dedicate it to the speedy success of the Bodhimanda, because the people of the world are waiting for us to save them. If we can’t even build a Bodhimanda, we can’t face the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

With sincere hearts we dedicate all our actions such as fasting or “sleeping” to the quick accomplishment of the Bodhimanda. Fasting means not eating. “Sleeping” refers to sitting meditation without getting up. Those who want to stand day and night can do so. Be sure to be sincere, and you will get a response. If you make the following resolve: “If the Bodhimanda doesn’t succeed, I will never again eat, sleep, or sit down”, then you’ll certainly get a response.

Now all the heavenly dragons and Dharma-protecting spirits must come to our aid so as to find ways to make this a success. Otherwise you are all shirking your responsibility. We are going to spread Buddhism extensively to all worlds, so you must do the work you are supposed to do, or you are all lazy. This applies to all: people, gods, dragons, Dharma-protecting spirits, and so forth. Everybody has to carry their load. All human, ghosts, and living beings who have taken refuge with me in the past, present, and future—all ought to use their abilities. Now manifest your spiritual powers to cause a response so that it may be quickly accomplished!

Sutra:

Moreover, because of the Buddha’s spiritual might, in each of the ten directions, from beyond worlds as many as the fine motes of dust in ten thousand Buddhalands, were Bodhisattvas as many as fine motes of dust in ten Buddhalands, who arrived at this place. Filling the ten directions they spoke as follows: “Good indeed, good indeed, disciples of the Buddha, you speak this Dharma well! We all have the same name, Dharma Wisdom, and the lands we come from all have the same name, Dharma Cloud. The Thus Come Ones of those countries are all called Wondrous Dharma. In all the Buddhalands from which we come, the Ten Dwellings are also spoken. The assemblies and retinues, the text and the doctrines are also thus, with nothing added or subtracted.

Commentary:

Moreover, because of the Buddha’s spiritual might—moreover, the Bodhisattvas of the ten directions rode upon the precious raft of the Buddha’s vow power. In each of the ten directions, from beyond worlds as many as the fine motes of dust in ten thousand Buddhalands, were Bodhisattvas as many as fine motes of dust in ten Buddhalands, who arrived at this place. Filling the ten directions , they came to the Saha world Bodhimanda and, they spoke as follows: “Good indeed, good indeed, disciples of the Buddha. You are doing well, very well. Disciples of the Buddha, you speak this Dharma well! The Dharma of the Ten Dwellings. We all have the same name, Dharma Wisdom. We Bodhisattvas who have come, Bodhisattvas to the number of fine motes of dust in ten Buddhalands, are all called Dharma Wisdom. Just like you, our name is Dharma Wisdom.

And the lands we come from all have the same name, Dharma Cloud. The Thus Come Ones of those countries are all called Wondrous Dharma. All Buddhas who are teaching and transforming living beings in the lands called Dharma Cloud are called Wondrous Dharma. In all the Buddhalands from which we come, the Ten Dwellings are also spoken. The assemblies and retinues—the assemblies and the retinues are the same. The text and the doctrines, the expressions, phraseology, text and meaning of what they speak are the same as those of the Ten Dwellings spoken in the Saha world. They are also thus, with nothing added or subtracted. Within the ten directions and three periods of time, all Buddhas speak Dharma with a single sound. They all speak wonderful Dharma which is identical.

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, relying on the Buddha’s spiritual might, we have come and entered this assembly in order to give you certification. As it is in this assembly, in all worlds throughout the ten directions, it is also thus.”

At that time, Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva, relying on the Buddha’s awesome might, contemplated throughout the ten directions, to the utmost reaches of the Dharma Realm, and spoke verses saying:

Commentary:

From worlds to the number of motes of dust in ten Buddhalands came Bodhisattvas who said, “Disciples of the Buddha, relying on the Buddha’s spiritual might—Shakyamuni Buddha’s awesome spiritual might--we have come and entered this assembly. We have come to the Saha world and entered the Avatamsaka Dharma Assembly in order to give you certification. Why have we come? To certify your speaking of the Ten Dwellings. As it is in this assembly—just as it is in this assembly--in all worlds throughout the ten directions, it is also thus. They are also explaining the Ten Dwellings.”

At that time, Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva, relying on the Buddha’s awesome might, contemplated throughout the ten directions. He contemplated the causes and conditions of all living beings throughout the ten directions in all Buddhalands, to the utmost reaches of the Dharma Realm , to see what teaching he should use to transform those living beings, and spoke verses. Then he used simple language in verse form to teach and transform living beings, saying:

Sutra:

Seeing the most supreme wisdom and the fine, wondrous body,   
Upright and adorned, complete with all the marks and characteristics,   
How he is honored and difficult to encounter,   
The Bodhisattva bravely first becomes resolved.

Seeing the unequalled great spiritual penetrations,   
Hearing spoken predictions, teachings, and admonishments,   
Because of limitless sufferings of living beings in all the destinies,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Hearing how Thus Come Ones, universally superior honored ones,   
All have accomplished every merit and virtue,   
Just like empty space, which does not discriminate,   
The Bodhisattva, because of this, first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva said, “Seeing the most supreme wisdom and the fine, wondrous body—I now see the Buddha’s most superior wisdom and also his subtle, wonderful, inconceivable Buddha body. Because the Buddha’s body has endless transformations, it appears and disappears. He has thirty-two marks and eighty minor characteristics.

Upright and adorned, complete with all the marks and characteristics; he is upright and majestic. His wisdom is complete, and his blessings are complete. He is the Doubly Honored One.

How he is honored and difficult to encounter. All living beings make offerings to and revere the Buddha, because it is not easy to meet a Buddha. At times one is born before, and at times one is born after the time of a Buddha. It is very difficult to be born at the actual time a Buddha is in the world. The Bodhisattva bravely first becomes resolved on Bodhi. That is why the Bodhisattva of the Ten Dwellings is vigorous and courageous in first bringing forth the resolve. This marks the beginning of his resolution for Bodhi.

Seeing the unequalled great spiritual penetrations. No one surpasses the Buddha in spiritual penetrations. None can compare with him. Hearing spoken predictions, teachings, and admonishments. Living beings who give rise to the Bodhi mind are given predictions by the Buddha. Provisional expedient dharmas and true and actual dharmas are spoken to teach them to cut off evil and practice good; that is, to do no evil and offer up all good conduct.

Because of limitless sufferings of living beings in all the destinies. All the living beings in the six paths suffer. In every path there are limitless, boundless, sufferings. The Bodhisattva because of this, first becomes resolved. Because the Bodhisattva sees living beings in the six paths undergoing so much suffering and wants to save them, he first resolves his mind on Bodhi. He courageously resolves his mind on Bodhi. Hearing how Thus Come Ones, universally superior honored ones—hearing how the Tathagatas, all have accomplished every merit and virtue—the Buddhas have accomplished all merit and virtue. How much merit and virtue does a Buddha have? It can’t be spoken of. It is said,

You can count the thoughts of living beings’ minds,   
You can drink dry the waters of the sea,   
You can measure space and bind the wind,   
But of the Buddha’s merit and virtue,   
No one can speak to the end.

Still, no one can say how much merit and virtue the Buddha has. No one knows, just as one of my disciples uses his favorite intellectual zen jargon and says, “I don’t know.”

Just like empty space, which does not discriminate. Just like the void, which makes no distinctions, yet there is nothing it does not contain. The Bodhisattva, because of this, first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattvas admire the Buddha, who has perfected all merit and virtue, and for this reason they resolve their minds on Bodhi and seek the unsurpassed Buddha Way.

Sutra:

The cause and effect of the three periods of time are called locations.   
Our self-nature is without location.   
Wishing to know completely the true and actual meaning,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

The cause and effect of the three periods of time are called locations. The three periods of time are called the past, present, and future. Let’s look at the causes and effects of the past, present, and future—all the causes and effects:

If you want to know the causes from lives past,   
Look at what you’re undergoing now.   
If you want to know the effects in lives to come,   
Look at what you’re doing now.

If in former lives you planted a seed, this life you reap that fruit. If you plant a good cause, you reap a good result. If you plant an evil cause, you reap an evil result. If you plant a cause which is neither good nor evil, you reap a result which is neither good nor evil. If you want to know what’s going to happen in the future, look at what you’re doing now. If you do good things now, in the future you will reap a good fruit. If you do evil things now, in the future you will reap an evil fruit. It is never off even by a hair’s breadth. You yourself make cause and effect: the Buddhas or Bodhisattvas do not make it for you. Yet other religions say that such and such a god rules over all, which is a grave error. It’s like walking—when you want to go east, you turn east; when you want to go west, you turn west. It’s up to you.

Cause and effect is that way also. So the text says, “locations”. The causes and effects of the three periods of time are the “locations” where you undergo retribution. Our self-nature is without location. Our self-nature is utterly void—at one with the Dharma Realm. True Emptiness is Wonderful Existence; Wonderful Existence is just True Emptiness. True Emptiness and Wonderful Existence are the self-nature, and it has no fixed location. Wishing to know completely the true and actual meaning. Because he wants to know, to genuinely, completely understand this true and actual meaning, the Bodhisattva first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattva who has first brought forth the mind does so in order to understand the real meaning. Bodhisattvas cultivate on the first of the Ten Dwellings, that of First Bringing Forth the Resolve, just for those very reasons.

Sutra:

Of the past, the future, and the present times,   
All karma whether good or bad.   
Wishing to know it all with nothing not exhausted,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

All Dhyanas, Liberations, and Samadhis,   
Defiled, pure, and of limitless kinds:   
Wishing to know them all and enter, dwell, and exit,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

According to beings’ faculties, whether keen or dull,   
Various kinds of powers of vigor such as these:   
Wishing to penetrate them all and discriminatingly know them,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

All living beings’ various kinds of understandings,   
What their minds delight in,   
All of which are different: Although limitless, yet wishing to know them all,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

Of the past, the future, and the present times—the past realm, the present realm, and the future realm—the three periods of time; past life, present life, future life; past recollection, present recollection, future recollection; past thought, present thought; and future thought—all these are called the three periods.

All karma whether good or bad. All of the karma we create in this world is a mixture of good and evil. We do some good and mix in some evil. We do some evil and mix in some good. In our evil, there is sometimes a bit of good, and in our good there is some evil. There is no totally good or totally evil karma. It is all a mixture. So the text says, “All karma”, whether good, evil, or a mixture. Wishing to know it all with nothing not exhausted. The Bodhisattva on the First Dwelling wishes to understand all of these doctrines with nothing that is not understood. That is why the Bodhisattva first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattva on the First of the Ten Dwellings, that of First Bringing Forth the Resolve, produces that intent.

All Dhyanas, Liberations, and Samadhis. This refers to the first, the second, third, and fourth dhyanas, and the nine successive samadhis, as listed in the Shurangama Sutra which also lists the eight liberations, and various samadhis or levels of concentration. Defiled, pure, and of limitless kinds. These dharmas are of unlimited variety and so are the liberations and samadhis.

