**The Avatamsaka Sutra**

**CHAPTER22**

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

**Explanation by VM. Hua**

**The Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries**

Commentary:

In the Flower Adornment Sutra every Dharma door is explained in ten ways. Each of the ten ways further divides into ten aspects—making a hundred parts. Each of the hundred parts again divides into ten, making a thousand kinds. Dividing each of those kinds into ten gives ten thousand. In other words, the meanings and principles in the Flower Adornment Sutra are multi-layered and inexhaustible, inexhaustible and multi-layered. These principles can be spoken to the ends of future kalpas and still not be finished, so the title of this chapter reads The Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries. “Treasuries” refers to the unending Dharmas contained herein. This is Chapter 22 of the Flower Adornment Sutra.

Sutra:

At that time, Forest of Merit and Virtue Bodhisattva further told all the Bodhisattvas, “Disciples of the Buddha, Bodhisattva Mahasattvas have ten kinds of treasuries which all the Buddhas of the past have spoken about, all the Buddhas of the future will speak about, and all the Buddhas of the present are speaking about.

Commentary:

At the time of speaking the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries Chapter--At that time, Forest of Merit and Virtue Bodhisattva further told all the Bodhisattvas; “Disciples of the Buddha, Bodhisattva Mahasattvas have ten kinds of treasuries. A great Bodhisattva among Bodhisattvas has ten kinds of Dharma treasuries which he should cultivate. They are those which all the Buddhas of the past have spoken about, all the Buddhas of the future will speak about, and all the Buddhas of the present are speaking about. All the Buddhas of the past have already expounded them; all the Buddhas of the future will expound them; and all the Buddhas of the present are expounding them right now. Right now they are speaking about the Ten Treasuries Dharma door and teaching and transforming living beings.

Sutra:

“What are the ten? They are the Treasury of Belief, the Treasury of Precepts, the Treasury of Shame, the Treasury of Remorse, the Treasury of Learning, the Treasury of Giving, the Treasury of Wisdom, the Treasury of Mindfulness, the Treasury of Upholding, and the Treasury of Eloquence. Those are the ten.

Commentary:

What are the ten Dharma Treasuries? They are as follows: the Treasury of Belief, the Treasury of Precepts, the Treasury of Shame, the Treasury of Remorse, the Treasury of Learning, the Treasury of Giving, the Treasury of Wisdom, the Treasury of Mindfulness, the Treasury of Upholding, and the Treasury of Eloquence. At present, I’ll just name the ten Dharma Treasuries and then afterwards I’ll speak about them in detail. Those are the ten Dharma Treasury Dharma doors . From out of these ten Dharma Treasuries come all the Buddhas of the past, future, and present. These Ten Dharma Treasuries are their mother.

I. The Treasury of Belief

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Belief?

Commentary:

“Each of you Disciples of the Buddha ought to pay attention because now I am going to explain them for you in detail.” Forest of Merit and Virtue Bodhisattva, concerned that the Bodhisattvas wouldn’t pay attention, compassionately calls out again to all the disciples of the Buddha. He says, “Disciples of the Buddha.” He isn’t afraid of the trouble of repeating himself. He is concerned that there are Bodhisattvas there who have entered samadhi, or have fallen asleep, or who are almost asleep, but not quite, so they aren’t able to hear the Dharma he is speaking, so he again says, “Disciples of the Buddha, you ought to strike up your spirits and not be so lazy! I’m going to talk about this Dharma door of the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries.” What is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Belief? I’m going to tell you now.

Sutra:

“These Bodhisattvas believe that all Dharmas are empty. They believe that all Dharmas are without an appearance. They believe that all Dharmas are wishless. They believe that all Dharmas are without creation. They believe that all Dharmas are without distinctions. They believe that all Dharmas are without reliance. They believe that all Dharmas are not able to be measured. They believe that all Dharmas are Unsurpassed. They believe that all Dharmas are difficult to transcend. They believe that all Dharmas are without production.

Commentary:

“These great Bodhisattvas among Bodhisattvas believe that all Dharmas are empty. All dharmas are void; they are still and extinct. As it is said, “Sweep away all dharmas and separate from all marks.” They believe that all dharmas are without a mark. They truly believe that all dharmas are empty, and since dharmas are empty, they have no mark and they are still and extinct. The still extinction of all dharmas can’t be spoken about. Penetrating the basic substance of dharmas, the way of words and speech is cut off and the place where the mind moves is extinguished. They believe that all Dharmas are without an appearance. They believe that all Dharmas are wishless, without motives. When you cultivate the Dharma, don’t be greedy. Don’t say, “I want to obtain such and such a benefit. I want to be such and such a way.” That’s false thinking. The Dharma is empty, markless, and wishless. There is no mark and there is no wish. They believe that all Dharmas are without creation. There is no maker and there is nothing made. They believe that all Dharmas are without distinctions. They are unable to say, “My dharma is high and yours is low. My dharma is good, and your dharma is bad.” They don’t harbor any discrimination. They believe that all Dharmas are without reliance. All dharmas have nothing that they rely on to be created.

They believe that all Dharmas are not able to be measured. They are incalculable. All dharmas are empty, markless, wishless, are without creation, without distinctions, and they don’t rely on anything. You also cannot measure them. You can’t even count them, there are so many. One way of explaining that they are uncountable is to say there are so many of them. Another way of explaining it is to say there isn’t even one. There isn’t anything at all. If there is nothing then how can you count something? If you have one, two, three, four, or maybe one foot, two feet, three feet, five feet, you could measure them and calculate them. But if basically there isn’t anything, then what can you count? To do so would be adding a head on top of your head.

They believe that all Dharmas are Unsurpassed. You should believe that although all dharmas are immeasurable and empty, still there is nothing superior to these dharmas. All dharmas are extremely supreme, profound, and mysterious. They believe that all Dharmas are difficult to transcend. You can’t go beyond all dharmas. They believe that all Dharmas are without production. Ultimately, dharmas are not produced.

Sutra:

“If Bodhisattvas can accord with all dharmas in this way, then after they give rise to pure belief, when they hear that all Buddhadharmas are inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that all Buddhas are inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that the realm of living beings is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that the Dharma Realm is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that the realm of empty space is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that the realm of nirvana is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid.

Commentary:

“If Bodhisattvas can accord with all dharmas in this way, if Bodhisattvas contemplate that all dharmas are void, without marks or wishes; that all dharmas are not created; that all dharmas are without distinctions; that all dharmas are without reliance; that all dharmas are immeasurable; that all dharmas are unsurpassed; that all dharmas can’t be transcended; and that all dharmas are not produced, then after they give rise to pure belief, they will be without any attachments to marks. When they hear that all Buddhadharmas are inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. They hear that all dharmas cannot be considered by the mind and cannot be spoken of by words. Some people who hear this might become very frightened and say, “Oh, you can’t think about it and you can’t speak about it, what kind of dharma is this?! Oh, I’m not going to study this!” Their minds will become afraid. They’ll retreat. They won’t study the Buddhadharma. They won’t dare even listen to it.

When they hear that all Buddhas are inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When Bodhisattvas hear that all Buddhas are unthinkable and unspeakable, that they are ineffably wonderful, their minds will be undaunted. The Bodhisattvas have samadhi power. Although they know that all Buddhas and all dharmas are inconceivable and ineffable, their minds remain in a state of unmoving suchness, comprehending and always lucid.

When they hear that the realm of living beings is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that all the realms of living beings are also inconceivable and ineffable, their minds won’t retreat. They are not intimidated.

When they hear that the Dharma Realm is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that the realm of empty space is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that the realm of nirvana is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When people hear that all afflictions can disappear, and all habits can be cut off they say, “ How can I do without afflictions when I take afflictions as my meal?” If you tell most ordinary people not to have any afflictions, they’d say, “That’s impossible!” For instance, there is a laywoman who was always sick, and she came here to ask me what to do. She wanted to know how she could get her sickness cured. I told her that if she didn’t have any afflictions and didn’t get angry, her sickness would be cured.

She said, “I can’t do that, I can’t do it.”

I said, “If you can’t do it then your sickness won’t get any better.”

She said, “Well, I’ll go try.” So she tried. She was patient and she bore it, but several times she couldn’t take it and got angry. When she got angry she had afflictions and her blood pressure went up. Her blood pressure was up..up..up…I don’t know how high it got and she had to go into the hospital. She was almost dying—it was so bad. Then she remembered that I told her if she had no afflictions her sickness would get better. So she got control of her temper and put out her fire, and her sickness got better. Later she said, “I am very afraid I’m going to die when my blood pressure goes up, so I recite and request you to please come save me.” I said, “You’re,

One who doesn’t light incense when everything is going all right.   
But embraces the Buddha’s feet when something goes wrong.

When you are sick you ask me to save you and when you don’t have any sickness, you don’t think about it.” If you don’t have any afflictions then you won’t get sick.

Nirvana is just the absence of afflictions. It’s tranquil, perfect, still, ultimate and devoid of afflictions. Some people hear others tell them to not have afflictions and it scares them. They say, “I can’t separate from my afflictions. I thrive on my afflictions. When I get mad I don’t have to eat but I get full.” Then go ahead, eat temper everyday, eat afflictions!

Sutra:

“When they hear that the past is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that the future is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that the present is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that entering every kalpa is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid.

Commentary:

“When they hear that the past is inconceivable, that all the time periods of the past are inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that the future is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear that the present is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. Their minds don’t retreat. When they hear that entering every kalpa is inconceivable, their minds are not afraid. When they hear about entering all kalpas, cultivating throughout all great kalpas no matter how long they are, staying in those kalpas and taking across all living beings everywhere, they are not daunted. They enter all kalpas to teach and transform living beings. They do not become frightened or lose heart. That is inconceivable also.

Sutra:

“Why not? These Bodhisattvas, residing in the places of Buddhas, have thoroughly solid faith. They know that the Buddhas’ wisdom is boundless and inexhaustible. In each and every one of the limitless worlds of the ten directions, there are limitless Buddhas who have already attained, are now attaining, or will attain anuttarasamyaksambodhi. They have already come into the world, are now coming into the world, or will come into the world. They have already entered Nirvana, are now entering Nirvana, or will enter Nirvana. The wisdom of these Buddhas does not increase, does not decrease; is not produced, is not destroyed; does not progress, does not retreat; is not near, is not far; is without knowing and without rejecting.

These Bodhisattvas enter into the Buddhas’ wisdom and accomplish boundless, inexhaustible belief. After they attain this belief, their minds do not retreat. Their minds do not become scattered or confused. They are indestructible and undefiled. They always have a foundation. They accord with sages, and dwell in the household of the Thus Come Ones.

Commentary:

When Bodhisattvas hear of these inconceivable states, they are not afraid. Instead, it causes their resolve for Bodhi to increase and grow, their bravery and fearlessness to grow, and also causes them to become even more vigorous. Why is it that the Bodhisattvas do not become afraid?

“Why not? These Bodhisattvas who cultivate the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries and who are residing in the places of Buddhas, have thoroughly solid faith. From beginningless kalpas past and up until the time of Shakyamuni Buddha’s ocean-like Avatamsaka Assembly, these Bodhisattvas have maintained strong, secure, and adamantine faith in the Bodhi-Way. They know that the Buddhas’ wisdom is boundless and inexhaustible. They have profound faith in the Buddhadharma; they know and understand that the Buddha’s wisdom has no boundary, no limit, and that it does not come to an end. The Buddhas’ wisdom is such that you could never finish describing it, even if you talked to the ends of the bounds of future time.

In each and every one of the limitless worlds of the ten directions, not only in the Saha world, but all the way up through the limitless worlds in the ten directions, there are limitless Buddhas. Each world has a Buddha who comes to be born there, and because worlds are limitless, Buddhas are also limitless. One doesn’t know how many there are; their number is uncountable. You can also say that for however many living beings there are in all the worlds in the ten directions, there are that many Buddhas, because each living being is a future Buddha. The Buddhas of the past are Buddhas who have already accomplished Buddhahood, the Buddhas of the present are Buddhas who are presently accomplishing Buddhahood, and the Buddhas of the future are all living beings who will in the future become Buddhas. These are Buddhas who have already attained, are now attaining, or will attain anuttarasamyaksambodhi, the Unsurpassed, Proper, Equal and Right Enlightenment . They have already come into the world, are now coming into the world, or will come into the world. They have already entered Nirvana, the Buddhas of the past have already entered Nirvana. They are now entering Nirvana. The Buddhas of the present are now entering Nirvana. Or they will enter Nirvana.

Nirvana is putting an end to affliction. When afflictions are extinguished then one arrives at the other shore. This is Nirvana. We have vowed:

“Afflictions are endless, I vow to cut them off.”

Although it says we vow to cut off inexhaustible afflictions, now I say we don’t have to cut them off. Why not? The Buddhas’ Sutras say that afflictions are just Bodhi. So if you cut off afflictions, then you do away with Bodhi as well. Then what should you do? You should transform afflictions into Bodhi. But it is very difficult to transform them. Afflictions include hatred, in other words, your bad temper, your fire of ignorance. I have a verse that I would like to quote:

Before, in the past, the flames of my rage   
Flared higher than the heavens,   
Consuming a forest of merit and virtue.   
Thus I now reap a bitter retribution.

The fire of my hatred was so great it burned through the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. Fire burns up the First Dhyana, water submerges the Second Dhyana, and wind tears down the Third Dhyana. If there was merit and virtue at all in my cultivation, I burned it all up. For this reason, I now endure the retribution of suffering, so I only eat once a day and cause all of you young people with wealth and good position to join me in enduring this suffering. That I should undergo it is appropriate. That you should do it is unjustified, and you have chosen to do it voluntarily.

In my case, my huge temper burned up an entire forest of merit and virtue. So you shouldn’t imitate your teacher’s temper. If you say, “Oh, my teacher’s temper is really great and I want to study this with him.” If you do this, in the future you will fall into the hells. You shouldn’t study this. Even if you want to study this, I won’t transmit it to you, because I already know that this is wrong. I already know that the fire of my ignorance is taller than the heavens, and so, in this wealthy country with so much abundance and blessings, I have to undergo this kind of suffering. Only eating once a day is very difficult. If you don’t believe it, you can look around everywhere in the world. You won’t find groups of people as large as ours cultivating this practice. Maybe there will be a few people, but not a lot.

You should all realize that not only is affliction harmful to other people, it is also harmful to oneself. Newton’s second law of motion says: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Your anger creates a negative reaction. Even if you haven’t actually lost your temper, if you are displeased with another person, your bad vibrations—your “telegram”—has already gone out to the other person. They receive these waves and they have a reaction to your anger before you even display it overtly. They have already gotten upset. What proof is there to this principle? Just look at people, whether they have conditions with one another or not. No matter how good you are to some people, it doesn’t seem to make a difference. You just don’t have affinities with them. It’s just like me—no matter how good I am to people, they still scold me. This includes my intelligent disciples. I don’t have any stupid disciples. None of them are as stupid as their teacher. If you don’t have affinities with people, then you are always unhappy with them. Although you don’t speak of it, the response to your vibrations will be negative. In other words they will not feel affinities toward you. So as you study the Buddhadharma, you shouldn’t study my anger. If you enter Nirvana, there are none of these problems. You simply cross over to quiescence. But because you haven’t crossed over yet, you have all these troubles.

The wisdom of these Buddhas does not increase, does not decrease; is not produced, is not destroyed; does not increase, does not decrease; is not produced, is not destroyed; does not progress, does not retreat. The Bodhisattvas cultivate constantly and unchangingly. You may not be aware of their progress, but there is also no retreating. “The ordinary mind is the Way.” When the Bodhisattvas cultivate, they embrace the three concepts of firmness, sincerity, and constancy. They have firm faith, are extremely sincere, and are constantly steady in their practice. They do not retreat.

The Buddhas’ wisdom is also not near and is not far. Bodhisattvas feel they are cultivating without cultivating and certifying without certifying. They cultivate as if nothing were going on. When they cultivate the Six Perfections and the Ten Thousand Practices, they are just fulfilling their responsibility and practicing what they ought to cultivate. They don’t feel they are close or far away from the Buddhadharma. They are constantly immersed in cultivating the Buddhadharma. Although they understand all dharmas and illumine all dharmas, they don’t have the attachment of knowledge and do not renounce them. They are without knowing and without rejecting. They can renounce everything, but they don’t feel that they’ve given up anything. How can they be this way? These Bodhisattvas enter into the Buddhas’ wisdom and accomplish boundless, inexhaustible belief. Their faith has no end and no limits. After they attain this belief, this kind of boundless, inexhaustible faith, this strong and stable faith, their minds do not retreat. They have reached irreversibility, constantly holding to the Middle Way. Embracing this unshakable faith, their minds do not become scattered or confused. They are indestructible. No deviant knowledge, views, or speech of outside ways can break up their faith. And they are undefiled—the minds of the Bodhisattvas have no defiling attachment . To be without defilement is to be pure.

They always have a foundation in wisdom . They accord with sages and dwell in the household of the Thus Come Ones. They reside in the Buddhas’ home, constantly dwelling within the Buddhadharma, being permeated by it, and practicing it.

Sutra:

“They protect the seed nature of all Buddhas. They increase the faith and understanding of all Bodhisattvas. They comply with all Thus Come Ones’ good roots, and they give rise to the expedients of all Buddhas.

This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Belief.

Commentary:

The home of the Buddha is the Way Place, the Bodhimanda. The Bodhimanda is just the straight mind of people. The straight mind is the home of the Thus Come One; the straight mind is Gold Mountain Monastery; the straight mind is the Bodhimanda. When Bodhisattvas dwell in the home of all Thus Come Ones, they must have some kind of work to do. What work? They protect the seed nature of all Buddhas. They keep the Buddhas’ lineage from being cut off, so that everyone can become accomplished in the Buddha-Way more quickly. They increase the faith and understanding of all Bodhisattvas. Day by day the Bodhisattvas increase their faith and increase the power of their understanding. They comply with all Thus Come Ones’ good roots. We must cultivate all the good roots the Buddhas cultivate. And they give rise to the expedients of all Buddhas. Since you accord with the good roots of all Buddhas, very naturally you can become a Buddha. After you become a Buddha, very naturally you can give rise to the expedient means of all Buddhas.

This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Belief. All we have talked about is the Treasury of Belief that the Bodhisattva Mahasattva should cultivate.

Sutra:

“When Bodhisattvas dwell in this Treasury of Belief, they can hear and uphold all the Buddhadharma, speak it for living beings, and enable them to become enlightened.

Commentary:

“When Bodhisattvas dwell in this Treasury of Belief—Bodhisattvas always cultivate the Treasury of Belief. Why is that?

Faith is the source of the Way,   
The mother of merit and virtue.   
It nourishes all good dharmas.

If you have faith, you can cultivate the Buddhadharma. So it says, they can hear and uphold all the Buddhadharma. It is important to have faith when you listen to the Buddhadharma. If you don’t have faith, it’s impossible to listen to the Sutra lecture. To have belief fulfills the requirement of faith, listening fulfills the requirement of hearing, and upholding fulfills the requirement of receiving and maintaining. You take what you hear and put it into actual practice. Once you’ve heard it, you must speak it for living beings, and enable them to become enlightened. You must vastly proclaim it for all living beings. It’s not enough to just listen yourself. You want to cause all living beings to hear the Dharma and become enlightened.

**II. The Treasury of Precepts**

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Precepts? These Bodhisattvas accomplish precepts which are universally beneficial, precepts of non-reception, precepts of non-dwelling, precepts of being without regret, precepts of being without contention, precepts of never harming, precepts of being without defilement, precepts of being without greed or seeking, precepts of never making mistakes, and precepts of never making violations.