There are unlimited defiled and immaculate states, limitless and boundless. Wishing to know them all and enter, dwell, and exit. The Bodhisattva wishes to understand completely the various states involved in entering samadhi, dwelling in samadhi, and coming out of samadhi. The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve therefore brings forth the great thought for Bodhi. According to beings’ faculties, whether keen or dull. Living beings have sharp or dull roots. Those with sharp roots are intelligent people; those with dull roots are stupid people. Living beings may be very smart or very stupid. Intelligent from birth means they have sharp roots. Stupid from birth means dull roots. Various kinds of powers of vigor such as these—whether your roots are sharp or dull, you should be vigorous. There are many methods for being vigorous. Wishing to penetrate them all and

discriminatingly know them. The Bodhisattva on the First Dwelling has first produced the initial resolve because of a wish to understand the dispositions of living beings and their sharpness and dullness. The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved. This is the reason that living beings who first produce the mind resolve themselves.

All living beings’ various kinds of understandings. Living beings have various understandings and opinions. What their minds delight in, all of which are different. What each living being likes is different. Although limitless, yet wishing to know them all—because of wishing to know the limitless, boundless, understandings and opinions, the Bodhisattva of the First Dwelling brings forth the great thought of enlightenment and dwells in the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve. Because of this the Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Sutra:

The realms of living beings are different   
And all worlds are limitless.   
Wishing to know their substance and nature,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

All the conducts and paths of the conditioned,   
Each has a place where it arrives.   
Wishing to know their actual nature,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

All the living beings in every world realm,   
According to their karma, drift without a moment’s rest.   
Wishing to obtain the Heavenly Eye to see them all clearly,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

The realms of living beings are different. Living beings are born from confluence of a multitude of causes and conditions. In general there are twelve classes:

* those born from womb,
* those born from thought,
* those born from moisture,
* those born from transformation,
* those with thought,
* those without thought,
* those with form,
* those without form,
* those not totally with thought
* those not totally without thought
* those not totally with form,
* those not totally without form.

Together they make twelve classes. In detail, there are boundless kinds in each class. Every category of living being has its own limitless differences within it.

And all worlds are limitless. The living beings in each world can’t be counted. Wishing to know their substance and nature. Bodhisattvas want to understand the limitless substance and natures of all living beings. Because of this, the Bodhisattva first becomes resolved. And so, because of this, the Bodhisattva dwelling in the First Dwelling, brings forth the great thought of enlightenment.

All the conducts and paths of the conditioned—all the conditioned dharmas and conditioned paths of cultivation-- Each has a place where it arrives. Each of the way practiced has a goal, a place where it goes. Wishing to know their actual nature—wishing to completely understand the real nature of each of them-- the Bodhisattva first becomes resolved. Thus, the Bodhisattva brings forth the great heart and dwells in the Dwelling of Bringing Forth the Resolve.

All the living beings in every world realm—all living beings in the three periods of time and the ten directions, according to their karma, drift without a moment’s rest. All give rise to delusion, create karma, and undergo retribution. Repeatedly they float and sink according to their karma, suddenly in the heavens, suddenly in the hells, turning without cease. At no time in the six paths does this process cease.

Wishing to obtain the Heavenly Eye to see them all clearly. The Bodhisattva wishes to obtain the unobstructed wisdom of the Heavenly Eye. Because of this, the Bodhisattva first becomes resolved. That’s why the Bodhisattva brings forth the great Buddha mind and dwells in the Dwelling of the First Resolve.

Sutra:

Of all that existed in past realms,   
Their substance, nature, and marks just as they are:   
Wishing to completely know their previous dwellings,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

All of living beings’ knots and delusions,   
Their continual arisal and habitual energies:   
Wishing to know how to ultimately exhaust them,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

Of all that existed in past realms—all the events that happened in former lives--their substance, nature, and marks just as they are—the make-up, fundamental nature and characteristics of each of those events. Wishing to completely know their previous dwellings. Wishing to understand the causes and effects of past lives, the Bodhisattva first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattva, because of these causes and conditions, brings forth the Buddha mind and dwells in the Dwelling of the First Resolve.

All of living beings’ knots and delusions. All living beings have karma that they create and delusions as well. Their continual arisal and habitual energies. The seeds are continuous, and so is the affliction. Affliction and the arisal of habits are continuous and uninterrupted. Wishing to know how to ultimately exhaust them. Desiring to know how these seeds and habits can ultimately be put to an end, the Bodhisattva first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattva, because of these causes and conditions, brings forth the great Bodhi mind.

Sutra:

According to that which is established by living beings,   
The various kinds of paths of discourse, speech and languages:   
Wishing to completely know such worldly truths,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

All dharmas leave the spoken word.   
Their nature is empty, still, extinct, with nothing created.   
Wishing to completely understand and penetrate the true meaning,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

According to that which is established by living beings—Living beings in the world establish a great variety of languages. Every kind of living being has its own language. Right within the human species are many different countries, each with its different languages and dialects. The various kinds of paths of discourse, speech and languages. The types of beings in the world are different, so their languages vary. That is a mundane, worldly truth, so it says, wishing to completely know such worldly

truths—all the worldly dharmas should also be known. The Bodhisattva, because of this, first becomes resolved. Because he wants to know the multiple paths of languages, he dwells in the First Dwelling, that of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

All dharmas leave the spoken word. With respect to every single dharma, “Whatever is spoken is not the real meaning.” All spoken dharmas are not genuine, because the true and real is apart from characteristics of languages, literature, and conceptual thought.

Sweep away all dharmas;   
Separate from all marks.   
True, genuine dharmas are apart from words; they cannot be expressed verbally.   
The path of words is cut off;   
The place of the mind’s activity is extinguished.

This is the principle and substance of the actual mark. Their nature is empty, still, extinct, with nothing created. The self-nature of all dharmas is empty and has no true substance. Thus, it is empty and without an agent or that which is done. There is no agent and nothing acted upon: both are non-existent. Wishing to completely understand and penetrate the true meaning. Wishing to understand this genuine principle, the Bodhisattva because of this first becomes resolved. Because of this wish, the Bodhisattva dwells in the position of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Sutra:

Wishing to completely quake the countries of the ten directions,   
And overturn all the great seas,   
To be endowed with great spiritual penetrations of all Buddhas,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Wishing that a single hair pore, emitting light,   
Universally illumine limitless lands of the ten directions,   
And that in every beam of light, all become enlightened,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Wishing to have difficult-to-conceive of Buddha kshetras,   
All settled in his palm and yet not move,   
Knowing everything is like an illusory transformation,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

Wishing to completely quake the countries of the ten directions. The Bodhisattva manifests great spiritual penetrations to cause the lands of the ten directions to quake in six ways and overturn all the great seas. He causes all the great seas to be turned upside down in order to force the water out of them. To be endowed with great spiritual penetrations of all Buddhas. Why can he do that? Because he is complete with the spiritual penetrations of all Buddhas. The Bodhisattva because of this, first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattva, because of these various causes and conditions, dwells in the First Dwelling, that of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Wishing that a single hair pore, emitting light. Bodhisattvas desire to emit a great store of light from a single hair pore, to universally illumine limitless lands of the ten directions. One hair pore shines and lights up the lands of the ten directions. And that in every beam of light, all become

enlightened. Each hair pore emits light and each ray illumines all living beings, causing them to bring forth the thought for Bodhi. The Bodhisattva, because of this, first becomes resolved. On account of these various causes and conditions and states, the Bodhisattva dwells in the position of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Wishing to have difficult-to-conceive of Buddha kshetras. A Bodhisattva of the Ten Dwellings wishes to have an inconceivable number of Buddhalands all settled in his palm and yet not move —those Buddhalands remain motionless in the palm of his hand. All the Buddhalands are not small, but they fit in his palm. His palm is not big, but it contains the ten direction Buddhalands—such an inconceivable state! Knowing everything is like an illusory transformation. Why? He understands that all states are like an illusion and a transformation; that nothing is real. Using this spiritual penetration and wondrous functioning, the Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Sutra:

Wishing to have living beings in limitless kshetras,   
Settled on the tip of a hair and yet not be confined,   
Completely knowing that no persons and no self exist,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Wishing, with a single hair, to scoop out the water of the sea,   
Until all the great seas are completely dry,   
And to know exactly how many dips it will take to do so.   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

When inconceivably many countries,   
Are all crushed into dust motes with no exception,   
Wishing to completely discriminate and know their numbers,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

In limitless kalpas of the past and future,   
Are marks of the formation and destruction of all world-realms;   
Wishing to completely penetrate and exhaust their boundaries,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

In the three periods of time are all of the Thus Come Ones,   
All Solitarily Enlightened Ones and all Sound Hearers;   
Wishing to know their dharmas completely with no exception,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

Wishing to have living beings in limitless kshetras. The Bodhisattva on the Ten Dwellings wishes to cause the living beings in limitless Buddha-fields to be settled on the tip of a hair and yet not be confined. He wants them to fit onto a single hair without being crowded. Although the hair is small, still it will hold all those living beings. The space will not be too small. They will not feel cramped—there will still be a lot of room. Completely knowing that no persons and no self exist. Why is it like that? Because the Bodhisattva understands that the state of no self or people includes all the myriad forms of existence. The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved on Bodhi . That is why the Bodhisattva dwells on the position of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Wishing, with a single hair, to scoop out the water of the sea—using a single hair to drop by drop, dry out the great ocean, until all the great seas are completely dry—to put the sea on a hair and to scoop up the sea and dry it up; wishing to have the spiritual powers to cause the sea to be emptied. Do you believe it? It can’t be done. You don’t believe it? The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have the power to do it. And to know exactly how many dips it will take to do so. They are able to discriminate and know how many hair dippings will dry up the entire ocean. The Bodhisattva, because of this, first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattva on the position of First Bringing Forth the Resolve can do this.

When inconceivably many countries. In the worlds of the ten directions, all the inconceivable lands, all those Buddhalands, are all crushed into dust motes with no exception. All of them are ground into fine powder, into dust motes, and not a single world remains. Wishing to completely discriminate and know their numbers—the Bodhisattva knows how many motes of dust there are. The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

In limitless kalpas of the past and future—past and future include all present worlds-- are marks of the formation and destruction of all world-realms—how all worlds are produced, dwell, decay, and become void—they know how all that appears. Wishing to completely penetrate and exhaust their boundaries. The Bodhisattva wants to clearly know the limits of the production, dwelling, decay, and becoming void of the worlds. The Bodhisattva, because of this, first becomes resolved.

In the three periods of time are all of the Thus Come Ones—all the Buddhas of the three periods of time, the past, the present, and the future.

All Solitarily Enlightened Ones and all Sound Hearers. This speaks of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. As to all Solitarily Enlightened Ones, when there is no Buddha in the world, they cultivate the Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-production and awaken to the Way. Thus, they are called Solitarily Enlightened Ones. When a Buddha is in the world, those who cultivate the Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-production and become enlightened are called Ones Enlightened to Conditions. As to Sound Hearers, they cultivate the Dharma of the Four Truths and become enlightened to the Way. They are called Arhats. Wishing to know their dharmas completely with no exception. The Bodhisattva wants to know how it is that one becomes a Thus Come One, how it is that one becomes a Sound Hearer or One Enlightened to Conditions. With the intention of completely knowing these kinds of dharmas, the Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Sutra:

All the limitless, boundless worlds  
Wishing with a single hair to raise them up,   
Completely comprehending their substance and their marks,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

All the limitless, boundless worlds—this is the Saha world, and besides it there are also limitless, boundless other worlds. Wishing with a single hair to raise them up. The Bodhisattva who has spiritual penetrations uses a single strand of hair and collects together all the limitless and boundlessly many worlds. A single hair is very fine, very small. It has no strength—it is very light. However, he can assemble limitless and boundless numbers of worlds by using a single strand of hair to assemble them together. This is something that is not easy to do, but for a Bodhisattva with spiritual penetrations it is very easily done.