Commentary:

Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue says, “Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Precepts? These Bodhisattvas accomplish precepts which are universally beneficial. There are Three Collections of precepts.

* Precepts of good dharmas
* Precepts of the Vinaya
* Precepts of benefitting living beings.

The first kind are called precepts of good dharmas; they are all wholesome dharmas. Precepts of the Vinaya tell how all the rules of deportment should be kept. The third kind, which we will now discuss, is the precepts of universally benefitting living beings. There are also the precepts of non-reception, precepts of non-dwelling, precepts of being without regret, precepts of being without contention, precepts of never harming, precepts of being without defilement, precepts of being without greed or seeking, precepts of never making mistakes, and precepts of never making violations. Together these ten kinds of precepts make up the Precept Treasury.

Sutra:

“What are the precepts which are universally beneficial? These Bodhisattvas receive and uphold pure precepts for the fundamental reason of benefitting all living beings.

Commentary:

“What are the precepts which are universally beneficial? These Bodhisattvas receive and uphold pure precepts. Why do they do this? For the fundamental reason of benefitting all living beings. They receive these precepts just because they want to benefit all living beings. They do this by adhering to the precepts. How? For instance, because they hold the precepts of not killing, all living beings are able to enjoy longevity, and as a result they can live longer. Because the Bodhisattvas don’t steal, other living beings won’t incur some kind of loss. Moreover, the Bodhisattvas don’t engage in sexual misconduct, they don’t lie and they don’t take intoxicants. All of these precepts have some benefits towards living beings, therefore they are categorized as the precepts of universally benefitting living beings.

Sutra:

“What are the precepts of non-reception? These Bodhisattvas do not receive or practice any of the precepts of external paths. Of their own nature they are vigorous, and they respectfully uphold the equal and pure precepts of all Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, throughout the three periods of time.

Commentary:

“What are the precepts of non-reception? We always talk about receiving the precepts. But what do we have here? Precepts of non-reception? We have to receive the precepts, right? How is it that we don’t receive the precepts? Actually, it means these Bodhisattvas do not receive or practice any of the precepts of external paths, the heterodox teachings. It doesn’t mean that they don’t receive the precepts of the Buddhas. It means that they don’t receive the precepts of outside ways. The experiences or states of external ways are not ultimate. For this reason Bodhisattvas do not receive the precepts of outside ways. Of their own nature they are vigorous and they respectfully uphold the equal and pure precepts of all Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, throughout the three periods of time. They cultivate and vigorously uphold the precepts of the Buddhas of the past, present, and future—all of the Vajra bright, pure and equal, jewelled precepts.

Sutra:

“What are the precepts of non-dwelling? When these Bodhisattvas receive and uphold precepts, their minds do not dwell in the desire realm, they do not dwell in the form realm, and they do not dwell in the formless realm. Why not? Because they do not uphold the precepts with the hope of being born in those places.

Commentary:

“What are the precepts of non-dwelling? We should constantly cultivate and take these precepts as our teacher. This means that we dwell in the precepts. Bodhisattvas receive and uphold precepts. It is said:

When living beings receive the Buddhas’ precepts,   
They immediately enter all Buddhas’ positions.   
Those whose level is identical to Great Enlightenment,   
Are true disciples of the Buddha.

-Brahma Net Sutra

Why does the Sutra refer to non-dwelling? Actually it goes on to explain;

When these Bodhisattvas receive and uphold precepts, their minds do not dwell in the desire realm, they do not dwell in the form realm, and they do not dwell in the formless realm. When these Bodhisattvas receive precepts, their hearts do not dwell in the desire realm; in their minds there is no desire. They don’t dwell in the form realm; in their minds there is no mark of form. And they do not dwell in the formless realm; in their minds there is no attachment to a mark of formlessness. In the desire realm there is sexual desire. In the form realm, although there are no thoughts of sexual desire, there is still and awareness of beautiful forms. In the formless realm, even the appearance of form is gone. But if you get attached to their absence you still won’t get out of the three realms. But Bodhisattvas don’t dwell in those three realms. Why not? Because they do not uphold the precepts with the hope of being born in those three places. Why don’t they dwell in the three realms? It is because they do not want to ascend to the heavens. They do not want to reap the rewards of blessings of heavenly beings. Why is this? When heavenly beings have exhausted their blessings in the heavens, they still have to come back down and live as people.

When the heavenly beings who have not completely drained their blessings are reborn, they are reborn as rich and prosperous people. If you have opened the five eyes and take a look, you’ll know that many Westerners are actually descended from the heavens. For this reason, they have many rewards of blessings. Many are like this. However, there are also many who have come from the hells. Not all people in the west are from the heavens. There are also many who have come from the sea and many from empty space. Don’t jump to the conclusion that all Americans are heavenly beings. Not all Americans are, but there are some like this. Those heavenly beings become oil and coal magnates, automobile or airline tycoons. They think these things are enjoyable, so they come down to play with airplanes, locomotives, and steamships. This is because when they were cultivating the Way, they were always thinking, “The heavens are incredible. I’ll have to go up to the heavens and enjoy the blessings there. Then when my blessings are exhausted, I’ll come back down to earth to become a trucking tycoon or a steamship magnate, or an airplane magnate, or a flying duck tycoon, or a flying dog magnate.” When this kind of karma ripens, they descend to the earth and actualize their false thinking.

What about those people from the hells? They either become lazy bugs, smart bugs, or stupid bugs; it’s not fixed, but they won’t be tycoons.

“Non-dwelling” in the precepts means these Bodhisattvas do not want to ascend to the heavens, because those are blessings with outflows. When their heavenly blessings are exhausted, they still have to suffer. This is the reason they keep those precepts of non-dwelling.

Sutra:

“What are the precepts of being without regret? These Bodhisattvas always rest in thoughts free from remorse or regret. Why? Because they do not commit heavy offenses, they do not practice flattery or deceit, and they do not break the pure precepts.

Commentary:

“What are the precepts of being without regret? These Bodhisattvas always rest in thoughts free from remorse or regret. They never make the same mistake twice. Confucius’ disciple, Yen Yuan, was like this. “Yen Yuan did not transfer his anger and he did not make the same mistake twice.” When he was angry with one person, if another person came along, he would not take his anger out on him. Maybe he would be feeling bad or depressed, but when he saw someone else, he would appear happy. He did not transfer his anger to innocent people, and he never made the same mistake over again.

People are not sages and saints,   
Who among them does not make mistakes?

Everyone makes mistakes, but Yen Yuan did not ever make the same mistake twice. When he made a mistake, he corrected it immediately. Some people may start to think, “I don’t want to learn from Yen Hui. Why? Because he was short lived.” Even though he was so good, and did not transfer his anger or make the same mistake twice, unfortunately he died at an early age.

Why did he die? Because he was too good. He was truly a good youth. He died at the age of thirty-three. The real reason was because he had fulfilled his mission and so he could afford to die. It is not because he did not transfer his anger that he died. It’s not because he did not make the same mistake twice that he died. Don’t think you are smart and jump to the wrong conclusions.

Why don’t the Bodhisattvas harbor regret? Because they do not commit heavy offenses, or you could say that they do not commit the same offense twice. Once they know their mistake, they could never repeat it. Moreover, they do not practice flattery or deceit. They don’t flatter rich people. They don’t put up a false façade to deceive others. They are not like those who see some influential people and start “boot-licking”, thinking of flattering things to say. And they do not break the pure precepts. They always guard and uphold the pure precepts, they do not break them. This is another reason they do not have regret.

Sutra:

“What are the precepts of non-contention? These Bodhisattvas do not critizicize what is already established, how much the less try to set things up their own way. Their minds are always in accord with precepts that tend toward Nirvana, completely receiving and upholding them and not violating them. Nor do they use precepts as a way to disturb other beings, causing them to give rise to suffering. It is only because they want everyone to always be happy that they uphold the precepts.

Commentary:

“What are the precepts of non-contention? These Bodhisattvas do not criticize what is already established, how much the less try to set things up their own way. These Bodhisattvas do not criticize the rules that have been set up previously. They do not find fault in the established rules. They do not say, “Those old timers were dim wits and all of the rules they set up are really stupid. They are not adequate and don’t satisfy the demands of modern times.” These Bodhisattvas are not like that. They do not change established rules or created something new. They don’t say, “Let me create some new rules.” They uphold the precepts of non-contention: they do not go against moral codes set up by the ancient people or the Buddhas of the three periods of time. Their minds are always in accord with precepts that tend toward Nirvana, completely receiving and upholding them and not violating them. They do not break the precepts or commit offenses, but instead always receive and uphold them. Nor do they use precepts as a way to disturb other beings. They do not use the precepts as a means to trouble living beings. They don’t say, “Don’t do this, I am keeping the precepts. You are really disgusting. Why—I adhere to the precepts and you are disturbing me, you are troubling me. I’m cultivating and you are interrupting me! I’m reciting the precepts and you are interrupting me!” Bodhisattvas don’t disturb others. They don’t keep precepts for the purpose of causing them to give rise to suffering. It is only because they want everyone to always be happy that they uphold the precepts. It is only for this reason they adhere to the precepts. Therefore, this is called the precept of non-contention.

Sutra:

“What are the precepts of never harming? These Bodhisattvas do not rely on precepts to study deceptive mantras or create potions in order to harm living beings. It is only for the sake of rescuing and protecting living beings that they uphold the precepts.

Commentary:

“What are the precepts of never harming? These Bodhisattvas do not rely on precepts to study deceptive mantras. These Bodhisattvas don’t hold the precepts in order to study the magic spells of outside ways or mantras of heavenly demons. Nor do they take precepts so as to create potions in order to harm living beings. They do not concoct potions or drugs or dharmas that will harm living beings, causing them to be confused about the dharmas that they cultivate. Harming living beings means causing them to lose their proper mindfulness and give rise to all kinds of deviant knowledge and views. It is only for the sake of rescuing and protecting living beings that they uphold the precepts. They do not hold precepts in order to harm or trouble living beings. Nor are they like the person talked about yesterday who maintains the precepts in such a way as to cause other living beings to become afflicted. For example a certain Precept Master might go to another monastery and be so attached to the fact that he is maintaining the precepts that he causes everybody else to be unhappy. Another example might be a person who is a vegetarian but gets really angry at home when people prepare vegetables that aren’t totally pure. He says, “I planned to eat vegetarian food today! What are you giving me that filthy stuff for?!” This person gets really angry and upsets everyone around him. So think about it. Being a vegetarian is a good thing but because that person gets incredibly angry, the whole thing becomes an evil affair.

Maintaining the precepts is also a wholesome activity, but if a person who maintains the precepts talks about the Vinaya, the precepts, and is not expedient about it and causes other people to become afflicted and turn away from resolving themselves to attain Bodhi, then the whole thing of maintaining precepts becomes an evil affair. For example, here in the Bodhimanda everything we do is good. We all wish to turn and walk on the right path. But within this good activity we shouldn’t mix in a bad temper, anger, and hatred. This is something we shouldn’t do. This is just like preparing some delicious food but then not being careful and allowing some human or dog excrement to get mixed in with the pure food. If nobody knows about this they will still go ahead and eat it, but it will upset them because even though they can’t see it, the filth in the food will make them sick. If they can see there is filth mixed in with the pure vegetables then who would want to eat it? Doing good affairs and getting angry at the same time is the same principle. So when we do good affairs we shouldn’t mix in any bad. When you get angry, you are producing bad causes and if the causes are bad, the effects will be bad. It’s just because of this that you will not have conditions with anybody at all. So if we are to maintain the precepts we don’t want to afflict and annoy other living beings. We want to cause all living beings to be happy. Maintaining the precepts is for the sake of saving living beings, not harming them.

Sutra:

“What are the precepts of being without admixture? These Bodhisattvas do not attach to prejudiced views nor do they hold a mixture of precepts. They only contemplate the arisal of conditions and uphold world-transcending precepts.

Commentary:

“What are the precepts of being without admixture? The precepts of being without admixture means that these precepts do not have the tenets of externalist religions mixed in with them. These Bodhisattvas do not attach to prejudiced views. These Bodhisattvas who cultivate the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries are not attached to prejudiced views. They aren’t attached to views of a body, prejudiced views, views of prohibitive morality, a view of grasping at views, or deviant views. Nor do they hold a mixture of precepts. They don’t receive or maintain any externalist precepts that are confused and not pure. They only contemplate the arisal of conditions. They investigate the doctrine of how things come into being. And uphold world-transcending precepts. They maintain the precepts which can cause them to transcend the triple world.

Sutra:

“What are the precepts of being without greed or seeking? These Bodhisattvas do not manifest strange appearances or display their own virtue. It is only for the sake of perfecting the Dharmas of escape that they hold the precepts.

Commentary:

“What are the precepts of being without greed or seeking? How does one refrain from greed in holding the precepts? These Bodhisattvas do not manifest strange appearances or display their own virtue. Maintaining the precepts is just maintaining the precepts, it’s not a means to seek things from people. So it says, “These Bodhisattvas do not manifest strange appearances.” They don’t go around looking special to show off their virtue. For example, they don’t put themselves on show or attract notice to the fact that they are cultivators. They don’t call attention to whatever meritorious virtues they may have. They don’t do anything which would seem to say, “Look at me, take a look at me. Look at my meritorious virtues, they’re HUGE! There is no one who has meritorious virtues as complete as mine, as great as mine!” The Bodhisattva would never say, “Look at the Golden Gate Bridge: I built it!” or “I established Buddhism in America, take a look and see how incredibly huge my meritorious virtues are! Don’t you know? I have built a lot of monasteries and I’ve printed a lot of Sutras, and I’ve helped huge numbers of people.” Bodhisattvas do not broadcast their own merit and virtue. But it is only for the sake of perfecting the Dharmas of escape that they hold the precepts. These Bodhisattvas won’t act like they are special so as to cause people to believe in them.

None of you saw this, but a long time ago I had a disciple in America who took refuge by letter through the mail. He carried around a big bottle gourd and wore huge colorful clothes and looked really strange. He went to the park and lectured to people and explained principles to them. This was more than fifteen years ago. Before I came he was doing all of these strange things and after I arrived he quit, he stopped doing this. This is called displaying an unusual appearance to cheat people. Such conduct is based on greed. One uses whatever kind of discipline one has to climb on conditions, seek advantages, or beg from people. But Bodhisattvas don’t maintain the precepts for this reason. They only maintain the precepts to perfect transcendental dharmas of escaping the Triple Realm. This is why they maintain the pure precepts.

Sutra:

“What are the precepts of never erring? These Bodhisattvas do not aggrandize themselves and say, ‘I hold precepts.’ When they see people who have violated precepts, they do not slight or slander them or cause them to feel remorseful, but they simply singlemindedly hold the precepts.

Commentary:

“What are the precepts of never erring? These Bodhisattvas do not aggrandize themselves and say, ‘I hold precepts.’ These Bodhisattvas are not arrogant with respect to the precepts, saying, “I maintain the precepts. Don’t you recognize me? I’m one who cultivates by maintaining the precepts. I’m a Vinaya Master, all of you should recognize me!” A Bodhisattva does not say that he is one who maintains the precepts. They don’t propagandize themselves.

When they see people who have violated precepts, they do not slight or slander them or cause them to feel remorseful. When these Bodhisattvas see someone who does not maintain the precepts, they don’t slight the person or slander him. They don’t look condescendingly upon him or say anything nasty about him and cause him to be embarrassed. They simply singlemindedly hold the precepts. They just unify their minds and concentrate on maintaining the precepts themselves.

Sutra:

“What are the precepts of never making violations? These Bodhisattvas have eternally severed killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, double-tongued speech, harsh speech, unprincipled speech, greed, hatred, and deviant views. They thoroughly uphold the ten good deeds. When those Bodhisattvas uphold these precepts of never making violations, they have this thought, ‘All living beings violate the pure precepts because they are upside down. Only the Buddhas, World Honored Ones, can know the causes and conditions that make living beings upside down so they violate the pure precepts. I should accomplish Unsurpassed Bodhi and extensively proclaim true and actual Dharmas for living beings so they can separate from being upside down.’

This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Second Treasury, that of Precepts.

Commentary:

“What are the precepts of never making violations? These Bodhisattvas have eternally severed killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, double-tongued speech, harsh speech, unprincipled speech, greed, hatred, and deviant views. These Bodhisattvas forever expel thoughts of desire. They don’t kill, steal, or commit acts of sexual misconduct. They don’t lie, gossip, bad-mouth, or say anything that is unprincipled. They are not greedy or hateful, and they don’t have deviant views. This list includes the three evils of the body, the four evils of the mouth, and the three evils of the mind. “Deviant views” just refers to stupidity. If a person weren’t stupid, he wouldn’t have any deviant views.

They thoroughly receive and uphold the ten good deeds. They completely receive and uphold the ten kinds of good karma. This is just the turning away from the ten kinds of bad karma. The ten kinds of bad karma become the ten good karmas.

When those Bodhisattvas uphold these precepts of never making violations, they have this thought, they think to themselves, ‘All living beings violate the pure precepts because they are upside down. Why do living beings slander and violate the precepts? It’s because they are upside down. It’s because they are topsy-turvy. It’s because they have deviant knowledge and deviant views. Only the Buddhas, World Honored Ones, can know the causes and conditions that make living beings upside down so they violate the pure precepts. It’s only the Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, who are able to know the causes and conditions that cause beings to be turned upside down.

I should accomplish Unsurpassed Bodhi and extensively proclaim true and actual Dharmas for living beings so they can separate from being upside down.' The Bodhisattva thinks, “In the future I shall perfect Unsurpassed Bodhi. I’ll accomplish the Unsurpassed Way a little bit sooner and at that time broadly and vastly, for the sake of living beings, explain the true and actual Dharma. At that time, I’ll explain true and actual principles for living beings and cause them to separate far away from being upside down and to maintain the pure precepts.”

This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Second Treasury, that of Precepts.

**III. The Treasury of Shame**

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Shame?

Commentary:

The Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue again calls out, “Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Shame? What is the Treasury of Shame that should be cultivated by all Bodhisattva Mahasattvas? Bodhisattvas repent of all of the offenses they created in the past.

Sutra:

“These Bodhisattvas remember the evil they did in the past and they give rise to shame.

Commentary:

“These Bodhisattvas remember the evil they did in the past. Reflecting on all the various evil deeds they have done life after life, birth after birth, they give rise to shame.

Sutra:

“Which is to say, they themselves reflect, ‘from beginningless time onward, we and all living beings have mutually been one another’s father, mother, older brother, younger brother, older sister, younger sister, son, and daughter. But because we are filled with greed, hatred, and stupidity, arrogance and deceptiveness, and all sorts of other afflictions, we have also mutually hurt one another and reciprocally exploited one another.

We have lusted, raped, injured, and killed. There is no evil we have not committed. It is this way for all beings. Based on their afflictions, they double their manifold evils. For this reason, among everyone there is no mutual respect, no mutual veneration, no mutual compliance, no mutual humility, no mutual guidance, and no mutual regard, rather there is a furthering of mutual killing and harming, so that everyone becomes revengeful enemies.

Commentary:

“Which is to say, these Bodhisattvas, themselves reflect. These Bodhisattvas think about it in their hearts and say to themselves, ‘from beginningless time onward, from infinite time past until the present, we and all living beings have mutually been one another’s father, mother, older brother, younger brother, older sister, younger sister, son, and daughter. All living beings have mutually been each other’s father, mother, and the rest of the six kinds of close relatives. In this life I’m the father and next life I’m the son. In this life, I’m the son and next life the father, thus mutually exchanging positions.