Completely comprehending their substance and their marks. The Bodhisattva clearly understands the substance of all those limitless and boundless worlds and the characteristics of all those worlds. The Bodhisattva, because of this, first becomes resolved. On account of these kinds of causes and conditions, the Bodhisattva dwells in this position of the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Sutra:

The limitless, countless, encircling mountains   
Wishing to make them enter completely into a hair pore,   
Coming to know their magnitudes, whether large or small,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

There are limitless, boundless worlds, and there are also the limitless, countless, encircling mountains—and outside of them are rings of fragrant seas. All of this proves that the mountains are extremely great. But wishing to make them enter completely into a hair pore. The Bodhisattva with spiritual penetrations who first brings forth the thought can make the vast encircling mountains completely fit into a hair pore, coming to know their magnitudes, whether large or small. The encircling mountains are big, or perhaps they are small, but in a hair pore the Bodhisattva on the Ten Dwellings is aware of them. The Bodhisattva, because of this, first becomes resolved. Therefore, the Bodhisattva, wishing to cultivate this kind of miraculous use of spiritual penetrations, dwells within the First Dwelling, the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Sutra:

Wishing with a single wondrous sound that’s quiescent and still   
To universally respond in the ten directions and proclaim according to kind,   
In that way bringing all to purely, clearly, understand,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

The dharmas of the languages of all living beings   
With a single word are proclaimed to their exhaustion.   
Wishing to completely know their self- nature,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Of worldly sounds of speech, none is not made,   
Causing all to understand and certify to still extinction.   
Wishing to obtain a wonderful tongue faculty such as that,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

Wishing with a single wondrous sound that’s quiescent and still. The Buddha speaks the Dharma with a single sound, and so it says, “Wishing with a single wondrous sound that’s quiescent and still”, to universally respond in the ten directions and proclaim according to kind. So he universally responds in the ten directions to each being according to his kind:

The Buddha speaks the Dharma with but a single sound.   
And living beings each according to their kind, can understand.

The Buddha’s Dharma universally resounds everywhere, in accordance with each variety of potentials to hear, and all living beings of the ten directions are taken across to liberation. According to their kinds, he proclaims this inconceivably wonderful Dharma, in that way bringing all to purely, clearly, understand. In this way, he causes all living beings to understand this kind of Dharma sound. The Bodhisattva, because of this, first becomes resolved. Since the Bodhisattva wishes to obtain this kind of wonderful use of spiritual penetrations, he dwells in the position of Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

The dharmas of the languages of all living beings—the languages of all living beings of the three existences, those kinds of methodical dharmas, that is all human languages, the languages of every country, the languages of all animals, the languages of all the other kinds of living beings are all used and, with a single word are proclaimed to their exhaustion. The Bodhisattva with spiritual penetrations can pronounce all the sounds of all languages in a single sentence. Wishing to completely know their self-nature. The Bodhisattva wishes to understand the self-nature of these languages—each kind of language, the language of each kind of living being. The Bodhisattva, because of this, first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattva brings forth the thought to dwell on this Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Of worldly sounds of speech, none is not made. All the sounds of all the worlds’ languages can be pronounced, causing all to understand and certify to still extinction, causing all living beings to understand and to be certified to attainment of this permanent, tranquil Dharma. Wishing to obtain a wonderful tongue faculty such as that. The Bodhisattva wants to obtain this wonderful speech faculty, which allows him to speak fluently in any language and everywhere proclaim all wonderful dharmas. The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

The Bodhisattva for these reasons, dwells in this Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Sutra:

Wishing that all world-realms of the ten directions,   
With their marks of formation and destruction, can all be seen,   
And to completely know that they are produced from discriminations,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

All the world-realms in the ten directions,   
Are completely filled with Thus Come Ones.   
Wishing to completely know the Dharmas of those Buddhas,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

There are limitless bodies of repeated transformations,   
Equal to the fine dust motes of all world-realms.   
Wishing to completely penetrate how they arise from the mind,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

In the past time, the future, and the present,   
There are limitless, numberless, Thus Come Ones.   
Wishing in a single thought to know them all,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Wishing that the proclamation of a single phrase of Dharma   
For an asamkhyeya kalpa not be exhausted,   
And that all the texts and meanings not be the same,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Commentary:

Wishing that all world-realms of the ten directions. The Bodhisattva on the Ten Dwellings wants it that all worlds in the ten directions with their marks of formation and destruction—the various marks of creation, dwelling, decay, and emptiness-- can all be seen. The Bodhisattva wishes to completely see them and understand them, and to completely know that they are produced from discriminations—and know that their creation, dwelling, decay, and emptiness are all brought about because of the thoughts and discriminations on the part of living beings. The Bodhisattva , because of this, first becomes resolved. Since it is this way, the Bodhisattva dwells in this position, of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

All the world-realms in the ten directions. All the worlds in the ten directions and the three periods of time, are completely filled with Thus Come Ones. In every world there is a Thus Come One, a Buddha, who is teaching and transforming living beings. Since there are limitless and numberless worlds in all, there are one-does-not-know-how-many Buddhas filling those worlds of the ten directions. Wishing to completely know the Dharmas of those Buddhas—wishing to understand all the Dharma spoken by all those Buddhas-- the Bodhisattva , because of this, first becomes resolved.

There are limitless bodies of repeated transformations—wishing to obtain limitless and boundless many bodies of varied kinds of transformations--equal to the fine dust motes of all world-realms. Bodies as many as all the fine motes of dust in the worlds of the ten directions—that many bodies—are produced by the Bodhisattvas by transformation. Wishing to completely penetrate how they arise from the mind. All those various kinds of wonderful employments of spiritual penetrations still do not go beyond the mind; they still are produced from the mind. The Bodhisattva , thus motivated, first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattva of the Ten Dwellings, due to all those previous circumstances, dwells in the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

In the past time, the future, and the present—those three periods of time--there are limitless, numberless, Thus Come Ones. There are limitless and boundlessly many Buddhas. Wishing in a single thought to know them all —to completely know the number of all Buddhas in one single thought--the Bodhisattva, because of those reasons, first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattva of the Ten Dwellings, because of this, dwells in the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Wishing that the proclamation of a single phrase of Dharma. The Bodhisattva wishes that the proclamation of a single perfect phrase of Buddhadharma for an asamkhyeya kalpa not be exhausted. At the end of limitless and boundlessly many kalpas, it would still not be finished; that single sentence of Dharma would not be spoken to the end. That one sentence could express all Dharmas, and still not be used up or spoken to the end. And that all the texts and meanings not be the same, to make all the texts and the meanings—some texts follow the meaning, some meanings follow the text—each not the same; the Bodhisattva, because of this, first becomes resolved. Wanting to fulfill this kind of wish, the Bodhisattva dwells in the position of the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Sutra:

In the ten directions, all the living beings,   
Have marks of birth and death, according to their flowing and turning.   
Wishing in a single thought to clearly penetrate them all,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

Wishing with the karma of body, speech, and mind,   
To go everywhere in the ten directions without obstruction,   
And know that the three periods of time are all empty and still,   
The Bodhisattva first becomes resolved.

The Bodhisattva, having once thus first brought forth the resolve,   
Should go throughout the countries of the ten directions,   
To venerate and make offerings to all Thus Come Ones,   
Which bring about irreversibility.

The Bodhisattva, bravely seeking the Buddha Way,   
Dwells in birth and death without weariness or satiation,   
And extols for others so they can practice accordingly,   
Which brings about irreversibility.

In limitless kshetras throughout worlds of the ten directions,   
In each is one acting as an Honored Lord.   
Who speaks that way to all Bodhisattvas,   
Which brings about irreversibility.

Commentary:

In the ten directions, all the living beings. All of the living beings in the worlds of the ten directions, have marks of birth and death, according

to their flowing and turning. All the different kinds of living beings are born and then die, die and then are reborn, flowing and turning within the wheel of birth and death, in an endless cycle whose beginning cannot be found.

They flow and turn in the wheel of the six destinies, being born and then dying, dying and then being reborn—having the marks of birth and death, of production and extinction. Wishing in a single thought to clearly

penetrate them all. Why do Bodhisattvas cultivate? They cultivate to completely understand and penetrate the marks of birth and death of living beings—how it is that they can cause living beings to turn back from flowing into the six dusts and return to the flow of the sages’ Dharma nature.

The Bodhisattva, because of such reasons, first becomes resolved. Because Bodhisattvas want to obtain this kind of wisdom eye, they dwell in the position of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Wishing with the karma of body, speech, and mind. The Bodhisattva also wants to employ karma of the body, karma of the mouth, and karma of the mind—the three karmas of body, mouth, and mind—in order to go everywhere in the ten directions without obstruction. His body, in a single thought, can pervade the ten directions. His karma of speech can also, in a single thought, pervasively teach living beings in the worlds of the ten directions. His mental karma can also, within a single thought, make offerings to limitless Buddhas, pervasively throughout the ten directions. That is the meaning of going everywhere in the ten directions without obstruction. They can do whatever they want to do. As it is said, “No place does he go where he is not at ease.” And know that the three periods of time are all empty and still. The Bodhisattva knows that the three periods of time are all empty, that

Past time cannot be got at.   
Present time cannot be got at.   
Future time cannot be got at.

The Bodhisattva, because of these reasons, first becomes resolved. The Bodhisattva, for this reason, dwells in the position of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

The Bodhisattva, having once thus first brought forth the resolve—the Bodhisattva of the Ten Dwellings, after he has brought forth this kind of great thought for Bodhi—how should he be? He should go throughout the countries of the ten directions. He should also bring forth the great thought for Bodhi and go to all the Buddhalands of the countries of the ten directions, to do what? To venerate and make offerings to all Thus Come Ones—to worship and make offerings to all Buddhas, which brings about irreversibility. Because the Bodhisattva courageously and vigorously brings forth the great thought for Bodhi, that makes his own thought for Bodhi eternally not retreat. If your merit and virtue are perfect, then you will not retreat from the thought for Bodhi. If you cultivate and use effort, if you always sit in dhyana and cultivate samadhi, if you have samadhi power and hold precepts perfectly, then you will not retreat. If you are able to practice giving—when you perfect your virtuous practices of giving—then you also will be unable to retreat from the thought for Bodhi. If you can be patient, endure what cannot be endured, that can also help you to not retreat from the thought for Bodhi. If you can be constantly vigorous, that will also assist you not to abandon the thought for Bodhi. If you can constantly practice dhyana, that also helps you not to retreat from the thought for Bodhi. If you can constantly cultivate Prajna, that will also help you to be irreversible from the thought for Bodhi.

The Bodhisattva, bravely seeking the Buddha Way. The Bodhisattva “seeks the Buddha Way above, and below teaches living beings.” Therefore, his every thought is to seek the Buddha Way above; his every thought is to teach living beings below. He has no other thoughts—no other false thoughts—aside from these. That is his responsibility, and so he dwells in birth and death without weariness or satiation. If he doesn’t end birth and death himself, it is no problem; he does not grow weary of birth and death. Those of the Two Vehicles, “…see the three realms as a jail.” They look upon the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm as being like a jail, a prison, and…see birth and death as a deadly enemy.” They look upon birth and death as a deadly enemy and are determined to end birth and death. The Bodhisattva has transcended that kind of state. What is within birth and death? Within birth and death is just Nirvana. Birth and death and Nirvana are not dual; they are the same. For that reason he is not weary of birth and death.

And extols for others so they can practice accordingly. For all living beings he praises precepts, samadhi, and wisdom and teaches them to destroy greed, hatred, and stupidity. If you cultivate precepts, samadhi, and wisdom, that is practicing in accord. If you destroy greed, hatred, and stupidity, that is also practicing in accord. You shouldn’t increase greed, hatred, and stupidity, or else that is practicing in opposition. Which brings about irreversibility. Because he accords in vigor and never retreats, that makes the Bodhisattva daily more diligent and irreversible.

In limitless kshetras throughout worlds of the ten directions. All the worlds of the ten directions have limitless and boundlessly many Buddha-kshetras. In each is one acting as an Honored Lord. Every country, every world, has a Buddha within it teaching living beings, who speaks that way to all Bodhisattvas. The Honored Lord is the Buddha. The Buddha is there explaining the Dharma door of the Ten Dwellings for all the Bodhisattvas. By doing this he causes all the Bodhisattvas to bring forth the great thought for Bodhi, which brings about irreversibility. Because of the wonderful Dharma spoken by the Buddhas, it comes about that all the Bodhisattvas of the Ten Dwellings become irreversible; they obtain that kind of position.

Sutra:

The most supreme, most lofty, and foremost,   
Profound, subtly wonderful, pure Dharma,   
He exhorts all Bodhisattvas to proclaim for human beings.   
And in that way teach them to separate from afflictions.

In all worlds, without an equal,   
Is the place which cannot be overthrown or conquered.   
For the Bodhisattvas he constantly praises it.   
In that way, he teaches them to be irreversible.

The Buddha is the world’s lord of great might,   
Endowed with all merit and virtue,   
In which he causes all Bodhisattvas to dwell.   
By that he teaches them to be victorious heroes.

Where limitless, boundless Buddhas are,   
He goes to and draws near them all.   
Constantly being gathered in and accepted by those Buddhas,   
Which brings about irreversibility.

All of the samadhis of still quietudes,   
Are completely proclaimed with no exceptions,   
Spoken in that way for those Bodhisattvas,   
Which brings about irreversibility.

Commentary:

The most supreme, most lofty, and foremost—the Dharma is most supreme, most lofty, and most superior. It is a profound , subtly wonderful, pure Dharma, and so it says,

The unsurpassed, deep, profound, subtle and wonderful Dharma,   
In hundreds of millions of kalpas is difficult to encounter.   
I now see and hear it, receive it and maintain it,   
And I vow to understand the Thus Come One’s true and actual meaning.

He exhorts all Bodhisattvas to proclaim for human beings. This unsurpassed, profoundly deep, subtle, and wonderful Dharma is subtle and wonderful if it is spoken. If you do not speak it, the subtle and wonderful is not subtle and wonderful. So, the Buddha hopes that the Bodhisattvas will speak the unsurpassed, profoundly deep, subtle and wonderful Dharma for living beings, and in that way teach them to separate from afflictions. Its purpose is to teach all living beings to leave all afflictions behind.

In all worlds, without an equal. In all the world-realms, without a parallel, is the place which cannot be overthrown or conquered. This solid, vajra mind cannot be quelled or overthrown. If you have this solid mind, then you can teach and transform living beings. For the Bodhisattvas he constantly praises it. He constantly praises this heroic vigor, this thought for Bodhi. In that way, he teaches them to be irreversible. In that way he teaches all living beings and all Bodhisattvas to not retreat from their thought for Bodhi.

The Buddha is the world’s lord of great might. The Buddha is, within the world, a lord of unexcelled might, endowed with all merit and virtue. He is endowed with all the meritorious qualities that exist, in which he causes all Bodhisattvas to dwell. He causes all of the Bodhisattvas who have brought forth the thought of enlightenment to dwell within these meritorious qualities, to dwell within this great power. By that he teaches them to be victorious heroes. By these kinds of causes and conditions, he teaches those Bodhisattvas and all living beings to become surpassing heroes, that is to become great heroes, teachers of gods and men.

Where limitless, boundless Buddhas are—within the Buddhalands of all the Buddhas that exist, he goes to and draws near them all. He can go to those Buddhalands and draw near to all those limitless and boundless Buddhas. Constantly being gathered in and accepted by those Buddhas. He constantly gains acceptance by all Buddhas, which brings about irreversibility. In that way he causes these Bodhisattvas to not retreat from the thought for Bodhi.

All of the samadhis of still quietudes—all of the quietudes, the quiet samadhi-concentrations-- are completely proclaimed with no exceptions. He constantly proclaims and speaks these kinds of wonderful dharmas, speaking them in great detail. Spoken in that way for those Bodhisattvas. The Buddha constantly, for all the Bodhisattvas, speaks this wonderful Dharma,

which brings about irreversibility. By means of this kind of Dharma, he causes the Bodhisattvas not to retreat from the thought for Bodhi, and also causes all living beings not to retreat from the thought for Bodhi.

Sutra:

Destroying all existence in the wheel of birth and death,   
Turning the pure and wonderful Dharma wheel,   
Being unattached to all worlds:   
He speaks this way for the Bodhisattvas.

Commentary:

Destroying all existence in the wheel of birth and death. “All existence” refers to all existence in the triple realm: the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm. In the triple realm there are twenty-five realms of existence, but in general, in all realms, there is birth and death. One revolves in the wheel of birth and death within the six paths, and it is hard to stop. But now one smashes and stops that wheel of birth and death, thus instead, turning the pure and wonderful Dharma wheel. The Buddha turns the clear, pure, wonderful, Dharma Wheel—the great Dharma Wheel—and speaks the pure, wonderful Dharma, being unattached to all worlds. Causing living beings in all worlds to have no attachments: He speaks this way for the Bodhisattvas, causing all the Bodhisattvas to leave the wheel of birth and death and instead turn the inconceivable, supreme, wonderful Dharma Wheel and get rid of all attachment, thus causing all living beings to bring forth the thought of enlightenment. This supreme, great Dharma of non-attachment is spoken also for Bodhisattvas of the First Resolve.

Sutra;

All living beings fall into evil paths.   
Limitless kinds of suffering bind and pressure them.   
Of acting as a place of refuge to save and protect them:   
He speaks this way for all Bodhisattvas.

This is the Bodhisattva’s dwelling in the first resolve,   
Its one aim and resolution to seek the Unsurpassed Way.   
As are the dharmas of instruction that I speak,   
So, too, are those of all the Buddhas.

Commentary:

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva says, “All living beings fall into evil paths. Living beings fall into the three evil paths of the hells, hungry ghosts, and animals. Why is it? It is because of this they make mistakes, create offense karma, and fall into the three evil paths where limitless kinds of suffering bind and pressure them. In the paths of the hells there are mountains of knives, oil cauldrons, and the hell of the iron pillar. When hungry, one swallows iron pellets; when thirsty, one drinks molten copper. These sufferings bind them. Of acting as a place of refuge to save and protect them. The Bodhisattva is a refuge for all those who are suffering.

He speaks this way for all Bodhisattvas. He tells them how one should be a savior and a place of refuge for beings. That is why the Dharma of the Ten Dwellings is spoken. This is the Bodhisattva’s dwelling in the first resolve. Of the ten Bodhisattva Dwellings, the first is the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve. Its one aim and resolution to seek the Unsurpassed Way. Because from the start the sole aim of the Bodhisattvas has been to seek Buddhahood, therefore they now dwell in the Dwelling of First Bringing Forth the Resolve.

As are the dharmas of instruction that I speak—Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva says that as he now speaks the instruction of the Ten Dwellings, the Dharma of Bodhisattvas and living beings--so, too, are those of all the Buddhas—all the Buddhas also speak it thus.

Sutra:

The Bodhisattva on the Second Dwelling, the Ground of Regulation,   
Should bring forth thoughts such as these:   
“May all living beings in the ten directions,   
Follow the teachings of the Thus Come One,”   
Thoughts of benefit, of great compassion, of happiness,   
Thoughts of peaceful dwelling, of pity, and of gathering in,   
Thoughts of protecting living beings, of them being the same as oneself,   
Thoughts of a teacher and of a Guiding Master.

Commentary:

The Bodhisattva on the Second Dwelling, the Ground of Regulation. The Bodhisattva on the Second Dwelling should bring forth thoughts such as these: “May all living beings in the ten directions—wishing all living beings in the ten directions and the three periods of time--follow the teachings of the Thus Come One. May all beings, with regard to the Buddhadharma, offer up their conduct in accord with the teaching, and follow the principles taught by the Buddha in their cultivation.” The Bodhisattva on the Ground of Regulation needs to have thoughts of benefit, of great compassion, of happiness, thoughts of peaceful dwelling, of pity, and of gathering in, causing all living beings to be peaceful and undisturbed, sympathetic and accepting. They should also have thoughts of protecting living beings, of them being the same as oneself—they protect other living beings as they would themselves—and also thoughts of a teacher and of a Guiding Master. They act as instructors and guides for all beings.

Sutra:

Once they dwell in superior, wonderful thoughts such as these,   
Then he has them recite and practice and seek much learning,   
To always delight in quietude and proper consideration,   
And draw near to all Good Knowing Advisors.

Commentary:

The Bodhisattva on the Ten Dwellings, previously mentioned--once they dwell in superior, wonderful thoughts such as these, seeking the unsurpassed path, then he has them recite and practice and seek much learning. Then all the Bodhisattvas and living beings are caused to recite Sutras, practice the Buddhadharma, pursue much learning and extensive knowledge through reading, reciting, accepting, and maintaining the Sutras. This is for the sake of acquiring extensive learning of all Buddhadharmas.

To always delight in quietude and proper consideration. Cultivators should always like to be quiet and tranquil and should not talk too much. They shouldn’t pay attention to what is none of their business, or read so many useless things. This is to be pure and quiet and to cultivate Dhyana samadhi—still consideration—the cultivation of thought. And draw near to all Good Knowing Advisors: They always draw close to all the good Knowing Advisors, not evil knowing advisors. Good Knowing Advisors teach you how to cultivate and get rid of your bad habits and faults. Evil knowing advisors teach you how to increase your bad habits and how not to cultivate. So, you should draw close to good teachers and avoid bad teachers.