We and all living beings have reciprocally exchanged all those positions, have assumed all of these roles, just like putting on a play, at this time playing this particular personna and at a different time staging another act. And so, the Bodhisattva thinks, ‘But because we are filled with greed, hatred, and stupidity, arrogance, and deceptiveness, and all sorts of other afflictions, we have also mutually hurt one another and reciprocally exploited one another. We’ve all had greed, hatred, stupidity, pride, and arrogance. We’ve flattered and lied and had an excess of all the many afflictions.

We’ve committed offenses that arise from the many afflictions and on top of that mutually harmed and afflicted each other. “You kill me, I’ll kill you; you harm me, I’ll harm you; you look down on me, I’ll look down on you; you obstruct me, I’ll obstruct you.” Some little affair comes up and you want to get angry—we won’t even have to talk about the big things. People exchange insults, slandering back and forth. “You slander me, I’ll slander you; you insult him, he’ll insult you.” They communicate insults back and forth just like carrying on a correspondence. They’re always perpetuating the cycle of insulting, cheating, and robbing one another.

We have lusted, raped, injured, and killed. We have committed acts of defilement, harmed and killed. There is no evil we have not committed. There’s not a single evil that is not done. It is this way for all beings. Based on their afflictions, they double their manifold evils. All living beings are just like this. Every single living being, not just myself, does these things. It is just because of ignorance, being upside down and not understanding that they create so many different kinds of karma.

From many different kinds of afflictions, all the different evils are created. All of you should attentively listen to this section of text. This is a most important part of the Avatamsaka Sutra. The Bodhisattvas make this resolve and if we who cultivate do not do the same, then we can cultivate for eighty thousand great kalpas and not accomplish anything. We have to cultivate in accord with the resolve of a Bodhisattva in order to get anywhere. We have to change our errors and renew ourselves. You can’t just hold on to your own temperament the way it is and say you can’t change. If you can’t change you’ll put yourself in a lot of danger.

For this reason, among everyone there is no mutual respect. “You don’t respect me, I don’t respect you; you curse me, and I’ll curse you. You say I’m wrong and I’ll say you are no good. You talk about my faults, and I’ll talk about your faults.” No one respects anyone else. There is no mutual veneration. “You don’t look up to me, I won’t look up to you.” They have no mutual compliance. You don’t go along with my ideas, and I don’t go along with your ideas.” Each and every living being is mutually antagonistic. They don’t go along and accord with one another. There is no mutual humility. “You’re impolite to me and so I’ll be even less polite to you.” There is no mutual guidance. “You don’t want me to increase my wisdom, so I won’t let you increase yours either.”

Living beings are not able to say, “I don’t understand this particular affair, why don’t you tell me about it and instruct me, and what you don’t understand, I’ll tell you about.” They are not like that. They can’t exchange opinions, and there is no mutual regard. “You don’t regard, protect, or sympathize with me and I won’t regard, protect, or sympathize with you either.” Rather there is a furthering of mutual killing and harming, so that everyone becomes revengeful enemies. “You kill me, I’ll kill you.” They mutually become resentful enemies and get embroiled in all kinds of hatred.

A Bodhisattva thinks to himself, “From limitless eons in the past all living beings have exchanged places with their fathers and mothers. They have throughout their lives exchanged places with their older or younger brother, older or younger sister, also with their wives and husbands. Every day their greed, hatred, and ignorance seem to increase and every day their morality, concentration power, and wisdom decrease. So it is said that afflictions are endless—endless and limitless. All living beings have no respect towards one another. They mutually do not venerate or honor one another. They have no mutual compliance nor do they get along with each other. They have no mutual humility and no mutual guidance. They do not exhort each other on or help each other find their faults. There is no mutual regard for one another. They do not protect one another, but instead go on killing and harming, harboring hatred and vengeance towards one another. So that now, these living beings only selfishly consider their own bodies.

Sutra:

“They themselves consider, ‘We personally, as well as all living beings are shameless about our past, future, and present behavior, yet there is not a single deed which the Buddhas of the three periods of time do not know and see. So now, if we do not cut off this shameless behavior, the Buddhas of the three periods of time will continue to see us. How could we possibly not stop acting like this? There is no way we cannot stop! Therefore we should singlemindedly sever and get rid of such behavior and become certified to anuttarasamyaksambodhi, so that we can expansively speak true and actual Dharma for living beings.’

Commentary:

“They, the Bodhisattvas, themselves consider, ‘We personally, as well as all living beings are shameless about our past, future, and present behavior. “I and all living beings in the past have selfishly thought of our bodies—in the past and the present we have engaged in these deeds without any sense of shame. We have not been repentant or felt shame about any of the offenses we created in the past.” In the midst of all of this, living beings don’t even feel they’ve done anything wrong. They don’t feel they’ve made any mistakes towards anyone else and they keep on erring without any sense of remorse. They don’t even know the meaning of repentance and reform. Yet there is not a single deed which the Buddhas of the three periods of time do not know and see. All the Buddhas of the past, present, and future know and see all of this. They are aware of all the shamelessness of living beings. The Bodhisattva reflects, “All living beings do not know repentance and reform and we’ve constantly practiced these things without shame throughout the past, present, and future.”

So now, if we do not cut off this shameless behavior, the Buddhas of the three periods of time will continue to see us. If we do not stop creating these shameful affairs, then the Buddhas of the three periods of time will continue to watch us make offenses. If we don’t stop, then all the Buddhas will know that we haven’t stopped. We should then ask ourselves, “How could we possibly not stop acting like this? There is no way we cannot stop! Can we continue like this without stopping? Can we still indulge in shamelessness and not stop? This will never do! This is the most impermissible type of affair. We cannot just go on like this without stopping.” Therefore we should singlemindedly sever and get rid of such behavior. Therefore I should unify my mind and bring my thoughts to a halt. I should concentrate my mind. I should cut off this shameless practice and despicable conduct, and become certified to anuttarasamyaksambodhi, so that we can expansively speak true and actual Dharma for living beings.’ “What should I do? I should accomplish anuttarasamyaksambodhi, the right, perfect, and complete enlightenment—the fruit of Buddhahood. Then everywhere, for the sake of all living beings, I should speak the true and genuine Dharma.”

Sutra:

“This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Third Treasury, that of shame.”

Commentary:

All of the principles spoken about before are called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ —the Great Bodhisattvas’-- Third Treasury, that of shame.”

IV. The Treasury of Remorse

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Remorse?

Commentary:

The Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue says, “Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Remorse? What is it that makes up the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Remorse? What is remorse? Remorse means that inside you feel apologetic towards people, and you give rise to a feeling of remorse. After that you don’t want to do it again.

Sutra:

“These Bodhisattvas themselves are remorseful that in the past they indulged in greedily seeking the five desires without weariness or satiation.

Commentary:

“These Bodhisattvas themselves are remorseful that in the past they indulged in greedily seeking the five desires. These Bodhisattvas themselves feel remorseful about the five desires that they have indulged in, in the past. They are remorseful over all the things they have done in the past, especially the five desires that they have indulged in. The five desires can be explained in two ways;

* forms
* sounds
* smells
* tastes
* objects of touch

and,

* wealth
* sex
* fame
* food
* sleep

Greed for forms means desiring external forms, beautiful forms.

Greed for sounds means being anxious to hear elegant sounds. Greed for wonderful smells means wanting to inhale wonderful fragrances. Greed for tastes means wanting to eat good things. Greed for objects of touch means being turned by the pleasure of touch. Or perhaps one is greedy for wealth, or greedy for sex, greedy for name and fame, greedy for things to eat, or greedy for a lot of sleep. The five desires include all the kinds of things that people are greedy for: good things to eat, good things to wear, name, fame, lots of sleep, sensual pleasures, and so forth. All of this is greed. When one wants or craves for a thing, it shows that one is greedy for that thing.

They sought without weariness or satiation. There is never any satisfaction. There is no time when they can ever get enough. There is no end to this greed. No matter how much there is, one can’t get enough of it.

Sutra:

“Because of this, their greed, hatred, and stupidity and various other afflictions increased.

Commentary:

“Because of this, their greed, hatred, and stupidity and various other afflictions increased. Since there is no satiation, there is an increase in greed, hatred, stupidity, and all of the other afflictions. Every day the greed mind increases, compounded with all the other problems. Why do people have afflictions? It is because there are things they greedily seek for. Now think about it, if we weren’t angry, if we didn’t seek after things, what afflictions would we have? You should all reflect and consider just precisely where your afflictions come from, if we look deeply enough, we will see that it is because inside we are impure. Being impure, one has greed, hatred, and stupidity. When one has greed, hatred, and stupidity, afflictions follow. Without greed, hatred, and stupidity what afflictions would you have? Not a single one. Most crucial of all is the greed for sexual desire. If one is greedy for sexual satisfaction and doesn’t achieve it, then all kinds of afflictions arise. If one seeks and achieves sexual satisfaction, a myriad sufferings and difficulties ensue. And yet we take suffering as bliss. One feels that this is a very blissful thing. But if one didn’t have thoughts of sexual greed, then when one sees a beautiful form, one will not crave it. The defiling objects of form will not move one. If one remains unmoved by the defiling object of form, then one will also not be moved by sounds, smells, tastes, and touchables.

Sutra:

‘I should not do these things anymore,’ is their thought. They continue to reflect, ‘Living beings lack wisdom and give rise to afflictions. They all practice evil dharmas and are not mutually respectful or courteous, even to the point that they become revengeful enemies. There is no evil of any sort which they do not engage in full-force. Having engaged in it, they are happy and seek for praise.

Commentary:

‘I should not do these things anymore,’ is their thought. These Bodhisattvas think, “I should no longer practice these affairs. From now on I won’t be attached or moved by the five desires of wealth, fame, food, sex, and sleep; or forms, smells, sounds, tastes, and touchables.”

They continue to reflect, ‘Living beings lack wisdom and give rise to afflictions. A Bodhisattva also thinks thus, “Living beings are without wisdom and produce all kinds of affliction.” All these living beings don’t have any wisdom; they’re really stupid and upside down. That’s why they get involved in all kinds of afflictions.

They all practice evil dharmas. All they do is evil. They are masters at evil dharmas, but they don’t practice good dharmas, and are not mutually respectful or courteous. They have no mutual respect. They have no regard for others. They can’t get along with others. They are without humility, they do not cherish the same hopes, and they are not mutually protective. Even to the point that they become revengeful enemies. They act this way to the point that they become dead set against one another and wind up as enemies. They become polarized and turn against each other, becoming resentful enemies. “Towards me, you are the enemy and towards you, I am the enemy.” There is no evil of any sort which they do not engage in full-force. Having engaged in it, they are happy and seek for praise. In this manner they do all kinds of evil. There is nothing they won’t get involved in, and once it is done, they are happy. After they’ve done this evil then they are delighted. Not only that, but they seek to be praised for what they have done. They say, “Hey! What I’ve done is extremely great. It happened just the way I planned it.” They seek reinforcement. They want to be respected for what they have done, because they feel they are very, very, intelligent. They are really happy to be involved in all of those evil dharmas.

Sutra:

“ ‘They are blind without the wisdom eye and have no knowledge or vision. From their mother’s belly they enter the womb and are born with an unclean body.

Commentary:

Because of this they are blind without the wisdom eye and have no knowledge or vision. They are like a blind person in that they do not have the wisdom eye and so are always doing really deluded things. They are without understanding or vision. They don’t even realize that they have done anything wrong.

From their mother’s belly they enter the womb and are born with an unclean body. They enter into the womb and receive birth. Through sexual union there is entering the womb and subsequent birth. Thus people’s bodies are basically defiled. They obtain a very filthy body.

Sutra:

“ ‘In the end, their hair turns white and their faces get wrinkled. Those with wisdom contemplate this and see that this solely comes about from the impurity of sexual desire.

Commentary:

Time quickly passes. ‘In the end, their hair turns white and their faces get wrinkled. Very slowly but surely, their hair grows out and turns white and their faces wrinkle up like chicken feet. Those with wisdom contemplate this and see that this solely comes about from the impurity of sexual desire. Those with wisdom contemplate and they see that all of these impure dharmas arise from sexual desire. A body is a product of the impurity of sexual desire. From this very unclean dharma, a body is produced.

Sutra:

“ ‘The Buddhas of the three periods of time all know and see this. If I continue to act like this, then I am just trying to deceive the Buddhas of the three periods of time.

Commentary:

“ ‘The Buddhas of the three periods of time all know and see this. All the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three periods of time—past, present, and future—know that the body is a product of this defiled dharma. If I continue to act like this, then I am just trying to deceive the Buddhas of the three periods of time. They see that we are still practicing these affairs. They see that we are still greedy for sexual desire and other desires. They see that we are just increasing our greed, hatred, and stupidity. If we continue to indulge in these desires, we are just cheating the Buddhas of the three periods of time.

Sutra:

“ ‘Therefore, I should cultivate a sense of remorse, quickly accomplish anuttarasamyaksambodhi, and extensively speak true and actual Dharma for the sake of living beings.’

Commentary:

“ ‘Therefore, I should cultivate a sense of remorse. We should practice this Dharma of remorse. We no longer want to be involved with the five desires. We want to quickly accomplish anuttarasamyaksambodhi. We should quickly realize the Unsurpassed, Proper, and Equal, Right Enlightenment and accomplish the fruit of Buddhahood. Then we should extensively speak true and actual Dharma for the sake of living beings.’ Universally, for the sake of all humanity, we should speak the true and genuine Dharma.

Sutra:

“This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Fourth Treasury, that of Remorse.”

Commentary:

“This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Fourth Treasury, that of Remorse.” This is what is known as the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Remorse, the Fourth Treasury. All the previously mentioned principles are what the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas should practice in the Fourth Treasury of Remorse. Not only should the Bodhisattva practice these Dharmas, but all living beings should also practice this Fourth Treasury of Remorse. Therefore, I often quote this verse:

Truly recognize your own faults;   
Don’t discuss the faults of others.   
Others faults are just my own.  
Being one with everyone is called Great Compassion.

V. The Treasury of Learning

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Learning? These Bodhisattvas know that because some phenomena exist, other phenomena exist; that because some phenomena do not exist, other phenomena do not exist; that because some phenomena arise, other phenomena arise; that because some phenomena cease to be, other phenomena cease to be; whether they are mundane dharmas, transcendental dharmas, conditioned dharmas, unconditioned dharmas, determinate dharmas, or indeterminate dharmas.

What are the phenomena which exist because other phenomena exist? For instance, activity exists because ignorance exists.

Commentary:

When the Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue had finished talking about the Treasury of Remorse he called out once again, “Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Learning? What is this Treasury of Learning that the Great Bodhisattvas cultivate? These Bodhisattvas who cultivate the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries know that because some phenomena exist, other phenomena exist. This will be discussed in more detail, but it means, for instance, knowing that when ignorance exists, it conditions activity, so there comes to be activity. The Bodhisattva knows that because some phenomena do not exist, other phenomena do not exist. When some particular matter doesn’t exist, then some other specific matter doesn’t exist either. They know that because some phenomena arise, other phenomena arise. They know that when there are certain causal conditions then certain phenomena come into being, arising as a result of those causal conditions. They know that because some phenomena cease to be, other phenomena cease to be; that is, when one particular matter is still and extinguished, then another is thereby still and extinguished. They know this about them whether they are mundane dharmas, or transcendental dharmas. These may be dharmas of the world, or world-transcending dharmas. They may be enacted, conditioned dharmas, or unconditioned dharmas, yet in which there is nothing not conditioned. They may be reckonable, determinate dharmas, or they may be neutral, unreckonable, indeterminate dharmas.

What are the phenomena which exist because other phenomena exist? What is meant by some specific events existing due to the existence of other specific events? For instance, activity exists because ignorance exists. Because of the ignorance innate within each person, there is activity, a kind of behavior or action.

Sutra:

What are phenomena which do not exist because other phenomena do not exist? For instance, name and form do not exist when consciousness does not exist. What are phenomena which arise because other phenomena arise? For instance, suffering arises because emotional love arises. What are phenomena which cease to be because other phenomena cease to be? For instance, birth ceases to be when becoming ceases to be.

What are mundane dharmas? They are for instance, form, feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness. What are transcendental dharmas? They are for instance, precepts, samadhi, and wisdom, liberation, and liberation of knowledge and views.

What are conditioned dharmas? They are for instance, the realm of desire, the form realm, the formless realm, and the realm of living beings. What are unconditioned dharmas? They are for instance, emptiness, nirvana, the extinction involving reckoning of conditions, the extinction not involving reckoning of conditions, arisal from conditions and dwelling in the Dharma nature.

What are determinate dharmas? They are for instance, The Four Holy Truths, the Four Fruits of a Shramana, the Four Eloquences, the Four Fearlessnesses, the Four Applications of Mindfulness, the Four Right Efforts, the Four Spiritual Fulfillments, the Five Roots, the Five Powers, the Seven Shares of Enlightenment, and the Eight Sagely Way Shares.

What are indeterminate dharmas? They are for instance, whether worlds are bounded, whether worlds are boundless, whether worlds are both bounded and boundless, whether worlds are neither bounded or boundless; whether worlds are permanent, whether worlds are impermanent, whether worlds are both permanent and impermanent, whether worlds are neither permanent nor impermanent; whether Thus Come Ones exist after extinction, whether Thus Come Ones do not exist after extinction, whether Thus Come Ones both exist and do not exist after extinction, whether Thus Come Ones neither exist nor do not exist after extinction; whether a self and living beings exist, whether a self and living beings do not exist, whether a self and living beings both exist and do not exist, whether a self and living beings neither exist nor do not exist.

How many Parinirvanas of Thus Come Ones and how many Parinirvanas of Sound Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas have there been in the past? How many Buddhas, Sound Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas and living beings will there be in the future? How many Buddhas, Sound Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, and living beings are there at present? Which Thus Come Ones first appeared in the world? Which Sound Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas first appeared in the world? Which living beings first appeared in the world? Which will be the last Thus Come Ones to dwell in the world? Which will be the last Sound Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas to appear in the world? Which will be the last living beings to dwell in the world? Which dharma first came to be, and which dharma will be the last? Where did worlds come from, and to what places will worlds go? How many world systems have arisen, and how many world systems have been destroyed? Where have world systems come from, and where do they go to? What is the boundary of before birth and death, and what is the boundary of after birth and death? These are called indeterminate dharmas.

Commentary:

What are phenomena which do not exist because other phenomena do not exist? For instance, name and form do not exist when consciousness does not exist. The non-existence of consciousness implies the non-existence of name and form, because if there is no consciousness there can be no name and form. The very existence of consciousness implies the existence of ignorance, and because of ignorance there is activity and action. “Ignorance” just means not understanding, not being clear. What is not understanding? It’s just your being upside down, giving rise to delusion, creating karma, and undergoing retribution. All of these arise from ignorance. Because you don’t understand, you become turned upside down. Being upside down, you do upside down things, and having done them all other sorts of things manifest. That’s knowing “that because some phenomena exist, other phenomena exist.” Now the text asks, “What are phenomena that do not exist, because other phenomena do not exist?” When one thing doesn’t exist, another doesn’t exist either. Again, this is referring to consciousness. If you did not have consciousness there wouldn’t be any name or form. If you don’t even have consciousness, how could there be a material form or name? But because you have one thought of ignorance, then comes a kind of upside down sexual activity, and sexual activity creates consciousness. If consciousness didn’t exist, then name and form would never come into being. There would be no such thing as the womb—name and form.

What are phenomena which arise because other phenomena arise? For instance, suffering arises because emotional love arises. What do we mean when we say because one affair arises, another arises? It means that when the causal conditions of love arise, then there is suffering. You think that love or craving is happiness, but within “happiness” is the root cause of suffering.

What are phenomena that cease to be because other phenomena cease to be? What is meant when we say that when one matter is extinguished, others are extinguished? For instance, birth ceases to be when becoming ceases to be.

The extinction of existence in turn extinguishes birth. If there is no existence, then there is no coming into being, no birth, and no production. This is talking about the Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-Production.

The Twelve Links

* Ignorance conditions
* Karmic Activity, which conditions
* Consciousness, which conditions
* Name and Form, which conditions
* Six Entrances, which conditions
* Contact, which conditions
* Feeling, which conditions
* Love, which conditions
* Grasping, which conditions
* Having, which conditions
* Birth, which conditions
* Old age and Death.

If everything within that twelve-fold chain is extinguished, then they are all gone.

What are mundane dharmas? What is meant by worldly dharmas? They are, for instance, form, feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness —the five skandhas—are all worldly dharmas.

What are transcendental dharmas? They are for instance, precepts, samadhi, wisdom, liberation, and liberation of knowledge and views. The fragrance of precepts, the fragrance of samadhi, the fragrance of wisdom, the fragrance of liberation, and the fragrance of the liberation of knowledge and views—the five-fold Dharma body—are transcendental dharmas.

What are conditioned dharmas? They are for instance, existence in the realm of desire , existence in the form realm , existence in the formless realm , and existence in the realm of living beings. The desire realm, form realm, and formless realm make up the Triple Realm, in which the realm of living beings revolves. They are all conditioned dharmas, dharmas that are bound to some sort of characteristic or activity.

What are unconditioned dharmas? They are for instance, emptiness, nirvana, the extinction involving reckoning of conditions, the extinction not involving reckoning of conditions, arisal from conditions, and dwelling in the Dharma Nature. What are unconditioned dharmas? They are: empty space, Nirvana, extinction brought about through the reckoning of conditions, extinction not brought about through such reckoning, arisal from conditions, and dwelling in the Dharma Nature.

What are determinate dharmas? They are for instance, the Four Holy Truths, the Four Fruits of a Shramana, the Four Eloquences, the Four Fearlessnesses, the Four Applications of Mindfulness, the Four Right Efforts, the Four Spiritual Fulfillments, also called the Four Bases of “as-you-will psychic powers”, the Five Roots, the Five Powers, the Seven Shares of Enlightenment, and the Eight Sagely Way Shares. What are determinate dharmas? They include the Four Holy Truths:

* Suffering
* Accumulation
* Extinction
* The Way

The Four Fruits of a Shramana:

* Srotaapanna
* Sakridagamin
* Anagamin
* Arhat

The Four Unobstructed Eloquences:

Phrasing  
Meaning   
Dharmas   
Delight in Speaking

The Four Fearlessnesses:

The Fearlessness of all wisdom   
The Fearlessness of speaking Dharma.   
The Fearlessness of speaking about dharmas which obstruct the Way.   
The Fearlessness of speaking Dharma which leads to the end of the path of suffering.

The Four Applications of Mindfulness:

The body contemplated as impure.   
Feelings contemplated as suffering.   
Thoughts contemplated as impermanent.   
Dharmas contemplated as without a self.

Everyone should cultivate these Four Applications of Mindfulness. Determinate dharmas also include The Four Right Efforts;

* Putting an end to existing evil.
* Preventing evil that hasn’t arisen from arising.
* Bringing forth goodness not yet brought forth.
* Developing goodness that has already arisen.

The Four Bases of Spiritual Power:

* Zeal
* Vigor
* Mindfulness
* Thought

The Five Roots:

* Faith
* Vigor
* Mindfulness
* Samadhi
* Wisdom

The Five Powers:

* Faith
* Vigor
* Mindfulness
* Samadhi
* Wisdom

The Five Roots and the Five Powers in name are the same, because

they have the direct relationship of cause and effect. First you cultivate the Five Roots and they form the basis or the root of that power derived in cultivation. For example, you cultivate the root of faith and it becomes the basis for the power of the faith after you have perfected its cultivation. Next come the Seven Shares of Enlightenment, or the Seven Bodhi Shares:

* Selecting a Dharma
* Vigor
* Joy
* Elimination
* Renunciation
* Samadhi

Then, there are the Eight Sagely Way Shares:

* Proper Views
* Proper Thought
* Proper Speech
* Proper Livelihood
* Proper Action or Karma
* Proper Vigor
* Proper Samadhi
* Proper Wisdom

These are all determinate dharmas.

What are indeterminate dharmas? They are for instance, whether worlds are bounded, whether worlds are boundless, whether worlds are both bounded and boundless, whether worlds are neither bounded or boundless; whether worlds are permanent, whether worlds are impermanent, whether worlds are both permanent and impermanent, whether worlds are neither permanent or impermanent; whether Thus Come Ones exist after extinction, whether Thus Come Ones do not exist after extinction, whether Thus Come Ones both exist and do not exist after extinction, whether Thus Come Ones neither exist nor do not exist after extinction; whether a self and living beings exist, whether a self and living beings do not exist, whether a self and living beings both exist and do not exist, whether a self and living beings neither exist nor do not exist; how many Parinirvanas of Thus Come Ones and how many Parinirvanas of Sound Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas have there been in the past? How many Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, have entered Parinirvana in the past? How many Sound Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas have entered Nirvana? How many Buddhas, Sound Hearers, Pratyeka-buddhas, and living beings will there be in the future? In the future how many Buddhas, how many Sound Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, and living beings will there be? How many Buddhas and how many Sound Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, and living beings are there at present? Now, in the present, how many Buddhas are dwelling and how many Sound Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, and living beings are dwelling?

Which Thus Come Ones first appeared in the world? Which Sound Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas first appeared in the world? Which living beings first appeared in the world? Which Buddha was first to appear? Which Sound Hearer and Pratyekabuddha were first to appear in the world? Which living being was the first to appear? Which will be the last Thus Come One to dwell in the world? Which will be the last Sound Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas to dwell in the world? Which will be the last living beings to dwell in the world? Which Thus Come Ones will be the last to appear? Which Sound Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas will be the last to appear? Which living beings will be the last to appear? Which Dharma first came to be, and which Dharma will be the last? Which Dharma was at the very beginning and which Dharma will be at the very end? Where did worlds come from and to what places will worlds go? Where did the worlds come from and where do they go? How many world systems have arisen and how many world systems have been destroyed? How many worlds are there? How many have been created? How many have been destroyed? Where have world systems come from, and where do they go to? Where did the world systems, all the universes, come from and where are they going? What is the boundary of before birth and death, and what is the boundary of after birth and death? What is the very first limit of birth and death and what will be the very last point of birth and death? These are called indeterminate dharmas. These are what are known as indeterminate dharmas. The Bodhisattva Mahasattvas cultivate them, and so they are something that the Bodhisattvas should know.

Sutra:

“The Bodhisattva Mahasattvas have this thought, ‘All living beings in the midst of birth and death lack learning and cannot understand all these dharmas. I should resolve to uphold the Treasury of Learning and become certified to anuttarasamyaksambodhi, and for the sake of living beings speak true and actual Dharma.’ This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Fifth Treasury, that of learning.”

Commentary:

Above, many kinds of dharmas were discussed. About these, The Bodhisattva Mahasattvas have this thought —the Great Bodhisattvas among Bodhisattvas reflect and this is what they think: “All living beings in the midst of birth and death lack learning and cannot understand all these dharmas. All living creaturesd are in the turning wheel of birth and death. They revolve in the six paths of rebirth where they come and go, back and forth, in the bitter sea of birth and death. They do not have the wisdom of learning, of erudition, and are unable to understand the dharmas which were just discussed: determinate dharmas, indeterminate dharmas, conditioned dharmas, unconditioned dharmas, worldly dharmas, transcendental dharmas, and so forth. They don’t understand them.

I should resolve to uphold the Treasury of Learning and become certified to anuttarasamyaksambodhi, and for the sake of living beings speak true and actual Dharma.” “They don’t understand and so it is up to me to now resolve to cultivate and uphold the Dharma Treasury of much learning, and certify to anuttarasamyaksambodhi. I should certify to the attainment of Unsurpassed, Right and Equal, Proper Enlightenment, the fruit of Buddha-hood, and for the sake of all living beings expound the true and actual, wonderful Dharma.”

This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Fifth Treasury, that of learning.” This is what is known as the Fifth Treasury, the Treasury of Learning, which is cultivated by the Bodhisattva who is among Great Bodhisattvas.

VI. The Treasury of Giving

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Giving? These Bodhisattvas practice ten kinds of giving. They are, Giving by Reducing one’s Portion, Exhaustive Giving, The Giving of Inner Wealth, the Giving of Outer Wealth, The Giving of Inner and Outer Wealth, Total Giving, Past Giving, Future Giving, Present Giving, and Ultimate Giving.

Commentary:

When the Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue finishes speaking the Treasury of Learning, he calls out again, “Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Giving? “Among the greatest of Bodhisattvas what is the Treasury of Giving that they practice?” Then he follows with an explanation. These Bodhisattvas practice ten kinds of giving. The Bodhisattvas who practice the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries also cultivate ten kinds of giving. They are;

* Giving by Reducing One’s Portion
* Exhaustive Giving
* The Giving of Inner Wealth
* The Giving of Outer Wealth
* The Giving of Inner and Outer Wealth
* Total Giving
* Past Giving
* Future Giving
* Present Giving
* Ultimate Giving.

Each of these is explained in detail in the following passage of text.

Bodhisattvas practice giving. Some people who have never heard the Sutras explained don’t know what a Bodhisattva is. What is a Bodhisattva? He is an enlightened sentient being who enlightens sentient beings. What is a sentient being? All those with blood and breath are said to be sentient. Things without blood and breath are said to be insentient. Bodhisattvas are those who enlighten all those with sentience. They are also sentient beings that are enlightened. Among living beings, they are those that are enlightened. Originally, they too, are living beings, but they have become enlightened.

As to enlightenment, there is self-enlightenment, enlightenment of others, and the perfection of enlightenment and practice. Self-enlightenment means that one has become enlightened oneself. This refers to those of the Two Vehicles, that is Sound Hearers and Those Enlightened To Conditions. Sound Hearers are those who, upon hearing the voice of the Buddha, the sound of the Buddha, awaken to the Way. They cultivate the Dharma of the Four Holy Truths: Suffering, Accumulation, Extinction, and the Way. One enlightened to Conditions is also called a Pratyekabuddha; he cultivates the Twelve Links of conditioned Co-Production and awakens to the Way. The Twelve Links are;

* Ignorance conditions activity
* Activity conditions consciousness
* Consciousness conditions name and form
* Name and form conditions the six entrances
* The six entrances conditions contact
* Contact conditions feeling
* Feeling conditions love
* Love conditions grasping
* Grasping conditions having/existence
* Having/existence conditions birth
* Birth conditions
* Old age and death.

These are the Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-Production. If ignorance is extinguished, then activity comes to an end. If activity comes to an end, then consciousness is extinguished. If consciousness is extinguished, then name and form are extinguished. If name and form are extinguished then the six entrances are extinguished. If the six entrances are extinguished, then contact is extinguished. If contact is extinguished, then feeling is extinguished. If feeling is extinguished, then love is extinguished. If love is extinguished, then grasping is extinguished, and when grasping is extinguished, then existence is extinguished. When existence is extinguished, then birth, old age and death are extinguished.

These Twelve Links are those which Those Enlightened to Conditions cultivate to awaken to the Way. When a Buddha is in the world, they are called Those Enlightened to Conditions. When there is no Buddha in the world, they are called Solitarily Enlightened Ones. So, cultivators who enlighten themselves are those of the Two Vehicles. They are enlightened themselves and therefore are different from common people because ordinary, common people are not enlightened.

What does it mean to not be enlightened? It means to take what is right as wrong and what is wrong as right. It means to take what is black as white and what is white as black. That’s a common person.

Those who enlighten others are Bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas can enlighten themselves and enlighten others. A fully enlightened one is a Buddha who is complete with the three kinds of enlightenment. That’s a brief explanation of the meaning “Bodhisattva”.

The giving which a Bodhisattva practices is of three kinds;

* The giving of Wealth.
* The giving of Dharma.
* The giving of Fearlessness.

Wealth refers to all of one’s valuables. Outwardly it refers to one’s country, cities, wife, and children—all of one’s most precious gems. Inwardly, it refers to one’s head, eyes, brain, and marrow. To be able to relinquish all of this is considered to be the giving of wealth.

The giving of Dharma means to speak Dharma for living beings. It is said that of all the kinds of offerings, the offering of Dharma is the ultimate one. To use Dharma as an offering is the highest kind of gift because it can rescue people’s wisdom life. Speaking the Dharma can cause people to resolve their minds on Bodhi—on enlightenment—and to cause them to accomplish the Unsurpassed Path. That’s why among the kinds of giving, the giving of Dharma is the most important.

The giving of fearlessness is the third. This means that whenever you find someone who is frightened, or who is in some difficulty or who has gotten involved in some dangerous circumstance, you are able to comfort him and cause him to not be afraid. You cause his mind to settle and be peaceful without any fear.

Every Bodhisattva who practices the Bodhisattva Way should practice these ten kinds of giving. Now, we are participating in this Kuan Yin Recitation Session and everyone is singlemindedly reciting the name of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva. Kuan Yin Bodhisattva’s name means to regard all the sounds in the world. This particular Bodhisattva follows the sounds to rescue people from suffering. Whatever particular difficulty you happen to be in, if you happen to recite the Bodhisattva’s name, he will bestow fearlessness upon you and practice the giving of fearlessness.

“Kuan”, refers to the one who is able to regard, using wisdom. The world’s sounds—“shih yin”, are the experiences which are contemplated, the states. What is contemplated is the realm of the states of living beings. So, this Bodhisattva is one who uses the wisdom which is able to contemplate, the wisdom of the contemplator, to contemplate the various realms or experiences.

Now, we are all here reciting the name of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva, and Kuan Yin Bodhisattva uses his wisdom to contemplate the sounds within the minds of all living beings. He makes it so whatever we seek will be in accord with our wishes. When you participate in this session of reciting Kuan Yin Bodhisattva’s name, every time you make that sound, there is a comparable strength which arises. If you recite once, then there is one part strength. If you recite ten times, then there is ten times the strength. When you recite the name of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva, a light of aiding Dharma is emitted which reaches this Way Place. This beneficial light of the Dharma descends and reaches our Way Place and pours upon the crowns of the heads of each person who is participating in this session. It is a sweet dew which anoints the crown of your heads, to help you. You are washed clean of all of your offenses by this water of sweet dew and your good roots will be able to increase and grow.

1. Giving by Reducing One’s Portion

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattvas’ Giving by Reducing One’s Portion? These Bodhisattvas who are humane and compassionate by nature, well practice giving. If they obtain delicious food, they do not keep it for themselves, but offer it to living beings and afterwards eat a portion. It is the same with all material objects they receive.

Commentary:

After Forest of Merit and Virtue Bodhisattva has finished naming the ten kinds of giving, he again calls out; “All of you Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattvas’ Giving by Reducing One’s Portion? “Portion” means to divide up or portion out, and in this way to practice giving. These Bodhisattvas who are humane and compassionate by nature, well practice giving. Whoever has a disposition which is by nature humane and compassionate, is this Bodhisattva. Whoever is not naturally humane and compassionate is not this Bodhisattva. Now, if you are this Bodhisattva, then you ought to cultivate the Bodhisattva Path. If you are not this Bodhisattva, you should change your mind and also practice the Bodhisattva Path. To be humane and compassionate is to have humanitarian feelings about people, to be good to everyone. To have a natural disposition is to be naturally endowed with that kind of character. A Bodhisattva is naturally endowed with the character of humaneness and compassion. His inherent nature is that way. He is good at practicing charity and giving. What he likes is to be charitable and to give. Charity is being very kind to people, and in a kindly fashion practicing giving to all living beings. If they obtain delicious food —if they come into possession of some very delicious and exquisitely flavored things to eat, how do they act? They do not keep it for themselves alone. They don’t just take the whole portion for themselves to enjoy. What do they do? They offer it to living beings. They want to give to living beings. They give all of the excellent flavors, all the good things to eat, to all living beings, and afterwards eat a portion. First of all they give them to all other living beings and then afterwards, they themselves eat. Only then do they go on to eat those delicious flavors. What is this? This is renouncing oneself for the sake of people. One forgets about oneself for the sake of all other living beings.

It is the same with all material objects they receive. It doesn’t matter who gives these Bodhisattvas the offerings of food, or offerings of clothing, or offerings of various kinds of jewelry—it’s all the same way. They act just the same way as when they obtained all the excellent flavors. They don’t take them all for themselves, but divide them up and give some to all living beings before they partake of any themselves, whether it is an offering of clothing, medicine, or bedding—it’s all treated in the same way.

So all of you think about this. Why is it that we here want to undergo suffering? Cultivating the Way here is very bitter and it’s not easy to endure this method of practice. But we endure it because we want to practice the Bodhisattva Way. Why is it that we just eat once a day? This is also because we want to economize on food and drink so we can offer them to all living beings of the world. It’s for this reason that we undergo a little discomfort and thereby enable other people to be full and warm. That’s a very good kind of practice.

Therefore, now as the Avatamsaka Sutra is spoken, all of you should reflect upon what it says. We are here practicing the Bodhisattva Path. This means that we want to take what we eat and drink and make an offering of it to the living beings of the world. This is an extremely big hearted matter. All of you can endure this kind of suffering. This is an inconceivable kind of state.

Sutra:

“When they themselves eat, they have this thought: ‘In my body there are eighty thousand worms who rely on me to live. When my body is full and content, they are full and content. When my body is suffering from hunger, they also suffer from hunger. I now accept all of this food and drink with the hope that all living beings will be full. It is in order to give that I take this food. I am not greedy for it’s flavors.’

Commentary:

“When they themselves eat, they have this thought: If the Bodhisattvas who cultivate the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries obtain exquisite flavors and are about to eat them, they first make the following reflection: “In my body there are eighty thousand worms—within my body there are 80,000 bugs.” We people are big bugs. A human body is comprised of a lot of little bugs. And in the little bugs are numerous microorganisms. Basically our bodies are just one big collection of bugs. People who don’t understand this consider their bodies to be extremely valuable. For the sake of the body one seeks good things to eat, good things to wear, and a comfortable place to live. Everyday one spends all of one’s time looking after oneself. But you don’t know that your body is just a whole lot of small bugs congregated together to make up one big bug. In every single one of your hair pores there are gathered a whole lot of bugs.

The Bodhisattva reflects that the 80,000 bugs dwelling within his body are those “who rely on me to live. All of those bugs rely on me to survive. When my body is full and content, they are full and content. If my body is happy and full and not hungry or thirsty, all the 80,000 bugs are also full and happy. All of those bugs also have food, they have things to eat and so they are all happy and feel really fine. But, when my body is suffering from hunger, they also suffer from hunger. If my body is hungry, then they also suffer from hunger. All of those bugs in my body are also without anything to eat. If I don’t have anything to eat, they also go hungry. I now accept all of this food and drink with the hope that all living beings will be full. It is for that reason that I eat these things,”…such as drinking a cup of tea or maybe eating a piece of fruit or maybe drinking a glass of milk or maybe eating some cheese. But as to cheese, you ought to know, all of you Americans like to eat this, but Chung Kuo (Chinese) people really don’t like to eat cheese. When Chung Kuo (Chinese) people see cheese, especially French cheese, which stinks to high heaven, they plug up their noses. Not even to speak of eating it, they won’t even smell it. But Americans say, “Oh, that’s something really good.” You think it’s so fine because all of the bugs in your body are fond of it. They’ve developed a taste for it. This is called, “getting together with the stench and liking it.”