Sutra:

Their speech is harmonious, pleasing, devoid of what is coarse and rude.   
They speak at the proper time and also without fear.   
They penetrate to the meaning and practice in accord with Dharma,   
Far removed from stupidity and confusion, their minds do not move.

This is the initial study of the Bodhisattva’s conduct.   
Those who can practice this conduct are true disciples of the Buddha.   
Now that I’ve explained what it is they should practice,   
Disciples of the Buddha should diligently study in this way.

The Bodhisattva in the Third Dwelling of cultivation,   
Should rely on the Buddha’s teaching to diligently contemplate   
All dharmas as impermanent, involved with suffering, and empty,   
Without self or others, and without creation.

All dharmas cannot be delighted in;   
They have no such names, and have no location.   
They lack differentiation, and are not true and actual.   
One who contemplates this way is called a Bodhisattva.

Commentary:

Their speech is harmonious, pleasing, devoid of what is coarse and rude. Cultivators at all times and in all places should speak harmoniously and not coarsely, rashly, beratingly, or sarcastically, ridiculing others. They must avoid backbiting, vulgar, abusive, scurrilous, and deceitful speech—all such are in opposition to principle. Harmonious and pleasing speech does not hurt the ear and is not hard to listen to. All like to hear it. A Bodhisattva’s speech is always courteous. They speak at the proper time and also without fear.

When it’s time to speak, speak.   
If you are given gifts legally, take them.   
If it’s time to be happy, be happy.   
If you cry when it’s time to be happy, you have lost out.   
If you are happy when it’s time to cry, that’s being stupid.

When it’s time to speak, speak; otherwise, don’t. That is “knowing the time”. If you don’t know the time and speak whenever you please, and when it’s not in accord with the potentials, that’s wrong. Speaking must be done in accord with opportunities and without fear. Say what you must say. Don’t fear to speak when it’s the right time, rather than speaking when the time is not right. You must understand when the time comes, and then you certainly must speak. When it’s not time, then you definitely should not speak.

They penetrate to the meaning and practice in accord with Dharma. You must clearly understand all the doctrines. If people understand them, and rely upon them in cultivation, then they are far removed from stupidity and confusion, their minds do not move. You must be far removed from stupidity and confusion and leave behind all perverse and upside-down actions, all unclear speech and unclear thoughts. If you don’t understand yourself, you will cause others not to understand. You r mind not moving just means you have samadhi power. This is the initial study of the Bodhisattva’s conduct. The Bodhisattva who has just brought forth the mind cultivates this. These are the ten kinds of dharmas the study of which the Bodhisattva should encourage upon the Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation. Those who can practice this conduct are true disciples of the Buddha. If you can cultivate according to this Dharma, you are a true Buddhist disciple. Now that I’ve explained what it is they should practice. Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva says that he is now teaching the Bodhisattvas what Bodhi conduct they should practice. Disciples of the Buddha should diligently study in this way. All the Buddha’s disciples should diligently study this kind of dharma and not be lazy.

The Bodhisattva in the Third Dwelling of cultivation,--the Third Dwelling of a Bodhisattva is that of cultivation-- Should rely on the Buddha’s teaching to diligently contemplate. One should rely on the Buddha’s teaching to respectfully practice and purely contemplate; this means being without laziness in one’s cultivation. One should contemplate all dharmas as impermanent, involved with suffering, and empty. You should know that all dharmas are impermanent, are suffering, and are empty, without self or others, and without creation. They are without self and people. You must break all attachments—have no attachment to self or others, and have no attachment to any creator, because no one creates those dharmas. All dharmas cannot be delighted in; They have no such names, and have no

location. One cannot take pleasure in dharmas which are ultimately vain and illusory; they don’t even have a name or a location in which they can be pinned down. They lack differentiation—differences--and are not true and actual. Dharmas are without discrimination. Discrimination is a function of the conscious mind. With wisdom, there is no discrimination. All dharmas are empty and false—unreal. One who contemplates this way is called a Bodhisattva. To observe all dharmas like that is just the Dwelling of Cultivation of the Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattva should cultivate in this way.

Sutra:

Then he causes them to contemplate the realms of living beings   
And, by exhorting contemplation of the Dharma Realm,   
Worldly discriminations are ended and none remain.   
All this he should encourage them to contemplate.

In worlds of the ten directions, and empty space,   
All the earth, water, fire, and wind,   
The desire realm, form realm, and formless realm—   
He should exhort the contemplation of all this to bring them to an end.

They contemplate these realms with each of their differences.   
Until they find their ultimate substance and nature.   
Obtaining such a teaching and diligently cultivating it,   
They are then called true disciples of the Buddha.

The Bodhisattva of the Fourth Dwelling of Noble Birth,   
Is born from all sagely teachings.   
Completely penetrating all existence as non-existent,   
He transcends those dharmas and is born of the Dharma Realm.

His belief in the Buddha is solid and indestructible.   
Contemplating dharmas as still and extinct, his mind is at peace.   
According with all living beings, he completely understands   
That their substance and nature are empty, false, and lacking actuality.

Commentary:

Then he causes them to contemplate the realms of living beings and, by exhorting contemplation of the Dharma Realm, worldly discriminations are ended and none remain. All the worldly discriminations are clearly understood. All this he should encourage them to contemplate. All the realms of living beings, the Dharma Realm and the world should be thoroughly observed and understood. In worlds of the ten directions, and empty space—the vast infinitude of all world realms and empty space--all the earth, water, fire, and wind. Earth, air, fire, and wind, the realms of the four elements—must be contemplated. The desire realm, form realm, and formless realm—he should exhort the contemplation of all this to bring them to an end. The three realms of desire, form, and formlessness should also be observed. All their different characteristics should be known.

They contemplate these realms with each of their differences. Until they find their ultimate substance and nature. Obtaining such a teaching and diligently cultivating it—so that their substance and their nature, as well, can be observed to the ultimate and completely understood, observing all the causes and conditions in the Dharma Realm-- they are then called true disciples of the Buddha. The one who can illumine all the dharmas and all the causes and conditions of the Dharma Realm is called a real Buddhist disciple.

The Bodhisattva of the Fourth Dwelling of Noble Birth. The Fourth Dwelling is that of Noble Birth. Why? Because one is born from all sagely teachings. Completely penetrating all existence as non-existent—all existence is empty--he transcends those dharmas and is born of the Dharma Realm. He transcends all conditioned dharmas and is born with the Dharma Realm as his substance.

His belief in the Buddha is solid and indestructible. Your belief in the Buddha should be solid, unmoving, and indestructible. It should be more solid than vajra. Contemplating dharmas as still and extinct, his mind is at peace. All dharmas are characterized by still extinction. He observes this and his mind doesn’t move. According with all living beings, he completely understands—the realm of living beings is completely understood--that their substance and nature are empty, false, and lacking actuality. Knowing the substance of all living beings is false and identical with empty space: there is nothing really there at all.

Sutra:

Worlds, kshetras, karma, and retribution,   
Birth, death, and nirvana, are this way, too.   
Disciples of the Buddha contemplate dharmas thus—   
Those personally born from the Buddha are called Buddhist disciples.

Commentary:

Worlds, kshetras, karma, and retribution. Worlds: there is the world of proper enlightenment, the world of sentient beings, and the world of utensils. The Sages, Bodhisattvas and Buddhas are the world of proper enlightenment. Living beings are the world of sentience; the mountains, rivers, the great earth, all buildings and vegetation—those are the world of utensils. All living beings of the worlds and Buddha countries give rise to delusion and create karma. Because of one thought of ignorance, they produce delusion, create karma, and receive retribution. They create good karma and receive good retribution; they create evil karma and receive evil retribution.

Birth, death, and nirvana, are this way, too. Birth, death, and Nirvana are also like that. Birth and death: having affliction is just birth and death. If you turn it into enlightenment, that is just Nirvana. Disciples of the Buddha contemplate dharmas thus—Buddhist disciples should contemplate dharmas in this way. Those personally born from the Buddha are called Buddhist disciples. If you can be without attachment, that is the same as being born personally from the Buddha, so the Buddha’s disciples are called “sons” of the Buddha.

Sutra:

All the Buddhadharmas of the past,   
The future, and the present time,   
They understand, amass and perfect.   
In this way, their cultivation and study become ultimate.

All the Thus Come Ones in the three periods of time   
Can accord with and contemplate all as equal.   
The various kinds of discriminations cannot be obtained.   
One who contemplates in that way, penetrates the three periods of time.

As I now proclaim it and praise   
All the merit and virtue of the Fourth dwelling,   
If one can rely on the Dharma and diligently cultivate,   
One quickly accomplishes the unsurpassed Bodhi of a Buddha.

The next, the Fifth Dwelling of all the Bodhisattvas,   
Is called the Dwelling of Endowment with Skill-In-Means.   
They deeply enter limitless, clever, expedient means,   
And bring forth karma of ultimate merit and virtue.

Commentary:

All the Buddhadharmas of the past, the future, and the present time. In the past, present, and future—the three periods of time—the past Buddhas spoke Dharma, the present Buddhas speak Dharma, and the future Buddhas will speak Dharma. They understand, amass and perfect. The Bodhisattvas know that with the Buddhadharma a little can accumulate into a lot. From knowing nothing, a little understanding is accumulated; from a little understanding, it grows into a lot; from a lot of understanding, it grows into perfect understanding, until one can completely understand all of the Buddhadharma.

In this way, their cultivation and study become ultimate—in that way, they cultivate the six perfections and the ten thousand conducts to the attainment of the ultimate Buddha fruit. All the Thus Come Ones in the three periods of time—all Buddhas, past, present, and future-- can accord with and contemplate all as equal. They follow causes and conditions to observe all living beings as being the same as Buddhas.

The various kinds of discriminations cannot be obtained. Various discriminations are unobtainable and non-existent. One who contemplates in that way, penetrates the three periods of time. If one contemplates in that way, without any attachment, one can penetrate the three periods of time completely without obstruction.

As I now proclaim it and praise—Now I, Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva, praise all the Bodhisattvas, and all the merit and virtue of the Fourth Dwelling, that is the Fourth Dwelling of Noble Birth. If one can rely on the Dharma and diligently cultivate—if one can rely on this dharma to industriously practice-- one quickly accomplishes the unsurpassed Bodhi of a Buddha. One can quickly accomplish the Buddhas’ Bodhi fruit. The next, the Fifth Dwelling of all the Bodhisattvas. This Fifth Dwelling is called the Dwelling of Endowment with Skill-In-Means. The Fifth Dwelling is “Perfection of Skill-In-Means.” They deeply enter limitless, clever, expedient means. What is meant by “Perfection of Skill-In-Means”? These Bodhisattvas deeply enter the Dharma doors of clever skill-in-means-- and bring forth karma of ultimate merit and virtue. They cultivate their merit and virtue to perfection and bring about that karmic fruit of perfection.

Sutra:

The amassed blessings and virtue cultivated by the Bodhisattvas,   
Are for rescuing and protecting all the flocks of beings.   
With concentrated thought they benefit and bestow happiness.   
Their one aim, out of pity, is to save and liberate.

For the sake of all worlds they dispel the mass of difficulties,   
Leading out all who exist and causing them to rejoice.   
They subdue each of them without missing any,   
Causing them to be endowed with virtue and to tend towards Nirvana.