The Bodhisattva reflects, “I now want to cause living beings universally to be full. It is in order to give that I take this food. When I eat and drink all of these things, I want all living beings also to be full of them. It’s for their sake that I eat. It’s just because I want to portion out this food and give it to all of those 80,000 bugs, that I eat and drink these things. However, I am not greedy for it’s flavors.” And so it’s not for oneself that one eats the cheese, and not out of greed for it’s flavor, but rather it is for the sake of all of these 80,000 bugs. One does not become greedy for any flavor—whether it’s good or bad, stinking or delicious. When you come right down to it, it’s the bugs who like to eat it, so I give it to them to eat.

Sutra:

“They also have this thought; ‘Throughout the long night of time, I have been lovingly attached to my body and have partaken of food and drink from a desire to fill it up. Now I use the nourishment from this food as a gift to living beings and vow to eternally cut off greed and attachment with regard to my body.’ This is called Giving by Reducing One’s Portion.

Commentary:

They also have this thought—These Bodhisattvas also strike up false thinking. They strike up false thinking about living beings and say, “Has this living being gotten to the point that I should rescue him? How is that living being doing? Have his Bodhi sprouts come up yet?” The Bodhisattvas also strike up false thinking, but it’s not the same kind of false thinking that we have. At all times it’s for the sake of teaching living beings.

“Throughout the long night of time, I have been lovingly attached to my body. During the dark and obscure night of time, what I have loved most was my body. My biggest attachment has been this body of mine. I was afraid my body would be cold, hungry, thirsty, or too hot. In every time and every place I was always taking my body into consideration. I was always taking good care of it, considering it more important than a precious gem and taking this body as a really fine thing.” But if you go without a bath for a couple of days, your body stinks unbearably. What’s so good about that? No matter how good it looks to you, it’s just like taking the most beautiful clothing and adorning a toilet. Everyone really knows, no one has to be told, that inside the body there are things that stink. The Bodhisattva also loved and was attached to his body so he didn’t become a Buddha.

The Bodhisattva continues to reflect, “and in order to make my body healthy and have the comfort of being full, I have partaken of food and drink from a desire to fill it up. I have accepted this food and drink. Now I use the nourishment from this food as a gift to living beings. I universally bestow all of this upon all of the 80,000 small bugs in my body. And vow to eternally cut off greed and attachment with regard to my body. I want to once and for all cast out greedy love and attachment.”

This is called Giving by Reducing One’s Portion. The Bodhisattva practices giving his portion—cutting down on the amount he uses, or not using his portion at all, in order to give it to other beings.

2. Exhaustive Giving

Sutra:

“What is the Bodhisattvas’ Exhaustive Giving? Disciples of the Buddha, these Bodhisattvas obtain all kinds of supremely flavored food and drink, fragrant flowers, clothes, and provisions of life. Were they to use these things themselves, they would be peaceful, happy, and long-lived. If they deny themselves and give to others, then they will be poor, miserable, and die young.

Commentary:

“What is the Bodhisattvas’ Exhaustive Giving? Just prior to this we talked about giving by reducing one’s portion. Now we come to the second kind of giving—exhaustive giving. What is the exhaustive giving of a Great Bodhisattva? Disciples of the Buddha, Forest of Merit and Virtue Bodhisattva speaks out and says, these Bodhisattvas obtain all kinds of supremely flavored food and drink. These Bodhisattvas have somehow come across a great variety of superbly flavored food and drink. Also fragrant flowers, clothes, and provisions of life —things that are able to sustain the lives of humans. Were they to use these things themselves, they would be peaceful, happy, and long-lived. They would have a peaceful and calm existence and their years would increase. If they deny themselves and give to others, then they will be poor, miserable, and die young. They will compound their sufferings and shorten their own lives. What should they do? It’s explained below.

Sutra:

“If at that time, a person comes and says, ‘You should give everything you have to me,’ The Bodhisattva says to himself, ‘From beginningless time to the present, because of starvation, I have lost my body countless times, yet I never did even a hair’s worth of benefit for living beings that would have been of wholesome benefit to me as well. Now, I should, as those before me have done, renounce my life in order to benefit living beings. According to what I own, I should renounce everything—even my very life—without any stinginess.’ This is called Exhaustive Giving.

Commentary:

These Bodhisattvas have everything that they need. If they use these things themselves, they will have long and happy lives. If they don’t use them themselves and instead give them to others, then they will certainly suffer. Their sufferings will increase and their lifespan will decrease. Given this situation, suppose another person approaches him--If at that time, a person comes and says, “You should give everything you have to me. All of these delicious foods and drinks, fragrant flowers, and handsome garments, all of those things you should give to me as a gift—all of them.”

The Bodhisattva thinks about the present situation and recalls his past—his own personal past. And so, the Bodhisattva says to himself, “From beginningless time to the present, because of starvation, I have lost my body countless times. Because of starvation I have lost my life I don’t know how many times. Yet I never did even a hair’s worth of benefit for living beings. For such a long time in the past I never did the slightest act of good for living beings. I didn’t aid living beings in ways that would have been of wholesome benefit to me as well. That is, I didn’t plant any good roots. I haven’t done any good things for living beings in the past. Nor did I get any advantage or benefit for myself.

Now, I should, as those before me have done, renounce my life. Now I should starve as I have done countless times in the past. I have all of this good food and these provisions, but I’m not going to use them. Instead I’ll give them to this person who has come to seek. I’ll probably be just as famished as I was in the past and probably die just like I did before. Although I have food I won’t eat it. I’ll be like one who is oppressed by starvation in order to benefit living beings. In this way I may be helpful to other living beings. All of this delicious food and drink, also these fragrant flowers, garments, and other kinds of material I should give in order to help out living beings. In the past, I have not done even a hair’s breadth of benefit for others. Now that I’m so rich, I should help them out. According to what I own, I should renounce everything.” Thereupon he agrees to the wishes of that person and renounces everything he has. “I will give even my very life.” He is willing to do it without any stinginess. “There should be nothing that I am unable to give up, including my own life. If someone says, “I want to use your life,” I certainly will give it to him.” This is called Exhaustive Giving. This is the exhaustive giving on the Bodhisattva cultivating the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries. “Exhaustive” means giving everything one has. “Exhaustive” means there is nothing left, it’s all given away, even one’s own life.

3. The Giving of Inner Wealth

Sutra:

“What is the Bodhisattvas’ Giving of Inner Wealth? Disciples of the Buddha, suppose a Bodhisattva is youthful and robust, upright and handsome, clothed in fine garments and adorned with fragrant flowers, having just received anointment on the crown of his head to make him a wheel turning king, and who is replete with the seven jewels and ruling over the four continents. Suppose he is approached by a person who addresses his lordship, ‘Oh, great king know that I am now old and decrepit, plagued with many illnesses, friendless, childless, emaciated, and eccentric. My death is not far off. If I had the king’s body, hands, feet, blood, flesh, head, eyes, bones, and marrow, I could go on living. I pray that the king will not be calculating or stingy, but will look upon me with kind thoughts and give himself to me.’

Commentary:

“What is the Bodhisattvas’ Giving of Inner Wealth? Now, those who study the Buddhadharma should think about this. What path do you want to cultivate? That is to say, where do you want to be reborn? What do you want to be? Do you want to be a Bodhisattva or practice as a Solitarily Enlightened One, or a Shravaka—a Sound Hearer? Do you want to be a heavenly being or a human? Do you want to be an Asura or cultivate the path of a hungry ghost? Do you want to be reborn as an animal or do you want to be reborn in the hells? Whatever path you want to cultivate or practice, you can be a guest in that path. The Sanskrit word is gati -destination. If you want to be a Bodhisattva, you can be a guest in the Bodhisattva Path, but at no time should you think that you are in charge—that you are the host. If you think that you are in control, then you are attached. You should be objective. Look at things objectively when you cultivate these dharmas. When you cultivate the path of a Bodhisattva—you give. When you cultivate the path of a Sound Hearer—you only cultivate what’s good for yourself. When you cultivate the Bodhisattva Path, you do what’s good for everyone. When you cultivate the path of One Enlightened to Conditions, you practice the Twelve Conditioned Links of Co-Production, which are:

* Ignorance conditions
* Karmic Activity which conditions
* Consciousness which conditions
* Name and Form which conditions the
* Six Entrances which conditions
* Contact which conditions
* Feeling which conditions
* Love which conditions
* Grasping which conditions
* Existence which conditions
* Birth which conditions
* Old Age and Death.

Sound Hearers cultivate the Four Holy Noble Truths of Suffering, Accumulation, extinction, and the Path. One who cultivates the Bodhisattva Path cultivates the Six Perfections-the Six Paramitas and the Ten Thousand Conducts. The Six Pararmitas are;

* Giving
* Morality
* Patience
* Vigor
* Ch’an Samadhi
* Prajna Wisdom

To be a god you cultivate the Ten Good Acts of;

* No killing
* No stealing
* No sexual misconduct
* No harsh speech
* No double tongued speech
* No frivolous speech
* No lying
* No greed
* No hatred
* No stupidity

If you want to be a human, hold the Five Precepts of;

* No killing
* No stealing
* No sexual misconduct
* No false speech
* No taking of intoxicants

How do you go about becoming an Asura? What you should do is constantly keep a militant, fighting, aggressive attitude around you all the time. This is the Dharma Ending Age and everyone likes to fight and struggle with everyone else. That is because Asuras have been born out of this earth in great numbers. Now, if you want to be a hungry ghost, just maintain your ignorance. Don’t give anything. Hungry ghosts have this characteristic; they are unwilling to give anything whatsoever. Therefore they are hungry ghosts lacking everything. If you want to be an animal, then bring forth your ignorance, all of your deviant views. Wear them on your sleeve and keep them in front of you when you do things. Keep this ignorance around and before long you’ll be an animal. How about the hells? If you want to be reborn in the hells, go out and kill people, set fires, break all the laws you can find, then you can fall into the hells pretty easily. You can be reborn in whatever path you wish; for whatever seeds you plant you’ll reap the corresponding fruit. A Bodhisattva cultivates giving. Giving means giving to other people, not telling other people to give to you.

Here in our Kuan Yin Recitation Session, Kuan Yin Bodhisattva can help you out. If you are really sincere and work hard at your cultivation, it’s easy to get a chance to open great wisdom so you won’t be as stupid in the future. What’s more, there’s an opportunity to open your Five Eyes. You can’t get all of the Six Spiritual Penetrations, but the Five Eyes can come. When you recite the name of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva comes down to aid you, and you can become enlightened on the spot, immediately. Once enlightened, you possess great wisdom and great eloquence. You get the Buddha Eye, the Dharma Eye, the Wisdom Eye, the Heavenly Eye, and the Flesh Eye—the Five Eyes. When you have the Five Eyes, then when something happens, you are not as stupid as you were before, because now you understand cause and effect. You understand what’s right and what’s wrong. Everyone has a share in this Kuan Yin Bodhisattva Recitation Session. You can obtain whatever you want, whatever you seek. You can have whatever you wish for. This is an inconceivable and ineffable state. Not only do we people recite the name of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva, but all other Bodhisattvas recite the name of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva as well. Because the vow power of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva is so great, anyone who recites the name of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva can very quickly leave suffering and attain bliss. One can end birth and death, obtain great wisdom and light, gain a long life and increase his eloquence. All of these things can be accomplished. But if you don’t encounter a wise advisor to teach you, then you’ll understand none of this.

No matter who you are, if you feel something like a bug crawling around on top of your head or on your face, don’t rub it with your hand. Don’t pay any attention to it. This is the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas rubbing the crown of your head, helping you out. People who understand the Buddhadharma who experience this, shouldn’t pay attention to or become attached to it. Even people who don’t understand the Buddhadharma, still shouldn’t rub their face with their hands when they experience this sensation. This is really important. If you rub or scratch the place where the Bodhisattva is rubbing your crown, you interfere with what he is doing. You brush away the Bodhisattva’s hand. If you experience this sensation, just be patient; it’s a time when you don’t want to move your mind. Remain unmoving.

The Bodhisattva gives inner wealth, so the text says, “ Disciples of the Buddha, suppose a Bodhisattva is youthful and robust, upright and handsome, clothed in fine garments and adorned with fragrant flowers, having just received anointment on the crown of his head to make him a wheel turning king. He is a youthful Bodhisattva who is full-featured. Various garments and flowers adorn his person. He has just received an anointment on the crown of his head. When a Bodhisattva receives an anointment on the crown from the Buddhas, he becomes a Dharma Prince. He can become one of the four kinds of Wheel Turning Kings, either gold, silver, copper, or iron. The Gold Wheel Turning King governs the entire universe—all four continents. The Four Great Continents are;

Jambudvipa in the South   
Uttarakuru in the North   
Apara-Godaniya in the East   
Purva-Videha in the West.

The Silver Wheel Turning King governs three continents, the Copper Wheel Turning King governs two continents, and the Iron Wheel Turning King governs one of the great continents.

This Bodhisattva is a Gold Wheel Turning monarch whose domain covers all Four Continents. He is replete with the seven jewels and ruling over the four continents. He has all seven of the precious things in their completion. The Seven Kinds of Precious Jewels are;

* The Wheel Jewel
* The Elephant Jewel
* The Horse Jewel
* The Jewel of the Divine Pearl
* The Jewel of Able Ministers
* The Jewel of the Jade Maiden
* The Jewel of Generals.

At this time, suppose he is approached by a person who addresses his Lordship. Suppose now that there is a person who requests an audience with the king. To the Gold Wheel Turning King he says, “Oh, great king know that I am now old and decrepit—I’m not young anymore like you. My eyes don’t see very clearly, my hair is all snowy white and my teeth have all fallen out. I’m plagued with many illnesses. I have contracted serious diseases. I’m friendless, childless, all alone and very isolated. I’m emaciated, and eccentric. My death is not far off. I’m skinny as a rail—very cadaverous looking. Death is practically upon me! If only I had the king’s body—you’re so young now, if I could get a hold of your body, your hands, feet, blood, flesh, head, eyes, bones, and marrow —if you would give me all those things, then I could go on living. My own life would certainly flourish. I could get fat. I could be young again. I’d have a lot of energy and I wouldn’t die. I pray that the king will not be calculating or stingy. My wish is that you, oh king, will not think of yourself. Don’t have a second thought, don’t even think about it. Don’t think that you can’t give up your hands, your blood, your head, your flesh, bones, and marrow. Don’t be stingy and refuse to give these to me. But I hope the Great King will look upon me with kind thoughts and give himself to me. I want you to regard me with compassion, King. Give everything to me.”

All of you think about this. Who could do this? Who could give on a scale like this? I think no one would be able to give one’s own head, bones, marrow, flesh, eyes, hands, and feet. But if you can’t make this vow, you are not a Bodhisattva. If you dare to make this vow, then you are the same as all Bodhisattvas.

Sutra:

“At that time the Bodhisattva says to himself, ‘In the future my physical body must also die and will be of no benefit to anyone. It is fitting that I should immediately relinquish it to save living beings.’ Having had this thought, he gives himself away without any regrets. This is called The Giving of Inner Wealth.

Commentary:

This youthful Bodhisattva has the position of a king and has all of the Seven Jewels and riches. Such a wealthy and distinguished person is approached by an old person who comes to beg from him. This old person is on the brink of death. He definitely must have had a doctor tell him to get a blood transfusion because he didn’t have enough blood. So he goes to the great king to beg for his blood, flesh, head, eyes, bones, and marrow. He wants the king to give him all of these things so that he can prolong his life. At this time he says to the king, “You shouldn’t wait any longer, you shouldn’t mull over it or consider it to the point that you might change your mind and decide not to offer them.” Having such a person come before him to beg in this way, the king is able to achieve this merit and virtue. This is called sacrificing oneself for the sake of other people. One forgets about oneself for the sake of all living beings.

At that time the Bodhisattva says to himself, “In the future my physical body must also die. Even though I am as wealthy and honored as it’s possible to be, in the future I will die just the same.” It’s said;

The fish flit around in the water   
People knock around in the world.   
Not knowing to do good and virtuous deeds,   
They steel their hearts and commit crimes.   
They may pile up gold and silver as high as mountains,   
But when they close their eyes for the final time, the whole wad is gone.   
They go before King Yama empty-handed,   
Weeping tears with bitter regret.

The Bodhisattva has this contemplation, “When it’s time to die, I too will die and will be of no benefit to anyone. I won’t be able to benefit other living beings or myself. It is fitting that I should immediately relinquish it to save living beings. Now this person wants to beg from me. He wants my head, eyes, bones, and marrow. I should quickly take advantage of this opportunity and make this offering in order to rescue living beings. Whatever has benefit for living beings I should quickly do without waiting around.”

Having had this thought, he gives himself away. After contemplating thus, he gives away his head, eyes, bones, and marrow to living beings without any regrets. His heart has no regrets. He doesn’t make an offering and then regret it later on. This is called The Giving of Inner Wealth. This is the third type of giving within the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries’ Treasury of Giving which the Bodhisattva practices.

People say, “How can this be done? How can you actually sacrifice your own life as an offering? You can’t do it because you are not a Bodhisattva. If you were a Bodhisattva then you’d also be able to do this. A Bodhisattva doesn’t act on his own behalf. He’s not attached to himself. Therefore he is able to give up his own body, mind, nature, and life to all living beings in order to benefit them. If only something has benefit for living beings then he will definitely do it. Whatever can be done, he will do. What is impossible to do, he still will do. It’s not so easy to bring forth the Bodhi Heart. You have to practice what people can’t practice and give what people can’t give. This is truly a Bodhisattva who brings forth the resolve for Bodhi.

4. The Giving of Outer Wealth

Sutra:

“What is the Bodhisattvas’ Giving of Outer Wealth? Disciples of the Buddha, suppose a Bodhisattva is in his prime, full-featured, replete with the multitude of marks, and clothed in garments of superb elegance. He has just received anointing of the crown and been inaugurated as a Wheel Turning King. He is replete with the Seven Jewels and rules over the Four Continents. Suppose he is approached by a person who addresses his lordship saying, ‘I am poverty stricken and oppressed by a multitude of sufferings. I only hope that the humane one will especially let fall his kindness, relinquish his royal position, and bequeath it to me. Then I can be in command and enjoy the blessings of a king.’

Commentary:

What is the Bodhisattvas’ Giving of Outer Wealth? Forest of Merit and Virtue Bodhisattva continues again. “What is the Great Bodhisattvas’ giving of outer wealth? Disciples of the Buddha. All of you disciples of the Buddha should now pay attention and listen to what I have to tell you. Suppose a Bodhisattva is in his prime. This Bodhisattva who is cultivating the giving of outer wealth, is not like the young Bodhisattva we spoke of before, the adolescent. Now we have a Bodhisattva who is in the prime of life, and full-featured. He is of flourishing years with full and well-proportioned features. He’s extremely good looking. He also has virtuous practice and is replete with the multitude of marks. He has thirty-one of the thirty-two marks and the eighty subtle characteristics. He is clothed in garments of superb elegance. He has the most precious and valuable flowers and clothing adorning his body. This Bodhisattva has cultivated the Six Paramitas and the Ten Thousand Conducts to perfection. His merit and virtue can be likened to the wonderful flowers and clothing which adorn him.

He has just received anointing of the crown and been inaugurated as a Wheel Turning King. This king is the Gold Wheel Turning Sage King, and he is replete with the Seven Jewels. These Seven Jewels have been explained in the previous section.