All living beings are boundless,   
Limitless, numberless and inconceivable.   
They also cannot be counted, measured, or compared.   
Such dharmas they hear and receive from the Thus Come One.

On this Fifth Dwelling of being a true disciple of the Buddha,   
One perfects expedient means and rescues living beings.   
The Honored Ones of all merit, virtue, and great wisdom,   
Employ such dharmas to instruct.

Commentary:

The amassed blessings and virtue cultivated by the Bodhisattvas. The Fifth Dwelling Bodhisattvas cultivate all blessings and virtue. Virtue is also accumulated from a little to a lot. One cultivates bit by bit. Why do the Bodhisattvas cultivate blessings and virtue? They are for rescuing and protecting all the flocks of beings. Their blessings, virtue, spiritual power, and strength are to rescue all living beings—not to benefit themselves but to benefit others. With concentrated thought they benefit and bestow happiness. They single-mindedly think of benefitting living beings and making them all happy. That’s the heart of the Bodhisattva. Their one aim, out of pity, is to save and liberate. They always pity all living beings and cause them to go from confusion and resolve on enlightenment, cast off the deviant and return to the proper, bring forth the Buddha mind, leave this shore of birth and death, cross over the sea of afflictions, and arrive at the other shore of Nirvana.

For the sake of all worlds they dispel the mass of difficulties. The Bodhisattva uses compassion for all the worlds and dispels all disasters. Leading out all who exist and causing them to rejoice. He leads and guides all living beings out of suffering and causes them to become happy and bring forth the resolve for Bodhi. They subdue each of them without missing any. All living beings, the obstinate, hard-to-tame living beings, he tames. There is not one who isn’t tamed, not one left over. This means that they all obtain liberation and happiness. Causing them to be endowed with virtue and to tend towards Nirvana. All living beings are complete with blessings and virtue and set out on the road to Nirvana.

All living beings are boundless. All living beings are without bounds, without limit, and without number—inconceivable. How many are there? An inconceivable number: Limitless, numberless and inconceivable. One can’t use a scale to measure the length of all these boundless, limitless, countless, measureless living beings. They also cannot be counted, measured, or compared. Such dharmas they hear and receive from

the Thus Come One. They hear and accept the Ten Dwellings Dharma, the Perfection of Skill-in-Means, that expedient Dharma door.

On this Fifth Dwelling of being a true disciple of the Buddha, one perfects expedient means and rescues living beings. The true disciples of the Buddha all accomplish the Perfection of Skill-in-Means in order to save living beings. The Honored Ones of all merit, virtue, and great wisdom, employ such dharmas to instruct. They use the various above-mentioned dharmas to instruct all living beings.

Sutra:

The Sixth Dwelling is the perfection of proper thought.   
About the self nature of dharmas they are not deluded.   
Proper mindfulness and reflection are removed from discriminations.   
All the gods and men cannot disturb it.

Hearing praise or slander of the Buddha or of the Buddhadharma,   
Or of the Bodhisattvas and the conduct they practice,   
That living beings have limits or are without limits,   
That they are defiled or undefiled, hard or easy to save,…

Commentary:

The Sixth Dwelling is the perfection of proper thought; about the self-nature of dharmas they are not deluded. In the Sixth Dwelling, that of Rectifying the Mind, the Bodhisattvas clearly understand and recognize the Buddhadharma, without any confusion or delusion. Proper mindfulness and reflection are removed from discriminations. They use proper thought and wisdom to think about the Dharma. They are not like common people who use the discriminating heart to discriminate. They don’t use consciousness; they use wisdom. All the gods and men cannot disturb it. All gods and men can’t undermine this state or move the Buddha’s mind.

As for the Bodhisattva of the Dwelling of Rectifying the Mind, since his thought is proper, he has samadhi power. His samadhi power is perfected, and so when he hears people praise the Buddha or slander the Buddhadharma—the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha—his mind does not move. He is not moved by the wind of language. Hearing praise or slander of the Buddha or of the Buddhadharma, or of the Bodhisattvas and the conduct they practice—whether the doors of conduct cultivated by the Sangha Jewel are praised or slandered, his mind does not move. That living beings have limits or are without limits—or if it’s said that living beings can be counted, that they have a numerical limit, or none at all-- that they are defiled or undefiled, hard or easy to save,…Or, if it’s said that living beings are defiled, or that they are undefiled; that they basically are pure, or that they basically are defiled and cannot be pure, these different manners of speaking; or that they are easy to save, or hard to save: the Bodhisattva in the Dwelling of Rectifying the Mind, in the midst of all of this, does not move his mind.

Sutra:

That Dharma Realms are great or small, created or destroyed,   
That they exist or do not exist, their minds do not move.   
In the past, the future, and the actual present   
Their scrutinizing thoughts and considerations are forever decisive.

That all dharmas are without characteristics,   
Without a substance, without a nature, empty and not actual,   
Like illusions, like a dream, apart from discriminations—   
They are always happy to listen to such doctrines.

The Bodhisattvas at the Seventh Position of non-retreat,   
With regard to Buddhas, Dharmas, and the Bodhisattva conduct—   
Whether they exist or not, escape or don’t escape—   
Although they hear this spoken, still do not retreat.

In the past, and future, and the present times,   
That all Buddhas exist, that they do not exist,   
That the Buddhas’ wisdom has exhaustion or has no exhaustion,   
That the three times have one mark or various kinds of marks,…

Commentary:

That Dharma Realms are great or small, created or destroyed. Some people say that the Dharma Realm is big, and some say that it is small; some say the world is big, and some say that it is small. Some say the Dharma Realms undergo coming into being as well as a time of destruction, that they all undergo formation, dwelling, destruction, and emptiness. Or they say that world realms also undergo formation, dwelling, destruction, and emptiness. But these are all hypothetical, not actual, ways of speaking—like a passing sensation, like wind blowing by the ears, like illusions: spoken words that are just words which have no actual substance. That they exist or do not exist, their minds do not move. So no matter whether someone says that Dharma Realms exist or that they do not exist, the Bodhisattva’s mind does not move. Why is that? It is because he has the power of samadhi concentration, which holds his mind fast so that it does not move. In the past, the future, and the actual present—no matter whether it is the past, the future, or the present--their scrutinizing thoughts and considerations are forever decisive. He ponders deeply, considers it, and thinks it over; he’s very firmly established, constantly having the power of decisiveness.

That all dharmas are without characteristics; all dharmas have no form or appearance, without a substance, without a nature, empty, and not actual—all of them also have no substance and no nature, and are not true and actual. That is, their having substance, nature, or characteristics is all non-actual. They are all empty and false, like illusions, like a dream, apart from discriminations— they are like a false illusion, and also like the false states encountered in dreams. They are apart from discriminations—the basic substance of dharmas has no discriminations. They are always happy to listen to such doctrines. The Bodhisattvas who have perfected the Dwelling of Rectifying the Mind always like to hear these kinds of wonderful Dharmas and inconceivable doctrines. Their minds definitely are not turned by these states or words. They are not buffeted by the wind of words, but are “thus, thus unmoving, constantly clear;” constantly clear, thus, thus unmoving.

The Bodhisattvas at the Seventh Position of non-retreat. The Seventh Dwelling of the Bodhisattvas is that of non-retreat, the Dwelling of Irreversibility. With regard to Buddhas, Dharmas, and the Bodhisattva conduct. As to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, the Three Jewels—the Buddha is the Buddha Jewel, the Dharma is the Dharma Jewel, and the Sangha is the Sangha Jewel. The Bodhisattvas are the Sangha Jewel. Whether people praise them or slander them, the Bodhisattva does not move his mind. Whether they exist or not, escape or don’t escape—whether people say that there are Buddhas, or that there are no Buddhas, that there is Dharma, that there is no Dharma; whether people say that there is a Sangha, that there is no Sangha, or if people say, “Your cultivating the Buddhadharma is totally useless. Escape the three realms? How can one escape the three realms? There is no way to escape them. People like you are really stupid. Cultivating the Bodhisattva conduct is too stupid!”

Although they hear this spoken, they still do not retreat. Although they hear people slander the Buddhadharma in that way, when there are people who say, “What you call the Buddha is just a demon, and the demon is just the Buddha…” True, a demon can become a Buddha, and the Buddha can be a demon: it’s all in how you look at it. Therefore, hearing people praise or slander in this way, their minds do not move. Although they hear this spoken, they do not retreat. They are incapable of saying, upon hearing people talk this way, that they won’t cultivate the Bodhisattva Way. Not cultivating the Bodhisattva Way would be retreating. Not retreating means still being vigorous—at all times being vigorous—with no time of retreat.

In the past, and future, and the present times—in the past, the present, and the future--that all Buddhas exist, that they do not exist—whether it is said that there were Buddhas in the past, or that there were no Buddhas in the past; that there are Buddhas in the present, or that there are no Buddhas in the present; that there will be Buddhas in the future, that there will be no Buddhas in the future—in the midst of all these various kinds of ways of talking, the Bodhisattva in the Dwelling of Irreversibility does not move. He is not turned by them.

That the Buddhas’ wisdom has exhaustion or has no exhaustion. If someone says that there is a time when the Buddhas’ wisdom does not exist—that there is a time when it is exhausted; that the Buddhas’ wisdom is not inexhaustible—that it can be exhausted; of if someone says it has no limit—that there are no bounds to the Buddhas’ wisdom-- that the three times have one mark or various kinds of marks,… of if someone says that the three periods of time have one single mark; or that the three periods of time have different kinds of marks—in the face of that kind of talk—he does not retreat. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Non-Retreat, upon hearing such things, does not retreat.

Sutra:

…That one is just many, that many are just one,   
That texts accord with meaning, that meaning accords with texts;   
Thus it is that they reciprocally evolve:   
For the irreversible person, this should be spoken.

Whether dharmas have marks or have no marks,   
Whether dharmas have a nature or have no nature;   
Various distinctions mutually accompany them:   
This person, once he has heard, obtains the ultimate.

Commentary:

…That one is just many, that many are just one. People with attachments say that one is one and that many are many. If you tell them that many are one, they don’t believe you. If you tell them that one is many, they also do not believe you. Why? Because they are attached. When there are no attachments, one comes from many, and many comes from one. Basically, there is no difference between one and many. Therefore, it says that one is just many and many are just one. Ones add up to many, and many unite into ones. That texts accord with meaning, that meaning accords with texts. There is a meaning within the texts, and so the texts reveal the meaning. The meaning is also produced from the texts, and so the meaning reveals the texts. Literary Prajna is meaning. Real Mark Prajna is the true principle behind texts and meaning. That is Real Mark Prajna. Thus it is that they reciprocally evolve. What was said—that many are just one, that one is just many; that texts accord with meaning, that meaning accords with texts—these different kinds of doctrines all reciprocally evolve. They are all interconnected; they have a mutual connection in their evolution—a mutual relationship.

For the irreversible person, this should be spoken. This irreversible person also should know these kinds of doctrines of non-obstruction: that specifics and specifics are non-obstructed, that principle and specifics are non-obstructed. The doctrines of the non-obstruction of principle and specifics are all understood by this irreversible person. This person is the Bodhisattva.