This Wheel Turning King is extremely wealthy and honored, and rules over the Four Continents. Suppose he is approached by a person who addresses his lordship…You who are listening to the Sutra should know that this is an analogy; the Sutra text says, “suppose” this should happen. Maybe it happened and maybe it didn’t. It’s just an analogy. It’s just for the sake of discussion. You shouldn’t suppose that there definitely is such a person. Maybe there really is such a person. However, the word “suppose” includes the possibility that there is no such person at all. The point being made is that a Bodhisattva should have this kind of mind of giving, of total renunciation. The person practicing the Bodhisattva Way has to be this way.

We are just expressing a principle here. So “suppose” a person comes and says to the king, “I am poverty stricken and oppressed by a multitude of sufferings. I am impoverished to the point that I don’t have any food to eat, any clothes to wear, or any place to live. And because I am so poor and destitute I am pressured by a host of sufferings.” This is suffering within suffering. Since he is enduring this suffering within suffering, he wants to win a sweepstakes, get a lucky ticket, or take first in the lottery, so he decides to go and beg from the Wheel Turning Sage King! He says to the king, “ I only hope that the humane one will especially let fall his kindness, relinquish his royal position, and bequeath it to me. I only hope that you, greatly kind and compassionate Wheel Turning Sage King, will especially condescend to pity me and concede your throne to me, in order to support my life. Then I can be in command and enjoy the blessings of a king. If you give me your kingly position, then I will be a Wheel Turning Sage King. I will stand in for you to govern the Four Great Continents. I will enjoy the happiness that you heretofore have enjoyed, oh king. All of these kinds of blessings and rewards will be mine.”

So, everyone think it over. If you were to become a Wheel Turning Sage King and then such a completely nutty person were to come beg for your position of Wheel Turning Sage King, would you be able to give it up or not? Return the light and ask yourselves whether or not you could do this. Some people might say, “What is spoken of in the Sutra is just talk. What Wheel Turning Sage King would possibly be able to relinquish his position in that circumstance?” It’s just because you could not relinquish such a position if you were in it, that you have never been able to be in that position. If you were able to relinquish it, then you would be able to become a Wheel Turning Sage King. It’s just because you are so stingy and wouldn’t be able to give up the wealthy and honored position of a king that up to now, you haven’t attained this kind of position.

Sutra:

“At that time the Bodhisattva thinks like this: ‘All that is glorious will pass away, and when it is gone I will be unable to further benefit living beings. It is fitting that I fulfill his wishes.’ Having had this thought he gives him everything without any regret. This is called the Giving of Outer Wealth.

Commentary:

At that time , what time? When the person comes to ask the Wheel Turning Sage King to bequeath his royal position to him. At this time the Bodhisattva thinks like this: “All that is glorious—the riches and honor that I revel in now-- will pass away, and when it is gone I will be unable to further benefit living beings. It’s for certain this will all fade and come to an end. When that time comes if I want to practice giving, I won’t have any way to benefit living beings. Although now I can benefit living beings using my present riches, however, if I wait until I don’t have any riches—then not to speak about benefitting living beings—I won’t even be able to benefit myself. Therefore, it is fitting that I should fulfill his wishes. I must accord with what he wants and satisfy the wishes of this living being who has come to seek my regal position.” Having had this thought he gives him every-thing.

After having had this thought he instantly gives up his position of Wheel Turning Sage King to that person without any regret. He has no after thought, no remorse. He gives everything away, but the substance of the three wheels is empty: there is no reciprocity of the gift to the giver. There is no one who gives, there is nothing which is given, and in the middle there is no one who receives. The substance of the three wheels is empty. So it says he gives “without any regrets”. This is called the Giving of Outer Wealth. One can make offerings of one’s countries, cities, wives, and children. But this is not easy to actually accomplish, so all of you don’t believe it. If you believed it you’d be able to practice the Bodhisattva Way. But people who don’t believe will have to wait awhile and in the future they will be able to practice the Bodhisattva Way.

There are a lot of people here for this Kuan Yin Bodhisattva Recitation Session. I counted forty-three people. In this country, there are that many people who aren’t afraid of hardship and they have all come to recite Kuan Yin Bodhisattva’s name. This has never happened before. This is a first.

All of you who are participating in this Kuan Yin Session are number one, you are all first. Those who don’t want to be number one, couldn’t come to participate in this Kuan Yin Session. All of you should know,

To undergo suffering is to end suffering.   
To enjoy blessings is to exhaust blessings.

If you endure the suffering within suffering you will be able to become a Bodhisattva. Bodhisattvas just have to want suffering. As it is said,

Bitter now, sweet later.

If you are able to undergo suffering now, in the future you will become a Buddha. In practicing the Bodhisattva Way you have to first take a little bit of a loss. If you can undergo suffering now, then in the future your bliss will be eternal. If you can just endure one hour’s worth of suffering, then in the future you will have eternal happiness.

The Giving of Inner and Outer Wealth

Sutra:

“What is called the Giving of Inner and Outer Wealth? Disciples of the Buddha, suppose a Bodhisattva such as described above, who has the position of a Wheel Turning King, is replete with the Seven Jewels, and rules over the Four Continents, is approached by someone who says: ‘This position of Wheel Turning King that the King inherited long ago is something I have never had. I only wish, oh Great King, that you would relinquish it to me and that you, Your Majesty, would become my servant.’

Commentary:

Previously, the Sutra explained the giving of inner wealth and the giving of outer wealth. The giving of inner wealth is the giving of head, eyes, brains, and marrow. The giving of outer wealth is the giving of countries, cities, wives, and children. Now this section of text discusses the giving of inner and outer wealth.

“What is called the Giving of Inner and Outer Wealth? This is a rhetorical question. It’s asking about this kind of dharma.

Disciples of the Buddha. The Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue again is afraid that all of these Bodhisattvas have entered samadhi, so he calls out again, “Disciples of the Buddha.” Suppose a Bodhisattva such as described above—the Bodhisattva who is youthful in age, robust and strong, whose body is adorned with the marks and characteristics just as the one described previously--who has the position of a Wheel Turning King. He’s in the position of a Gold Wheel Turning King and is replete with the Seven Jewels. His Seven Jewels are totally perfect and complete, and he rules over the Four Continents—he lords over the entire universe. Suppose he is approached by someone who wants to test him and who says: ‘This position of Wheel Turning King that the King inherited long ago is something I have never had. You’ve been a king for a long time but I’ve never gotten to be one. I only wish, oh Great King, that you would relinquish it to me. But not only do I want that, I also hope that you, Your Majesty, would become my servant.’ If you can renounce a position like this and fulfill this wish, this is truly the conduct of a great Bodhisattva!”

Sutra:

“At that time, the Bodhisattva thinks to himself, ‘My body, wealth, and gems, as well as the royal position, are all dharmas which are impermanent and destined to decay. I am now in my prime and my riches encompass all under heaven. Since this beggar has come forth, I will use what is insubstantial to seek a substantial dharma.’ Having thought thus, he gives everything over to that person, and with his own body, respectfully and diligently serves him. His mind harbors no regret, this is called the Giving of Inner and Outer Wealth.

Commentary:

This Wheel Turning King has great riches and stature. He has a lot of wealth and power. A person has come before him to beg for his royal position and all his wealth. In addition, he asks that the king become his personal servant. This is an extremely difficult request to grant, but at that time, the Bodhisattva thinks to himself, ‘My body, wealth, and gems, as well as the royal position—the body which I possess; my inner wealth of head, eyes, brain, and marrow, and my outer jewels such as gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, mother-of-pearl, red pearls, and carnelian, as well as this position of a Wheel Turning Sage King-- are all dharmas which are impermanent and destined to decay. They are all impermanent and in the future, they will certainly perish. They cannot exist forever. This is the dharma of impermanence.

“I am now in my prime—now I’m young and strong. I have plenty of blood and energy, and my riches encompass all under heaven. My wealth and position include the entire universe; everything under heaven is mine. Since this beggar has come forth and is one who seeks my wealth and position of a king, I will use what is insubstantial to seek a substantial dharma. I will offer up this body which is insubstantial, and my throne and riches which are ephemeral, and give them to this person in order to seek for the firm, strong, Dharma—The Dharma of Irreversibility from Anuttarasamyaksambodhi.”

Having thought thus—after thinking this over , he gives everything over to that person. He immediately gives away the position of a king, his body and all of his wealth. He gives it all away and doesn’t keep even a little bit, to the point that with his own body, respectfully and diligently serves him. He is respectful and vigorous when he acts as a servant. He is sincere in giving up his royal position. And after making this gift his mind harbors no regret, this is called the Giving of Inner and Outer Wealth.

Total Giving

Sutra:

“What is meant by a Bodhisattva’s Total Giving? Disciples of the Buddha, as before, this Bodhisattva inherits the position of a Wheel Turning King, is replete with the Seven Jewels, and rules over the Four Continents. At one time, limitless poverty-stricken people approached him and said, ‘Great King, your renown pervades and is heard throughout the ten directions. Out of veneration we have come. We each have certain things we would like and we hope that you will be compassionate and fulfill our wishes.’

Then the poor people begged variously of the king: Some asked for his country, some wanted his wives or children, some wished for his hands and feet, some wanted his blood, flesh, heart, lungs, head, eyes, marrow, and brains. The Bodhisattva at that time, had this thought: ‘I will eventually have to part from all those for whom I have fondness and love, but it will have been of no benefit to living beings. Now, with the hope of forever casting out greed and emotional love, I will use all of these things that are destined to disperse, to fulfill these living beings’ wishes.’

Having had this thought, he bestowed upon them all the things they wanted, without any thoughts of regret, nor any sense of repulsion or contempt toward those living beings. This is called Total Giving.

Commentary:

After the Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue had spoken about the giving of inner and outer wealth, he goes on to speak about the giving of everything—total giving. What is meant by a Bodhisattva’s Total Giving? Disciples of the Buddha—I will now tell all of you. As before, this Bodhisattva—this Bodhisattva is in the same position as the one spoken of above who gave inner wealth, outer wealth, and inner and outer wealth. He inherits the position of a Wheel Turning King, is replete with the Seven Jewels, and rules over the Four Continents.

At one time, limitless poverty-stricken people, it’s not known how many destitute people, approached him and said, “Great King, your renown pervades and is heard throughout the ten directions. You are a great philanthropist. Out of veneration we have come. We admire your loftiness, your acts of giving, and your excellent conduct, and so we have come to this country to see you. Now, we each have certain things we would like. Each one of us has that which we wish to seek from you. And we hope that you will be compassionate and fulfill our wishes.” Then the poor people begged variously of the king: Some asked for his country, some wanted his wives or children. Not only did they seek things external to his body, but they also sought for things within his body. Some wished for his hands and feet, some wanted his blood, flesh, heart, lungs, head, eyes, marrow, and brains.

The Bodhisattva at that time, had this thought: “I will eventually have to part from all those for whom I have fondness and love—I will eventually have to leave all of those whom I am fond of—my wives, children, and the people of my country. I will depart from them. But at that time, it will have been no benefit to living beings. Now, with the hope of forever casting out greed and emotional love, I will use all of these things that are destined to disperse, to fulfill these living beings’ wishes. Now I wish to renounce all these things I am fond of. I will certainly have to separate from all of these objects of wealth in the future. No matter how much wealth I have, when I die I’ll have to go empty handed. I can’t take it along with me. Therefore, I should satisfy the wishes of living beings instead.”

Having had this thought, he bestowed upon them all the things they wanted. He gave away his countries, wives, children, and cities; his head, eyes, brains, and marrow—he gave them all away to these destitute people, without any thoughts of regret. In his mind he didn’t have any regrets, nor any sense of repulsion or contempt toward those living beings. He did not detest these living beings. He did not look down on them as being people who are greedy. This is called Total Giving. This is the Dharma Door of Total Giving that the Bodhisattva practices.

7. Past Giving

Sutra:

“What is the Bodhisattva’s Past Giving? When these Bodhisattvas hear about the merit and virtue of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past, they do not become attached. They understand its lack of existence. They do not give rise to discriminations. They are not greedy for it, not obsessed by it, and they do not grasp or seek it. They are without a place of reliance. They see dharmas as being like a dream, devoid of any solid substance. They do not give rise to thoughts about good roots, nor do they rely on them. It is only for the sake of teaching and transforming that they cling to living beings. They become perfected in the Buddhadharma and then proclaim it.

“Moreover, they further contemplate all past dharmas and realize that even when they are sought throughout the ten directions, they cannot be got at. Having had this thought, they completely relinquish all past dharmas. This is called Past Giving.

Commentary:

Forest of Merit and Virtue Bodhisattva asks: What is the Bodhisattva’s Past Giving? He asks a rhetorical question and the text that follows answers this question. When these Bodhisattvas hear about the merit and virtue of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past they do not become attached. They understand its lack of existence. They realize that ultimately even merit and virtue are empty. They do not give rise to discriminations regarding the past Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. They are not greedy for it, not obsessed by it—that is, they don’t keep thinking about the merit and virtue. And they do not grasp or seek it. They don’t grasp or seek what the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past amassed in merit and virtue. They are without a place of reliance. They see dharmas as being like a dream, devoid of any solid substance. They understand that all dharmas are illusory, like a dream or transformation and ultimately not real. They do not give rise to thoughts about good roots, nor do they rely on them. They don’t think about the good roots of themselves or the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past, and they don’t rely on them. It is only for the sake of teaching and transforming that they cling to living beings. They only appear to be attached to living beings, but that’ only because of their dedication to save them. They become perfected in the Buddhadharma and then proclaim it. Because they want living beings to accomplish the position of a Buddha and fulfill Bodhi, they then speak the Buddhadharma for these living beings.

Moreover, they further contemplate all past dharmas of the ten directions and realize that even when they are sought throughout the ten directions, they cannot be got at. Having had this thought, they completely relinquish all past dharmas. This is called Past Giving. This is cultivating one of the ten kinds of giving in the Treasury of Giving of the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries.

8. Future Giving

Sutra:

“What is the Bodhisattva’s Future Giving? When these Bodhisattvas hear how all future Buddhas will cultivate, they understand their lack of existence. They do not grasp at appearances. They take no special delight in getting reborn in any Buddhaland. They are not obsessed or attached, and they do not give rise to weariness. They do not use their good roots to transfer to them, nor do they because of them, retreat from their good roots.

Commentary:

Forest of Merit and Virtue Bodhisattva, having finished speaking about past giving, says: What is the Bodhisattva’s Future Giving? The following text is in answer to this question. When these Bodhisattvas hear how all future Buddhas will cultivate, after these Bodhisattvas hear of the practices the Buddhas of the future cultivate, they understand their lack of existence. They understand that all dharmas are empty. They do not grasp at appearances. They do not attach to the marks and characteristics of what all Buddhas of the future will cultivate.

They take no special delight in getting reborn in any Buddhaland. While residing in their own particular country, they wouldn’t want to get reborn in some other Buddhaland. They are not obsessed or attached. They don’t ponder over the Dharmas all these Buddhas cultivate and they aren’t attached to the Dharmas which all Buddhas cultivate, and they do not give rise to weariness. Now if they aren’t attached to them, if they don’t delight in them, if they don’t greedily seek these things, then is it the case that they dislike them—that they are tired of them? Do they get weary of the practices that all the Buddhas of the future cultivate? No, they don’t weary of them. They do not use their good roots to transfer to them. They don’t use the good roots which they themselves have cultivated and transfer their merit and virtue to all Buddhas of the future, because they aren’t attached to anything. Nor do they because of them, retreat from their good roots. They won’t think that because the good roots cultivated by all Buddhas of the future are so difficult to practice that they decide to retreat. Despite the difficulty, they still don’t retreat from their own good roots or their resolve for Bodhi.

Sutra:

“They are constant and diligent in their cultivation, never renouncing it. It is only because they wish to gather in living beings that they make use of such states, so they speak for them what is true and actual and cause them to become mature within the Buddhadharma. And yet these dharmas do not exist in any location, nor do they lack a location. They are not inside, not outside, not near and not far. They also have this thought: ‘If dharmas do not exist, then I cannot fail to renounce them.’ This is called Future Giving.

Commentary:

They are constant and diligent in their cultivation. Why does it say that the Bodhisattvas do not retreat from their good roots and resolve on Bodhi? It is because they constantly and diligently cultivate. “Constant” means never letting it be cut off. “Diligent” means vigorous, courageous, and energetic. It’s not like the way most of us cultivate. We cultivate for one, two, three, four, or five days and then decide that it is not very interesting, that there’s nothing to be obtained from it, and so we stop cultivating. This is not constantly and diligently cultivating. Constant and diligent cultivation is constantly being courageous and vigorous from the very first thought of resolve on Bodhi all the way to the point of becoming a Buddha and all the time in between. It is having a great resolve on Bodhi and cultivating the Six Perfections and the Ten Thousand Practices. The Bodhisattvas diligently cultivate the Dharma, never renouncing it. They never stop or abandon it. They don’t stop being vigorous even for an instant. They are never lazy for an instant. Their cultivation never comes to a stop. They never relax or let go of it, and they never stop cultivating.

It is only because they wish to gather in living beings that they make use of such states. To “gather in” all living beings is like using a magnet to draw in iron filings: they draw them all in. So they speak for them what is true and actual. When the Bodhisattvas speak Dharma, they speak true and actual Dharma, and cause them to become mature within the Buddhadharma. They cause living beings to accomplish the Buddha Way a little bit sooner. Although they use the Dharma to teach and transform living beings, and yet they realize that these dharmas do not exist in any location. This means one shouldn’t be attached to the Dharma. So, dharmas do not exist in any location. Nor do they lack a location. Upon hearing that they don’t exist, and that you shouldn’t be attached to the Dharma, yet you shouldn’t go to the other extreme and not use the Dharma. It’s not that way either. Rather, you should speak in accord with the situations that you encounter. Without the situation, the Dharma is empty.

But even at the time you speak the Dharma, there is no Dharma. There should be no attachment to the Dharma spoken or to the speaking of it. Moreover, they are not inside, not outside. The Dharma does not arise from within, nor does it come from without. You should think this way and not be attached. It’s not near and not far. The Dharma isn’t close by nor is it far away. They the Bodhi-sattvas, also have this thought: ‘If dharmas do not exist, then I cannot fail to renounce them.’ If one says that no dharmas are true and actual, then how can one be attached to Dharma? Basically they are still and extinct, which means they are non-existent. Hypothetically there is Dharma, but basically there is no Dharma. So how can one be attached to Dharma? You ought to relinquish it. You should put it down.

This is called Future Giving. This is the future giving which the Great Bodhisattvas cultivate.

9. Present Giving

Sutra:

“What is the Bodhisattva’s present giving? These Bodhisattvas hear about the amount of merit and virtue the gods in the heaven of the Four Heavenly Kings are replete with, as well as those in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, the Suyama Heaven, the Tushita Heaven, the Heaven of the Transformation of Bliss, the Heaven of the Comfort From Others’ Transformations…

Commentary:

When Forest of Merit and Virtue Bodhisattva had finished speaking of the future giving of the Bodhisattva he again put forth a question and answers it himself. He says, what is the Bodhisattva’s present giving? What was spoken of before was past and future giving, but what is the present giving cultivated by the Great Bodhisattvas? What follows now is in answer to the question.

When these Bodhisattvas hear about the amount of merit and virtue the gods in the Heaven of the Four Heavenly Kings are replete with —The Four Heavenly Kings are:

The Heavenly King “Maintaining the Country”   
The Heavenly King “Great Learning”   
The Heavenly King “Broad Eyes”   
The Heavenly King “Increasing and Growing”

There are limitless gods in the Heaven of the Four Kings. Each of these kings lead a multitude of gods. As well as those in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. The “Heaven of the Thirty-Three is a translation of the Sanskrit name Trayastrimsha. Those who rule the Heaven of the Thirty-Three in the past were thirty-three women. Together, they all brought forth a resolve to restore a temple that had been destroyed. From the merit and virtue they accrued from restoring this temple, they were reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three and became the rulers of it.

The Suyama Heaven is the “Heaven of Well-Divided Time.” The Tushita Heaven is the “Heaven of Contentment”. The Bodhisattva who is to be the next Buddha to appear in the world, waits in the inner court of the Tushita Heaven, until the time is right. It is the same for every Buddha-to-be. Therefore, this heaven is also called the “Place of the Successor.” In the next life the Bodhisattva waiting in the inner court of the Tushita Heaven will succeed the present Buddha and become the next Buddha. The Heaven of the Transformation of Bliss—this heaven is extremely blissful. There are all kinds of blissful transformations. The Heaven of the Comfort From Others’ Transformations—there’s also a heaven called the Comfort From Others’ Transformations. There, the gods rely on others’ bliss in order to become blissful themselves. They rely on the bliss of other heavens for their own bliss.

Sutra:

“The Heavens of Brahma—the Brahma Body Heaven, the Heaven of the Ministers of Brahma, the Heaven of the Multitudes of Brahma, the Great Brahma Heaven, the Heavens of Light—the Lesser Light Heaven, the Limitless Light Heaven, the Light-Sound Heaven…

Commentary:

When compared with the human realm, the heavens are very different. In the heavens, everyone is very blissful and extremely happy. Therefore, one day and night in the Heaven of the Four Kings is equivalent to fifty years in the human world. One day and one night in our human world is equivalent to fifty years in the hells. Why is it this way? Because in the hells there is so much suffering that the inhabitants feel the time goes by slowly and seems longer. Where happiness exists, people feel that the time passes quickly and so seems shorter. For this reason, in the Heaven of the Four Kings (the heaven located above us), one day and night is equal to fifty years in our human world. That is because they are very blissful when compared to the human realm, which is full of suffering.

One day and night in the Trayastrimsha Heaven corresponds to one hundred years in our human realm. The time it takes for a day and night to pass in our world increases to longer and longer periods of time in correspondence to how high up the heavens are. If we were to continue deducing in this manner, by the time we reach the Heaven of Neither Thought Nor Non-Thought, one day and night by their reckoning would correspond to millions of great kalpas of our time—that long a time.

The Heavens of Brahma—the Brahma Body Heaven, the Heaven of the Ministers of Brahma—in these heavens there are pure cultivators. The Heaven of the Multitudes of Brahma, the Great Brahma Heaven—The king of this heaven is really comfortable and independent.

The Heaven of Light—in these heavens the gods speak the Dharma by means of light. The Lesser Light Heaven, the Limitless Light Heaven, the Light-Sound Heaven. According to Buddhist Sutras, the people of our world originally descended from the Light Sound Heaven. The beings in this heaven utilize light as sound. They use the light to speak the Dharma.

Originally the beings of the Light Sound Heaven came to our earth. Because they were heavenly, they could fly, so they flew from the Light Sound Heaven down to our earth. In the beginning our earth was covered with the “fat of the land” which was kind of like the cotton candy that we have today. It was really sweet and delicious. In the Light Sound Heaven they didn’t have this delicacy so when they came to the earth they thought it was really good. They were just like kids being treated to candy, and they ate one piece after another. After the heavenly beings had eaten a bit of the fat of the land they could no longer fly. It is said that this is the way the world became inhabited by human beings.

Was it really this way? It doesn’t matter. It’s not important. If it were this way, so what? If it weren’t this way, so what? For those who really want to cultivate, it’s better to take care of your own affairs first and then worry about other affairs. If you meddle into other business before you have settled your own affairs, then whatever knowledge you come by is false and empty. So people who have to study this and study that, who must research into one field and research into another field, just keep investigating on and on until they die. And after they die, they forget all the research they have done. Then when they become human beings again, they start doing this kind of researching all over again. They do research again but they still can’t get everything cleared up before they die again. So, if viewed from this perspective, it’s far better to study the problem of life and death. How did we get born and how will we die? We have to clarify where we came from and where we are going. This is important.

Sutra:

“The Heavens of Purity—the Heaven of Lesser Purity, the Heaven of Limitless Purity, the Heaven of Pervasive Purity; the Heavens of Abundance—the Heaven of Lesser Abundance, the Heaven of Limitless Abundance, the Heaven of Abundant Fruit; the Heaven of No Afflictions, the Heaven of No Heat, the Good View Heaven, the Good Manifestation Heaven, the Heaven of Ultimate Form, and so forth, up to and including Sound Hearers and Those Enlightened to Conditions, who are replete with merit and virtue.

After hearing about this, their minds are neither confused nor depressed, nor do they become obsessed by or scattered by all of this. They merely contemplate all practices as being like a dream that lacks any reality, and they have no greed or attachment toward them. It is for the sake of causing living beings to renounce and leave the evil destinies, to have their minds become free from discriminations, to cultivate the Bodhisattva Path and accomplish the Buddhadharmas, that they speak and explain. This is called Present Giving.

Commentary:

In the First Dhyana there are three heavens, in the Second Dhyana and Third Dhyana there are also three heavens. In the Fourth Dhyana there are nine heavens. These are the Four Dhyana Heavens.

The Heavens of Purity—these heavens are even more pure than the Brahma Heavens mentioned before. The Heaven of Lesser Purity, the Heaven of Limitless Purity, the Heaven of Pervasive Purity. In the Heaven of Lesser Purity, although it is very pure, it is not a perfect purity. In the Heaven of Limitless Purity, the purity is more perfect and it is limitless but not all pervasive. In the Heaven of Pervasive Purity the purity is all pervasive and universal. The Heavens of Abundance—the Heaven of Lesser Abundance, the Heaven of Limitless Abundance, the Heaven of Abundant Fruit. In each case in the text above, the sets of three heavens are introduced with a general reference to the kinds of heavens, such as “The Heavens of Abundance”. Now we go on to single heavens, no longer sets of three.

The Heaven of No Afflictions—not only is this heaven pure, but the gods who inhabit it have no troubles, no afflictions. The Heaven of No Heat—in this heaven it is always cool and clear. “Heat” can also mean “noise” or “heated afflictions”. This heat can refer to the fact that in one’s nature there is fire. The heat of afflictions no longer plagues these gods.

The Good View Heaven, the Good Manifestation Heaven, the Heaven of Ultimate Form—in this heaven, form does not exist anymore. And so forth, up to and including Sound Hearers and Those Enlightened to Conditions, who are replete with merit and virtue. The Bodhisattvas contemplate the merit and virtue of all those heavenly beings as well as Sound Hearers and Those Enlightened To Conditions. After hearing about this—all this merit and virtue-- their minds are neither confused nor depressed, nor do they become obsessed by or scattered by all of this. These different kinds of states of the gods don’t confuse the Bodhisattvas. Nor do they get depressed and sink into these states. Nor do they constantly pay attention to them and become attached to them. Nor are their thoughts scattered by these states. They merely contemplate all practices as being like a dream that lacks any reality. As it is said;

All activity is impermanent:   
This is the dharma of production and extinction.   
When production and extinction are extinguished,   
Still extinction is bliss.

Ultimate still extinction is happiness. So they contemplate that all practices are just like dreams and are not real, and they have no greed or attachment toward them. The Bodhisattvas remain free of attachment to all the states we have talked about—all of the blissful states of the heavens.

It is for the sake of causing living beings to renounce and leave the evil destinies that the Bodhisattvas speak the Dharma. They want living beings to abandon and depart from the Four Evil Destinies of the hells, hungry ghosts, animals and asuras. They want to have their minds become free from discriminations, to cultivate the Bodhisattva Path: They want living beings to cultivate the Bodhisattva Way to benefit other living beings in turn, and accomplish the Buddhadharmas. They want them to succeed in all of the Dharmas which the Buddhas attain. It is for this reason that they speak and explain. They speak the Buddhadharma for the sake of all living beings. This is called Present Giving. The text we have just covered is the Dharma of Present Giving.

10. Ultimate Giving

Sutra:

“What is the Bodhisattva’s Ultimate Giving? Disciples of the Buddha, suppose there were living beings who perhaps had no eyes, or no ears, or no noses or tongues, or no hands and feet, who came to where the Bodhisattva was and said, ‘My body is defective, my faculties are maimed and incomplete. I only wish the humane one would compassionately use expedient means and relinquish what he has in order to make me whole and perfect.’ When the Bodhisattva hears this he immediately gives in this way, and if because of this he must pass through asamkhyeyas of kalpas with incomplete faculties, still his mind never gives rise to a thought of regret.

He only contemplates that from the time he entered the womb he had an unclean form. He reflects on how the fetus, which takes shape and develops sense organs, is subject to birth, old age, sickness, and death. He also contemplates the body as unreal, that it is shameless, and not a thing which is sagely or holy. It smells, is filthy and unclean. It is supported by bones and joints, and smeared with blood and flesh. The nine apertures constantly flow with impurities. It is that which people loathe and despise. Having contemplated in this way, he does not give rise to a single thought of love or attachment regarding it.

He also has this thought: ‘This body is fragile and not solid, so why should I be fond of or attached to it? I should give to all those people, to fulfill their wishes. I do this to instruct and guide living beings, to cause them to not be greedily attached to their bodies and minds, so they can all become accomplished in the pure wisdom body.’ This is called Ultimate Giving.

Commentary:

What is the Bodhisattva’s Ultimate Giving? After the Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue has spoken about “present giving”, he then discusses “ultimate giving”, and asks, “What is the ultimate giving of a Great Bodhisattva?”

Disciples of the Buddha, suppose there were living beings who perhaps had no eyes, or no ears, or no noses or tongues. You can imagine that a living being without a nose would be very ugly, and a living being without a tongue would not be able to speak. Or they had no hands and feet. Perhaps some living beings had no hands and some had no feet, and who came to where the Bodhisattva was and said, “My body is defective—our bodies are deficient in blessings, so we lack either eyes, ears, nose, tongue, hands or feet.” But of course they couldn’t lack brains or heads. When one’s faculties are incomplete, one is said to have a deficiency of the six sense organs. Those living beings said, “ my faculties are maimed and incomplete. ” This means that their eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind are imperfect.

They continue, “I only wish the humane one would compassionately use expedient means and relinquish what he has in order to make me whole and perfect. Give to us in order to cause those of us who have no eyes to obtain eyes; those without ears, to have ears; those without noses, to have noses; those without tongues, to have tongues; and those without hands and feet, to have hands and feet.” When the Bodhisattva hears this he immediately gives in this way. Without a second thought, he gives those without eyes his eyes. He gives those without ears, his ears. He gives those without noses, his nose. He gives those without tongues, his tongue. He gives those without hands and feet, his hands and feet.

And if because of this he must pass through asamkhyeyas of kalpas, limitless numbers of kalpas, with incomplete faculties, still his mind never gives rise to a thought of regret. It’s not for certain he would be asked to give in this way, but if he were, he would do so and would have no regrets.

He only contemplates that from the time he entered the womb he had an unclean form. The Body is not clean and pure. He reflects on how the fetus, which takes shape and develops sense organs, is subject to birth, old age, sickness, and death. After it is born, it gets old, becomes sick and dies. He also contemplates the body as unreal—not a single part of it is real. What part of it can be considered real? Also, he contemplates that it is shameless, and not a thing which is sagely or holy. It smells, is filthy and unclean. It’s rank and turbid. This body always emits a noxious odor and exudes impure vapors. It is supported by bones and joints, and smeared with blood and flesh. The blood and flesh adhere to the structure of the bones and joints. The nine apertures constantly flow with impurities. The eyes ooze matter, the ears have wax, and the nose has mucus. There’s saliva in the mouth, and urine and excrement are even more impure. That’s why it says that the nine apertures are constantly flowing with impurities. If you were told to eat these impure substances which flow out of the body, it would be next to impossible for you to do so. And if you were to say they are clean, then why can’t you eat your own excrement? Why can’t you drink your own urine? This just proves that they are unclean.

It is that which people loathe and despise. Everybody is repulsed by it and feels that the body is filthy and unclean. Having contemplated in this way, he does not give rise to a single thought of love or attachment regarding it.

He also has this thought: “This body is fragile and not solid. The suffering of birth, old age, sickness, and death are really a lot of trouble, so why should I be fond of or attached to it? Eventually it is going to die. It’s not solid and durable. I should give to all those people, to fulfill their wishes. I do this to instruct and guide living beings, to cause them to not be greedily attached to their bodies and minds.” He uses this act of compassion as a means of teaching living beings. “I’m not attached to my body and mind and I hope that all living beings will also not be greedy and fond of their body, mind, nature, and life, so they can all become accomplished in the pure wisdom body. I hope that they will all obtain a body of wisdom that is pure.”

This is called Ultimate Giving. This is the ultimate giving cultivated by the Great Bodhisattva, among the various kinds of giving which they cultivate.

Sutra:

“This is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Sixth Treasury, that of Giving.

Commentary:

This is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Sixth Treasury, that of Giving. What has just been explained are the many, many kinds of giving. They are:

* Giving by reducing one’s portion
* Exhaustive giving
* The giving of inner wealth
* The giving of outer wealth
* The giving of inner and outer wealth
* Total giving
* Past giving
* Future giving
* Present giving
* Ultimate giving

What have been explained are the conducts cultivated by Bodhisattvas who practice the Bodhisattva Path. They truly and actually cultivate. This is the Sixth Treasury, that of Giving, and tells of the giving done by the Great Bodhisattvas who don’t attach to any marks.

VII The Treasury of Wisdom

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Wisdom? These Bodhisattvas have a true knowledge of form, a true knowledge of the accumulation of form, a true knowledge of the extinction of form, and a true knowledge of the path that leads to the extinction of form.

Commentary:

Disciples of the Buddha, the Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue again calls out and says, “All of you disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Wisdom? What is the Treasury of Wisdom that the Great Bodhisattva among Bodhisattvas is complete with?”

These Bodhisattvas have a true knowledge of form. These Bodhisattvas have true and actual knowledge of the form skandha. That is to say that they truly and actually, totally understand that the form skandha is false and empty. From the existence of the form skandha, suffering, accumulation, extinction, and the Way are all produced. These are the Four Noble Truths. These Bodhisattvas totally understand the Four Noble Truths. So the text says, “These Bodhisattvas have a true knowledge of form.” They aren’t tied up by the accumulation of suffering.

These Bodhisattvas have a true knowledge of the accumulation of form. The truth of accumulation is characterized by the “beckoning” nature of the form skandha. The Bodhisattvas have true, actual knowledge of this truth.

These Bodhisattvas also have a true knowledge of the extinction of form. They actually understand the certification and attainment of the Truth of Extinction within the form skandha.

And they have a true knowledge of the path that leads to the extinction of form. These Bodhisattvas thoroughly understand the method for cultivation and attainment of the Way with respect to the form skandha, and so they have a genuine understanding of the method that leads to certification to the Truth of Extinction.

And so, with respect to the Four Noble Truths of Suffering, Accumulation, Extinction, and the Way—we want to have true, factual, and real knowledge. The Bodhisattvas know that the skandha of form is empty.

Sutra:

“They have a true knowledge of feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness; a true knowledge of the accumulation of feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness; a true knowledge of the extinction of feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness; and a true knowledge of the path that leads to the extinction of feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness.

Commentary:

People are unable to understand that the Five Skandhas of Form, Feeling, Thinking, Activity, and Consciousness and the Four Noble Truths of Suffering, Accumulation, Extinction, and the Way, are actually perfectly fused without any obstruction. They cannot comprehend their interconnection. Consequently all different kinds of attachments are produced just like the silk worm when it spews out silk and ties up its own body. If you understand the principle involved here, then you’ll attain liberation. If you attain liberation, then you won’t be confused by Suffering, Accumulation, Extinction, and the Way. You’ll be able to stop suffering, cut off accumulation, aim for extinction, and cultivate the Way. If you don’t understand the principle involved here, then you won’t know about stopping suffering, or about cutting off the accumulation of suffering. You won’t be able to aim for extinction, or be able to cultivate the Way.

You can apply the Four Truths to the Form skandha and understand that it is empty. You can do the same with the skandhas of Feeling, Thinking, Activity, and Consciousness. If you understand this, then your self-nature won’t be covered over by the Five Skandhas. It will emit light. You will illumine and view the Five Skandhas as empty and cross over all suffering and difficulty.

“Feeling” is defined as reception. “Form” is described as hard and solid. It has shape and appearance. The Feeling Skandha has no form or appearance; there is reception or sensation. If one is attached to the Form Skandha, then the Feeling Skandha arises out of that attachment. One becomes greedy for feelings. One wants to take in the experience of the Form Skandha. The desire to “feel” or experience some state gives rise to the Skandha of Thinking. One starts thinking all the time. From this constant thinking, the Skandha of Activity arises. It is characterized by the constant shifting and flowing of thoughts which never stop. Once there is the Skandha of Activity, then discrimination arises. There come into being all kinds of discriminations, opinions, prejudices, and understandings, all of which are functions of the conscious mind. This is the Skandha of Consciousness.

They have a true knowledge of feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness. In the same way, these Bodhisattvas truly and actually understand and penetrate the Skandhas of Feeling, Thinking, Activity, and Consciousness. A true knowledge of the accumulation of feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness. They also have true and actual knowledge of the beckoning feelings within the Skandha of Feeling, Thinking, Activity, and Consciousness as revealed in the Truth of Accumulation.

They have a true knowledge of the extinction of feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness; and a true knowledge of the path that leads to the extinction of feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness. They also have a genuine understanding of the extinction of the accumulation of suffering and of the way that leads to that extinction. You must also genuinely comprehend, perceive, and recognize these. Then it won’t be possible to be confused by any states. To not be turned by any states is to be able to turn the states. Then ultimately you’ll be able to obtain the Unsurpassed Bodhi Fruit.

Sutra:

“They have a true knowledge of ignorance, a true knowledge of the accumulation of ignorance, a true knowledge of the extinction of ignorance, and a true knowledge of the path that leads to the extinction of ignorance. They have a true knowledge of craving, a true knowledge of the accumulation of craving, a true knowledge of the extinction of craving, and a true knowledge of the path that leads to the extinction of craving.

Commentary:

The Five Skandhas and the Four Noble Truths have been explained up to this point. We should all truly and totally understand these. Now the text talks about the Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-Production. The first of these twelve is ignorance. They have a true knowledge of ignorance. One should truly have an understanding of ignorance in relation to the truth of suffering. What is ignorance? It’s just not understanding anything. There is nothing that someone who is ignorant truly understands. Ignorance gives rise to activity. From activity comes consciousness, from consciousness comes name and form. Once there is name and form, then the six entrances-the six sense organs of the body (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind) come about.

From the six sense organs comes contact. Once there is contact there is feeling. From feeling is brought forth craving and because of craving there is grasping. Grasping leads to existence. When there is existence, there is future rebirth. Birth is followed by old age and death. So these Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-Production flow in succession. They are produced one right after the other. The first is ignorance. If there is no ignorance, there won’t be any activity. If there isn’t any activity, then there won’t be any consciousness. If there is no consciousness, then there is no name and form. With no name and form, there won’t be the six sense organs. Without the six sense organs there can’t be any contact. Without contact there can’t be any feeling. Without feeling there is no craving. With no craving there is no grasping. With no grasping there is no existence. When there is no existence then there won’t be future births. And without birth, there can’t be any old age or death. So the principle here is very simple, but those who truly understand it are very few.