Whether dharmas have marks or have no marks—whether it is said that dharmas have marks or that dharmas have no marks, whether dharmas have a nature or have no nature—if it said that dharmas have a nature, or if dharmas have no nature, the irreversible Bodhisattva is not terrified or afraid. Upon hearing those kinds of doctrines, he is unable to be turned by those states. Various distinctions mutually accompany them. There are various distinctions which come along as a retinue. This person, once he has heard, obtains the ultimate. The irreversible person, after he has heard these various kinds of dharmas, becomes enlightened to the ultimate principle; he reaches their ultimate meaning.

Sutra:

At the eighth, the Bodhisattva Dwelling of Pure Youth,   
The actions of the body, speech, and mind are all complete.   
Everything is pure, and there are no flaws.   
One is born as one intends and attains self-mastery.

Commentary:

At the eighth, the Bodhisattva Dwelling of Pure Youth. The eighth is the Bodhisattva’s Pure Youth Dwelling. Pure Youth means the original self-nature, the original nature, which has not been depleted. It also means “pure yang body”. Dwelling means to abide in that place. As a virgin youth, being without any deviant knowledge or deviant views, and without unwholesome habits, the actions of the body, speech, and mind are all complete. “Complete” means no flaws. The body does not kill, steal, or engage in sexual misconduct. The mouth has no four evils of abusive language, profanity, lying, and gossip. The mind has no greed, hatred, and stupidity. Bad habits are totally gone, so it is called “complete”, with nothing lacking in the least and nothing added at all—exactly right. Everything is pure, and there are no flaws. The three karmas of body, mouth, and mind are pure and without mistakes. One is born as one intends and attains self-mastery. The Bodhisattvas’ samadhi power is complete; they can travel to whatever place their thoughts wish to go. They roam and play among humans and act as sovereign master. Whatever they like is in accord with Dharma.

Sutra:

One knows what all the minds of living beings delight in,   
Their various intentions and understandings, each of which is different,   
And every one of the dharmas that they have,   
The marks of creation and destruction of the countries of the ten directions.

Up until swiftly obtaining wonderful spiritual penetrations,   
One goes anywhere according to one’s thoughts.   
In the presence of all Buddhas, one listens to the Dharma,   
And praises their cultivation without any weariness.

Commentary:

One knows what all the minds of living beings delight in. Delight means what their hearts like. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Pure Youth knows what all living beings like, their various intentions and understandings, each of which is different. Each kind of living being has its own kind of thought; all are different, and their understandings are also different. And every one of the dharmas that they have—all the dharmas that they cultivate-- the marks of creation and destruction of the countries of the ten directions—he knows the creation, dwelling, destruction, and emptiness of all worlds in the lands of the ten directions.

Up until swiftly obtaining wonderful spiritual penetrations. When a Bodhisattva obtains those wonderful spiritual penetrations—he gets them very quickly-- one goes anywhere according to one’s thoughts. In all places at all times, he need only think of a place, and will arrive there. In the presence of all Buddhas, one listens to the Dharma. In all the Buddhas’ Bodhimandas in the ten directions and the three periods of time, he goes to hear the Dharma, and praises their cultivation without any weariness. He praises their cultivation of conduct which truly accords with Dharma, and their heroic vigor which has no laziness, sloppiness, or weariness.

Sutra:

One understands and knows the countries of all Buddhas,   
Quaking, sustaining, and contemplating them;   
Passing beyond measureless Buddhalands,   
One travels throughout worlds of boundless number.

Asamkhyeya dharmas are all investigated.   
As one wishes one receives bodies, all of sovereign mastery.   
With speech and skillfulness that fill all places without fail,   
For all the numberless Buddhas one performs services.

At the ninth, the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Dharma Prince,   
One can see living beings undergoing different births.   
There is no affliction or manifestation of habit which one does not know,   
And one well comprehends all the expedient means that are practiced.

All dharmas are different, and the awesome deportments are each distinct.   
Worlds are not the same in their former and latter boundaries,   
The mundane and the primary truth of those,   
One comprehends well and knows without exception.

The Dharma King’s Skill-In-Means and positions of peaceful establishment,   
And all the dharmas suited to those positions,   
The Dharma King’s palaces—what one undertakes or enters—   
And within them, that which is contemplated and seen…

Commentary:

One understands and knows the countries of all Buddhas. The Pure Youth Bodhisattva is well versed in the understanding of all Buddhalands, those countries, quaking, sustaining, and contemplating them. Sometimes those countries quake, sometimes they don’t; sometimes they are sustained, skillfully contemplated, and understood. Passing beyond measureless Buddhalands. The Pure Youth Bodhisattva quakes, sustains, contemplates, and transcends Buddhalands without limit. One travels throughout worlds of boundless number. He can bring about the playful samadhi and roam in empty space throughout the Dharma Realm, through limitless and boundless Buddhalands.

Asamkhyeya dharmas are all investigated. A countless asamkhyeya of dharmas, in a single thought, he can inquire about them all. As one wishes one receives bodies, all of sovereign mastery. The Pure Youth Dwelling Bodhisattva can receive whatever kind of body he wishes to have. The Bodhisattva does not fear birth and death but wants to turn in the wheel of birth and death, and he obtains rebirth in accord with his wishes—very free and independent and without pain.

With speech and skillfulness that fill all places without fail. His sounds are all harmonious and skillful, and there is no place in the Dharma Realm where those sounds do not permeate. For all the numberless Buddhas one performs services. The Pure Youth Bodhisattva is skilled at expounding al dharmas by means of clever expedients; and, what is more, he makes offerings to all Buddhas in the ten directions, serving and waiting upon them all.

At the ninth, the Bodhisattva’s Dwelling of Dharma Prince. The Ninth Dwelling is that of Dharma Prince. One can see living beings undergoing different births. He knows all the different ways that living beings are born and die. There is no affliction or manifestation of habit which one does not know. Their afflictions, their seeds, and their habitual energies—he knows them all. And one well comprehends all the expedient means that are practiced. All the expedient Dharma doors which are cultivated: he understands them as well.

All dharmas are different, and the awesome deportments are each distinct. All dharmas are different; they are not the same. Worlds are not the same in their former and latter boundaries—the Dharma King’s worlds and their limits are not the same. The mundane and the primary truth of those—perhaps it is the common truth or perhaps the transcendental primary truth--one comprehends well and knows without exception. The Dharma Prince knows these Dharma doors well, along with the Dharma King’s Skill-In-Means and positions of peaceful establishment. The Dharma King has proficiency in teaching and transforming living beings, and his peaceful places also take living beings across. And all the dharmas suited to those positions. Whatever the place, whatever the state, he knows what method to use to teach and transform living beings. The Dharma King’s palaces—what one undertakes or enters—the great way of the Dharma King--and within them, that which is contemplated and seen…by using the Dharma, he is able to contemplate and understand all these various methods.

Sutra:

With Dharmas of the Dharma King’s Anointment of the Crown   
And spiritual might, he’s aided; thus he is without fear.   
Reposes, palaces, and praises—   
One uses them to instruct and command the Dharma Prince.

Speaking for them in this way, with nothing unexhausted,   
And he causes their minds to be without attachments.   
Knowing this, they cultivate proper mindfulness,   
And all Buddhas appear before them.

Commentary:

The Buddha is the Dharma King; the Bodhisattva is the Dharma Prince. With Dharmas of the Dharma King’s Anointment of the Crown—when the Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha, his crown is anointed with sweet dew-- and spiritual might, he’s aided; thus he is without fear. All of the Buddhas of the ten directions anoint the crowns of the Dharma Princes. The power of the Buddhas assist them so that they are not afraid but always practice the four unlimited minds of kindness, compassion, joy, and giving.

Reposes, palaces, and praises: The Dharma King teaches them how he rests, and how he carries out his business in the palaces, and also the praises and slander he receives. One uses them to instruct and command the Dharma Prince. All these dharmas are taught to the Dharma Princes.

Speaking for them in this way, with nothing unexhausted. As previously mentioned, the doctrines were spoken by the Buddha to the Dharma Princes. And he causes their minds to be without attachments. The Buddha speaks Dharma to break living beings’ attachments. If living beings have no attachments, then the Dharma is unnecessary. Why speak the Dharma? Because living beings have attachments. Knowing this, they cultivate proper mindfulness. The Buddha speaks Dharma in order to teach living beings how to change the deviant and return to the proper, get rid of consciousness, retain wisdom, and understand how to cultivate proper thought: how to have proper knowledge and proper views and obtain proper samadhi. And all Buddhas appear before them. If you are able to use proper mindfulness in your cultivation, then all the Buddhas will appear before you; all the Buddhas will anoint your crown and bestow on you a prediction of future Buddhahood.

Sutra:

At the tenth, Anointment of the Crown, the true disciple of the Buddha   
Accomplishes and perfects the most supreme and foremost dharmas.   
All the numberless worlds in the ten directions,   
He can completely quake and move, his light illumining everywhere.

Commentary:

At the tenth, Anointment of the Crown, the true disciple of the Buddha. The tenth is that of Anointment of the Crown, and the genuine Buddhist disciple won’t retreat but will always follow the Buddhas in study. He accomplishes and perfects the most supreme and foremost dharmas. He accomplishes the most supreme number one Dharma. All the numberless worlds in the ten directions, he can completely quake and move, his light illumining everywhere. The numberless worlds of the ten directions quake in six ways—quaking, roaring, crashing, shaking, surging, and rising—and cause living beings to bring forth the thought of enlightenment. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Anointing the Crown can also emit light and cause, to the end of space and the Dharma Realm all living beings to bring forth the thought of enlightenment.

Sutra:

He sustains and travels to them without exception.   
His adornments of purity are all perfected.   
The living beings that he instructs have no number,   
And he contemplates and knows their roots exhaustively.

His resolve to tame and subdue is also boundless.   
He causes them all to tend towards great Bodhi.   
All the Dharma Realms he completely contemplates,   
And he goes to all the countries of the ten directions.

Commentary:

He sustains and travels to them without exception. The Dharma Prince on the Dwelling of Anointing the Crown can maintain and hold all the Buddhadharmas, and use his spiritual power to go to all lands in the ten directions to make offerings to all Buddhas. There is no Buddhaland he does not go to, so it says, “without exception”. He goes to all lands to make offerings and to serve all those Buddhas. His adornments of purity are all perfected. The Dharma Prince dwelling in Anointment of the Crown has completed all purifications and adornments, so that both are perfect. The living beings that he instructs have no number. The Bodhisattva dwelling in the Anointment of the Crown has no mark of saving beings, although he saves beings. It is as the Vajra Sutra says, “…having taken all living beings across to extinction, there is not a single living being who has been taken across to extinction.” Why? It is because he is apart from attachment to living beings. He knows that: “basically there is not one thing; where can the dust alight?” The beings that he instructs are without number.

And he contemplates and knows their roots exhaustively. He uses his Prajna Wisdom to contemplate the causes and conditions of all living beings to see whether they can be saved or not. He contemplates their root nature. Do they have sharp roots or dull roots? Have they planted good roots or not? If they have not, he helps them to plant them. If they have, he helps them to grow. If the roots have grown, he helps them to ripen. If their roots are ripe, he leads them to obtain liberation. He uses his wisdom, the wonderful contemplative wisdom, to contemplate the root nature of living beings. “Exhaustively” means that he contemplates them very clearly and thoroughly, not haphazardly. Thus, he knows them all exhaustively and can know the dispositions of all living beings—the depth and shallowness of their good roots.

His resolve to tame and subdue is also boundless. The Bodhisattva on the Dwelling of Anointment of the Crown resolves to subdue all living beings. Living beings are difficult to subdue and difficult to tame. You tell them to do good things, and they don’t do them. Tell them not to do bad things, and they certainly will do them—especially living beings in the Saha world, who are particularly stubborn. But, although they are not easy to subdue, he subdues them—a boundless number of them. He causes them all to tend towards great Bodhi. He causes all living beings to go down the great road of Bodhi, that is, to head towards the Buddha position. If you want to head for the Buddha position, you must first cultivate the Six Paramitas and the Ten thousand Conducts.

All the Dharma Realms he completely contemplates. The ten Dharma Realms are those of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Conditionally Enlightened Ones, Sound Hearers, Gods, Humans, Asuras, Animals, Hungry Ghosts, and Hell Beings. He contemplates all realms and uses wisdom to contemplate the root nature of living beings, and he goes to all the countries of the ten directions. The Bodhisattva dwelling in the position of Anointing the Crown goes to all the Way-places throughout the ten directions and respectfully serves and makes offerings to all Buddhas.

Sutra:

Within their bodies and what their bodies do—   
Their spiritual penetrations and transformations--   
All are difficult to fathom.   
All the states in Buddhalands throughout the three periods of time,   
Even the Prince cannot understand.

The wisdom of those who view the three periods of time,   
The wisdom that clearly understands all Buddhadharmas,   
The unobstructed and boundless wisdom of the Dharma Realms,   
The wisdom that completely fills all worlds,   
The wisdom that illumines and sustains the worlds,   
The wisdom that knows all dharmas of living beings,   
And the wisdom that knows proper enlightenment without bounds.

The Thus Come One speaks exhaustively of them all.   
In this way all Bodhisattvas of the Ten Dwellings   
Are transformationally born from the Thus Come One’s Dharma.   
Accordingly, the merit and virtue of their practices   
Cannot be fathomed by either gods or people.

In the past, future, and present times,   
Their resolve to seek Buddhahood has no bounds.   
Filling the countries of the ten directions,   
None will fail to accomplish All-Wisdom.

Commentary:

Within their bodies and what their bodies do—the kinds of body karma enacted by Bodhisattvas on the Tenth Dwelling, Anointment of the Crown, and by Dharma Kings-- their spiritual penetrations and transformations all are difficult to fathom. Their cultivation of karma and their spiritual penetrations and transformations are all inconceivable. All the states in Buddhalands throughout the three periods of time—in the past, present, and future, all Buddhalands are not the same, and so the states in all those lands are different-- even the Prince cannot understand. Not to speak of common people, even Bodhisattvas on the level of Dharma Prince cannot understand these states, but the Bodhisattva Dwelling in Anointing the Crown has sufficient wisdom to understand them.

The wisdom of those who view the three periods of time—those with vision use the Wonderful Contemplative Wisdom to know the wisdom of all Buddhas; The wisdom that clearly understands all Buddhadharmas—the Buddhadharma is as deep as the great sea; it is not easy to deeply enter the Sutra Store and clearly understand all Buddhadharma. If you have that bright wisdom, you can illumine and understand all dharmas; The unobstructed and boundless wisdom of the Dharma Realms—you can use the interpenetrating wisdom to contemplate the Dharma Realm; The wisdom that completely fills all worlds—you also use the wisdom that can permeate all realms.

The wisdom that illumines and sustains the worlds—you have wisdom and light that illumines all worlds and sustains the Buddhadharma; The wisdom that knows all dharmas of living beings—you also understand cause and effect: how beings give rise to delusion, create karma, and undergo retribution; And the wisdom that knows proper enlightenment without bounds—the boundless wisdom that understands Proper Enlightenment-- The Thus Come One speaks exhaustively of them all. The Buddha speaks of this wisdom so that all Bodhisattvas may understand.

In this way all Bodhisattvas of the Ten Dwellings—all the Bodhisattvas of the Ten Dwellings--are transformationally born from the

Thus Come One’s Dharma. They are all transformed from the Dharma spoken by the Buddha. They are born from the Buddha’s mouth and transformationally born from the Dharma. Therefore, they are called Dharma Princes. Accordingly, the merit and virtue of their practices—all the meritorious and virtuous practices of the Bodhisattvas--cannot be fathomed by either gods or people. All the gods and people cannot understand the conduct of merit and virtue of these Bodhisattvas.

In the past, future, and present times—the three periods of time--their resolve to seek Buddhahood has no bounds. They resolve to seek the unsurpassed Buddha Way, and the kinds of cultivation and practices involved in doing so are limitless and boundless, filling the countries of the ten directions. The countries of the ten directions are all filled with the merit and virtue of the Dharma doors of the Tenth Dwelling Bodhisattvas. None will fail to accomplish All-Wisdom. They should quickly accomplish all wisdom and perfect the Buddha fruit.

Sutra:

All of the countries are unbounded;   
the world realms, living beings, and dharmas are also that way.   
Delusions, karma, and what the mind delights in, each are different—   
Based on that, they bring forth the intent for Bodhi.

Commentary:

All of the countries are unbounded. Our Saha world contains the four great continents. They are;

* Purvavideha-Eastern continent.
* Jambudvipa-Southern continent.
* Apara-Godaniya- Western continent.
* Uttarakuru-Northern continent.

That is called “One set of four under heaven”, and within it there are many lands, called countries. Ours is just one world, comprised of one Mount Sumeru, one sun and moon, and one set of four great continents. That’s one planet. Ultimately, how many other worlds, other planets are there? Limitless and boundlessly many—more than can be counted. So it says that all of the countries are unbounded. They have no known number, because they are unbounded. The world realms, living beings, and dharmas are also that way. The countries are unbounded and so are the worlds, as are the living beings and the Buddhadharma. So, living beings’ dharmas, the Buddhadharmas, and mind dharmas are all without limit and bounds.

Delusions, karma, and what the mind delights in, each are different—delusion is living beings’ ignorance which, once arisen, gives rise to three subtle marks: the mark of karma—giving rise to delusion and creating karma; the mark of manifesting—the mark of karma’s appearance; and the mark of the turning—the turning, or revolution, of the mark of karma. We give rise to delusion, create karma, and receive retribution. All living beings are just as different as all people who have different faces. What they like is also different. Based on that, they bring forth the intent for Bodhi. If, during the process of giving rise to delusion, creating karma, and undergoing retribution, you awaken and bring forth the thought of enlightenment and think of a way to cultivate the Way, in the future you’ll return to the root, go back to the source, turn away from delusion, and go to enlightenment; and you won’t be confused again.

Sutra:

As to the very first thought of seeking the Buddha Way,   
Worldly ordinary beings and those of the two vehicles   
Cannot even know what it is like,   
How much less the remaining conduct of merit and virtue!

All the worlds in the ten directions   
Can be raised up by a single hair.   
The person who can know them is a disciple of the Buddha;   
He tends toward the Tathagata’s conduct of wisdom.

Commentary:

As to the very first thought of seeking the Buddha Way—the first thought of seeking the Buddha Way, the Worldly ordinary beings and those of the two vehicles—all the living beings and the Shravakas and Pratyekabuddhas--cannot even know what it is like. As to the first thought of the Bodhi mind, all of the living beings, Shravakas and Pratyekabuddhas have no way to know the power of that first thought, How much less the remaining conduct of merit and virtue!—how much less the merit and virtue derived from that one thought: they do not know that either.

All the worlds in the ten directions. This, that, and unlimited worlds in the ten directions and the three periods of time can be raised up by a single hair. All the Bodhisattvas with spiritual penetrations can use one hair to pick up all the worlds in the ten directions, collect them together, and arrange them there. The person who can know them is a disciple of the Buddha. One with that spiritual penetration, a Bodhisattva on the Tenth Dwelling, can know the Buddhas’ disciples’ merit and virtue.

He tends toward the Tathagata’s conduct of wisdom. He can go towards the wisdom, the perfect enlightenment of the Tathagatas, which is the result of his practice.

Sutra:

In the ten directions, all of the great seas,   
Can be dipped out completely with a single strand of hair.   
The person who can know them is a disciple of the Buddha.   
Who, with one mind cultivates the conduct of merit and virtue.

If all world-realms were ground up into dust,   
He could discriminate them all and know their number.   
A person like that can also see,   
The paths that all Bodhisattvas travel.

Past, future, and present Buddhas of the ten directions,   
All Solitarily Enlightened Ones, and all Sound Hearers   
Completely with varieties of wonderful eloquence,   
Teach beings to first bring forth the thought for Bodhi.

The merit and virtue of bringing forth the resolve cannot be measured;   
It completely fills all the realms of living beings.   
With a multitude of wisdom, in speech one could not exhaust it,   
Much less all of the remaining wonderful conducts!

Commentary:

In the ten directions, all of the great seas. To the end of space and Dharma realms, all the great seas in the ten directions which are without limit, can be dipped out completely with a single strand of hair. The Bodhisattva has spiritual penetration such that with one hair he can dip out all the water in the seas of the ten directions until it is all gone. The person who can know them is a disciple of the Buddha. Who, with one mind cultivates the conduct of merit and virtue. He can know the merit and virtue accomplished and the practices involved in that first thought to cultivate.

If all world-realms were ground up into dust. He could grind all the worlds into dust, and he could discriminate them all and know their

number. The Bodhisattva could discriminate and know how many motes of dust there are. A person like that can also see—only a Bodhisattva with that spiritual power can see-- the paths that all Bodhisattvas travel. This is the path cultivated by all Bodhisattvas. Past, future, and present Buddhas of the

ten directions—the ten direction Buddhas of the past, present, and future- all Solitarily Enlightened Ones, and all Sound Hearers. All the Solitarily Enlightened Ones are ones who, when there is no Buddha in the world, cultivate and attain the Way. Completely with varieties of wonderful

eloquence—the Buddhas throughout the ten directions, the Sound Hearers, and the Pratyekabuddhas, all use their wonderful eloquence and teach beings to first bring forth the thought for Bodhi. They teach and instruct all living beings to bring forth the Bodhi heart. The Bodhi heart is the enlightened mind.

The merit and virtue of bringing forth the resolve cannot be measured. The merit and virtue of the First of the Ten Dwellings is measureless, to say nothing of the merit and virtue of the other nine. It completely fills all the realms of living beings. Throughout all Dharma Realms, it universally pervades the realm of living beings. With a multitude of wisdom, in speech one could not exhaust it. All beings, Bodhisattvas, if they spoke together of the merit and virtue of the Ten Dwellings, would never finish, much less all of the remaining wonderful conducts! To say nothing of the other wonderful practices: how much less could they ever be fully explained!