If in a single thought there is no awakening, then the three fine marks are produced and one is covered over by ignorance. And it is just because of one unenlightened thought that there is ignorance. From that there arise the three fine marks: the mark of manifesting, the mark of karma, and the mark of turning. So with respect to ignorance there has to be true and actual knowledge. One should truly and fully understand ignorance.

They have a true knowledge of the accumulation of ignorance. Ignorance within the truth of suffering should truly and actually be known. Ignorance within the truth of accumulation should also truly and actually be known. A true knowledge of the extinction of ignorance. Ignorance within the truth of extinction should truly and actually be known. And a true knowledge of the path that leads to the extinction of ignorance. Ignorance within the truth of the methods that lead to extinction should truly and actually be understood. If there can be true knowledge of it, then one can break through ignorance and there won’t be any trouble at all.

They have a true knowledge of craving, a true knowledge of the accumulation of craving, a true knowledge of the extinction of craving, and a true knowledge of the path that leads to the extinction of craving. Why do we turn in the six paths? It’s because of one thought of ignorance that we get involved in activity. Why is it that we get involved in activity and turn in the six paths? It’s because of craving and love. If one understands how this craving is produced and what relationship it has with ignorance and the truths of suffering, accumulation, extinction, and the methods that lead to the extinction of this craving, then one won’t have to flow and turn within any of the six paths of rebirth. But one’s understanding has to be genuine and unobstructed.

Those enlightened to conditions cultivate these Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-Production and understand that this is how is all begins. It all begins because there is ignorance. So they don’t conduct their activities through ignorance. I always say this about ignorance but people still don’t know what I mean. What is ignorance? I’ll tell you very clearly again. Ignorance is just when you say, “I don’t know.” That’s ignorance. Whenever anyone says, “I don’t know”, that’s ignorance manifesting. That’s what ignorance is. If you don’t know, then why do you do the things you do? If you don’t know then why do you do things that are upside down? It’s just from ignorance. So when you do things don’t use “I don’t know” to conduct yourself. If you use the mind of “I don’t know” to do things, that’s just being upside down.

Now that we are explaining the Avatamsaka Sutra, you have to have true and actual knowledge. You have to truly and actually understand what is going on. If you half understand and half don’t understand, that’s just being ignorant. If it seems like you know but don’t really know that’s just ignorance. Those of us who investigate the Buddhadharma have to break through our ignorance so that the Dharma Nature can be revealed. If one is able to break through ignorance one won’t be upside down. If one is able to reveal the Dharma Nature one will be intelligent and one will give rise to wisdom. The place where you apply effort is right before your eyes. You don’t have to be far off to find what you should do.

Some people still don’t understand ignorance. They say, “Ignorance is ‘I don’t know,’ and ‘I don’t know’ is ignorance. Then why is it called ignorance and not ‘I don’t know’?” Well, I’ll tell you now and then you’ll understand. When you are asleep, that’s called ignorance. When you wake up that’s called “I don’t know”.

Sutra:

“They have a true knowledge of Sound Hearers, a true knowledge of the Dharmas of Sound Hearers, a true knowledge of the Accumulation of Sound Hearers, and a true knowledge of the Nirvana of Sound Hearers.

Commentary:

They have a true knowledge of Sound Hearers. A “Sound Hearer” is one who has enlightened to the Way upon hearing the sound of the Buddha. Which sound of the Buddha has he awakened to? He has awakened to the Way through the Dharma of the Four Holy Truths. The Four Truths are suffering, accumulation, extinction, and the Way. He has a true and actual understanding of these types of Dharmas.

You ought to have a genuine, reliable, and thorough understanding. This understanding shouldn’t be skin-deep or superficial. It should reach to the heart of the matter—the true and actual nature.

A true knowledge of the Dharmas of Sound Hearers. You should really, truly know the dharmas which are cultivated by a Sound Hearer.

A true knowledge of the Accumulation of Sound Hearers. You should also have a genuine understanding of the nature of beckoning of accum-ulation. You should know how to cut off affliction, certify to Bodhi, and attain Nirvana. So the text goes on to say, and a true knowledge of the Nirvana of Sound Hearers. They also know which Dharma the Sound Hearer cultivates to attain Nirvana, that is, the nature which is neither produced nor extinguished. The Bodhisattvas have a reliable understanding of how the Sound Hearers obtain the Four Virtues of Nirvana, which are;

* Permanence
* Bliss
* True Self
* Purity

They profoundly understand these at all times.

Sutra:

“They have a true knowledge of Solitarily Enlightened Ones, a true knowledge of the Dharmas of Solitarily Enlightened Ones, a true knowledge of the Accumulation of Solitarily Enlightened Ones, and a true knowledge of the Nirvana of Solitarily Enlightened Ones.

“They have a true knowledge of Bodhisattvas, a true knowledge of the Dharmas of Bodhisattvas, a true knowledge of the Accumulation of Bodhisattvas, and a true knowledge of the Nirvana of Bodhisattvas.

Commentary:

“They have a true knowledge of Solitarily Enlightened Ones. A “Solitarily Enlightened One” is one who has become enlightened on his own. He has suddenly awakened and penetrated through to understanding. He understands the great function and the entire substance of the nature. He understands the external and internal manifestations and the subtle and coarse aspects of all the myriad things.

“Solitarily Enlightened” is another name for the Conditionally Enlightened One. They are both enlightened to conditions. When a Buddha is in the world and speaking the Dharma, people who become enlightened upon hearing the Dharma of the Twelve Links of conditioned Co-Production are called “Those Enlightened to Conditions.” When there is no Buddha in the world there are still people who cultivate the Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-Production. They cultivate on their own, become certified on their own, enlighten on their own, and finish their own business. They are called Solitarily Enlightened Ones. Those Solitarily Enlightened cultivate the Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-Production.

In springtime they see the white flowers blossom.   
In the fall they see the myriad things decay and wither away.

Observing this process whereby things are born and die naturally, they suddenly open great enlightenment. So they are called Solitarily Enlightened Ones. We should also genuinely understand how they become enlightened and realize the fruit.

They have a true knowledge of the Dharmas of Solitarily Enlightened Ones. How is it that one becomes Solitarily Enlightened? We should contemplate how they become enlightened to the Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-Production. We should understand this very truly and clearly.

They have a true knowledge of the Accumulation of Solitarily Enlightened Ones. How is it that the Solitarily Enlightened One can cut off accumulation? How is it that they cut off afflictions that mass together? You should understand this thoroughly too. This is not to say you look into the afflictions that Solitarily Enlightened Ones have once they have certified to that state. Rather, it means you look into how they cut off afflictions and thereby are certified to the fruition of Solitarily Enlightened Ones. It’s true that Solitarily Enlightened Ones still have afflictions, but those afflictions are very fine and minute, not at all like the afflictions that ordinary people have. Some people are, for instance, always getting angry. People who get angry have affliction. We should investigate why it is that people have anger and affliction. It’s because people with this kind of affliction are very selfish. If they weren’t selfish, they wouldn’t have afflictions. If you weren’t selfish then even if people scolded you, you wouldn’t get afflicted. The reason we get upset is because we are selfish.

Why do we give rise to afflictions? It’s because we try to use our afflictions like a shield to protect our own egos. We put up this shield of anger or some other affliction with the hope that we won’t get harmed or have to take a loss. In fact, this is completely the wrong way to go about it. If you aren’t selfish, then what is the ego? Who is the “I” you are trying to protect?

Without self and others,   
Contemplate at ease.   
Where there’s no emptiness or form,   
View the Thus Come One.

If you want to cut off afflictions, you first have to cast aside your selfishness. Those who are Solitarily Enlightened have done so. They have an understanding of the Truth of Accumulation. They have cut off afflictions. Once one renounces selfishness one can come to truly know what it means to be open minded and unselfish, to be straight and upright and not at all prejudiced. This is the understanding of the Accumulation of Solitarily Enlightened Ones.

And they have a true knowledge of the Nirvana of Solitarily Enlightened Ones. The Nirvana which Solitarily Enlightened Ones certify to is Nirvana with Residue. “With Residue” means that although they have ended birth and death, there are still some habits, afflictions, and ignorance remaining. Sound Hearers and Solitarily Enlightened Ones have ended share section birth and death but not change birth and death. What is share section birth and death? It refers to each individual’s share and section. One’s “share” refers to one’s physical stature. One’s “section” refers to one’s lifespan. But your six feet and my seven or eight feet and our individual lifespans are all empty and false. So the Sound Hearers and Solitarily Enlightened Ones have cut off share section birth and death. However, they still have to undergo change birth and death. One should genuinely possess a true knowledge of the Nirvana of Solitarily Enlightened Ones.

They have a true knowledge of Bodhisattvas. A “Bodhisattva” is “one among sentients that has awakened.” Also, “one who awakens those with sentience.” You should definitely know how to recognize a Bodhisattva. To understand a Bodhisattva, one first should have a true knowledge of the Dharmas of Bodhisattvas. If one doesn’t understand the Dharmas Bodhisattvas cultivate, then one won’t truly understand the Bodhisattva. What are the Dharmas that Bodhisattvas cultivate? They cultivate the Six Paramitas and the Ten Thousand Practices. There are two ways of looking at this. Outside there are Six Paramitas and Ten Thousand Practices, and inside there are Six Paramitas and Ten Thousand Practices.

If you only think about teaching and transforming living beings on the outside but don’t try to save the 84,000 living beings in your own self nature, then you aren’t really crossing over living beings. The Bodhisattva first vows to cross over the limitless living beings in his own self-nature.

I vow to cross over the living beings of my own self-nature.   
I vow to cut off the afflictions of my own self-nature.   
I vow to study the Dharma doors of my own self-nature.   
I vow to accomplish the Buddha Way of my own self-nature.

Crossing over the living beings of one’s own self-nature is putting an end to change birth and death. What is change birth and death? It is the continual arisal and cessation of thoughts. As long as production and extinction have not stopped, one continues to revolve in the six paths of rebirth. But when the living beings of the self-nature are crossed over, then the change birth and death is ended. So you should understand how a Bodhisattva cuts off the Truth of Accumulation.

They have a true knowledge of the Nirvana of Bodhisattvas. They know how a Bodhisattva has realized Nirvana without Residue and certified to the Four Virtues of Nirvana, which are Permanence, Bliss, True Self, and Purity. You should have the wisdom and knowledge to know how it is that the Bodhisattva is certified to Nirvana Without Residue; how it is that they have cut off change birth and death; how it is that they have accomplished all of this. You should understand all of these dharmas.

Sutra:

“What do they know? They know that they are brought about from causes, conditions, and karmic retribution of all activities. Everything is empty, false, and devoid of actuality. There is no self and nothing substantial. There is not the slightest dharma which can be established.

Commentary:

The Treasury of Wisdom is the understanding of everything. So the question is asked, what do they know? What is meant by knowing? This is also a rhetorical question. They know that they are brought about from causes, conditions, and karmic retribution of all activities. They know that all living beings produce delusion, act out karma, and undergo retribution. So their existence is based on the causes and conditions which lead to these activities. One endowed with the Treasury of Wisdom understands all causes and conditions and all karmic retributions. It is said:

Whatever cause is planted,   
Leads to whatever fruit is reaped.   
Whatever karma is done,   
Leads to a corresponding retribution which must be undergone.

Everything whatsoever comes about from this process of producing delusion, creating karma, and undergoing retribution. There are various kinds of activities and each activity arises due to various causes and conditions. All activities come about from the interaction of causes and conditions. However, the arisal of causes and conditions itself is basically empty. It is said:

Dharmas produced from causes and conditions are all empty.   
They are given false names,   
But are also called the meaning of the Middle Way.

Everything is empty, false, and devoid of actuality. Of all the ten thousand things in the world, there’s not a single one that is true. Therefore, one doesn’t need to be attached to them.

Our bodies are also false. We shouldn’t work so hard for the sake of this false shell, this stinking skin bag. Our bodies are false, but our self-nature is true. The self-nature within the body is like a person wearing clothes. The body is like the clothes, whereas the self-nature is like the person. We shouldn’t forget about the person and only pay attention to the clothing.

There is no self and nothing substantial. Our bodies are not actually “us”. All of our possessions are not actually “ours”. Nothing is solid; everything is impermanent. Since it’s impermanent and not substantial, what are you doing being attached to it? What use does your attachment serve?

There is not the slightest dharma which can be established. There is not even the slightest true and actual dharma which really exists. All of them are empty and impermanent, all are produced through causes and conditions. You must see through them and put them down and then you can obtain comfort.

Sutra:

“Wishing to cause living beings to know the actual nature of dharmas, they speak expansively. What do they speak about? They say that all dharmas cannot be destroyed. What dharmas cannot be destroyed? Form cannot be destroyed; feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness cannot be destroyed. Ignorance cannot be destroyed. The dharmas of Sound Hearers cannot be destroyed. The dharmas of Solitarily Enlightened Ones cannot be destroyed. And the dharmas of Bodhisattvas cannot be destroyed.

Commentary:

Wishing to cause living beings to know the actual nature of dharmas—These Bodhisattvas know that everything whatsoever is empty and false, with no true actuality, that all is impermanent and not solid. Although they have this understanding, they still wish to cause all living beings to know the true and actual nature of dharmas. What is the true and actual nature of dharmas? This is the basic substance of dharmas which is tranquil, extinct, and profoundly quiet. Actually there is no real substance. Rather, it is like empty space.

They speak expansively. Because they understand that all is non-existent they have no attachments, and having no attachments they obtain liberation.

What do they speak about? They say that all dharmas cannot be destroyed. How is it that they can’t be destroyed? It’s because they are empty. If they had form or appearance they could be destroyed. When they have no form or appearance, what is there that can be destroyed?

What dharmas cannot be destroyed? Some dharmas can’t be destroyed. Form cannot be destroyed. Form, one of the five skandhas, cannot be destroyed. Why is it that form can’t be destroyed? It’s because it is basically empty to begin with. Feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness cannot be destroyed. These are also basically empty to begin with. Ignorance cannot be destroyed. Ignorance is also empty. Up to and including the dharmas of Sound Hearers cannot be destroyed, that is, Suffering, Accumulation, Extinction, and the Way cannot be destroyed. The dharmas of Solitarily Enlightened Ones cannot be destroyed. That is, the Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-Production cannot be destroyed. And the dharmas of Bodhisattvas cannot be destroyed. That is, the Six Paramitas and the Ten Thousand Practices cannot be destroyed.

If you are not attached to any of these dharmas, then all are indestructible.

Sutra:

“Why is this? It is because all dharmas are not created. They have no creator. They cannot be expressed. They have no location. They are not produced. They do not arise. They do not give. They do not take. They do not move or turn. And they have no function. Bodhisattvas accomplish such a treasury of limitless wisdom.

Commentary:

Previously we discussed how the Five Skandhas of form, feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness are dharmas that cannot be destroyed. The dharmas of Sound Hearers, of Those Enlightened to Conditions, and of Bodhisattvas are also indestructible.

Why is this? What are the causes and conditions behind all these dharmas not being able to be destroyed? It is because all dharmas are not created. They have no creator. Since there is no one that creates the dharmas, and nothing that is created, what can be destroyed?

They cannot be expressed. Since there is no one who creates them and nothing that is created, then there is nothing that can be verbally expressed.

The path of words is cut off.   
The place of the mind’s activity is extinguished.

They have no location. Dharmas do not have a fixed location. They are not produced. They do not arise. It shouldn’t be said that there isn’t any place where a particular dharma is produced or destroyed, or any place where a particular dharma arises or become extinct.

They do not give. They do not take. The basic substance of dharmas is that it isn’t able to give people anything, and it also does not seek anything from anyone.

They do not move or turn. They do not evolve or change. They are still and extinct.

All dharmas from their origin   
Are characterized by eternal, still, quiescence.   
They cannot be expressed in words.

And they have no function. The basic substance of all dharmas can’t be said to have a function.

Bodhisattvas accomplish such a treasury of limitless wisdom as this. The Bodhisattvas who cultivate these Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries understand these various principles of emptiness and know that,

All conditioned dharmas   
Are like dreams, illusions, bubbles, shadows;   
Like dewdrops and a lightening flash;   
Contemplate them thus.

They aren’t attached to anything, and because they aren’t attached, they bring forth limitless Treasuries of wisdom.

Question: If someone leaves a flesh body by either sitting in full lotus or by being buried in the ground and not decaying, what level of accomplishment has this person reached?

Answer: There are various differences to this. Why is it that some people can leave a vajra indestructible body when they die? It is because they have no sexual desire. They have cut it off. If one is able to cut off desire, meaning not only in one’s actions but also being devoid of thoughts of desire in one’s mind, then one’s body won’t decay. This is because the precepts, samadhi, and wisdom that one cultivates are pure and one has no greed, hatred, or stupidity. A person like this however, does not just die haphazardly. He is clear about his birth and understands his death. If he wants to live, he can live for several hundreds or thousands or ten thousands of years. If he wants to go off to rebirth, he can go whenever he pleases. This is being “independent of birth and death”. This is true independence. One who is that way can be certified as having reached the Fourth Fruit of Arhatship. The essential point is that from birth one has cut off desire and has no defilement of emotional love. Whichever of you is able to cut off emotional love can achieve this kind of state. The reason someone’s body doesn’t decay after death is because that person has cut off desire.

The Sino American Buddhist Association and Gold Mountain Monastery are establishing an elementary school which will be conducted at the International Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts. (1976) We should all do whatever we can do to help the elementary school get started. It shouldn’t be that you don’t want to help and they don’t want to do anything. We should aid the elementary school so it gets a good grounding and then we can go on to establish a high school and university. We shouldn’t be selfish. Instead we should help society and all people. Now, in establishing an elementary school, we can benefit young children by helping them learn how to be good people and good citizens. We can establish merit and virtue in this way. But if you don’t want to do this, and other people don’t want to do this, then who will do it? We should each fulfill our own responsibilities. In teaching children one must have patience. Don’t back out at the first sign of difficulty. By now, there are quite a few among us who can teach the children. Previously in Chinatown, on Sacramento Street, I conducted a summer session which was attended by several students and I was the only person teaching them. We started at eight o’clock in the morning and went until four o’clock in the afternoon. I taught one course after another all day long and no one was helping me. So, with as many people as we have now, we should certainly be able to do a good job running the elementary school.

When we do things we should do them truly and actually. We shouldn’t just act in a perfunctory manner. We should be determined to teach the children well. Every single person should consider this as his or her own personal responsibility, and then it’s bound to be a successful venture.

Although it’s the case that we left-home people don’t have any children of our own, nonetheless, in teaching the children of others, we should see them as if they were our own elder sisters, younger sisters, elder brothers, younger brothers, or sons or daughters. We shouldn’t be selfish and procrastinate. However, if everyone else feels that this is an impossible undertaking, then I will happily take on the entire job myself. You just stand in for me and lecture the Sutras and I’ll stand in for you teaching the children. But if you are unable to stand in for me and lecture the Sutras, and yet you still want me to stand in for you in teaching the children, that’s too unfair. People should do things which are of benefit to their country, society, and all of humanity. Don’t just think of yourself. You are not the only one in the world. Having been born into this world we should realize: if there is something that can benefit others, we should exhaust our efforts to make that thing succeed. We shouldn’t always check it out to see how it will benefit us. We as individual people are very insignificant. We should expand the measure of our minds and work for the sake of all humankind.

Sutra:

“From a few expedient means they understand all dharmas. They naturally comprehend without others enlightening them.

“There are ten reasons why this treasury of inexhaustible wisdom is known as inexhaustible.

Commentary:

From a few expedient means they understand all dharmas. The Bodhisattvas already possess great wisdom, therefore they are very skilled with the use of many expedient devices. But with regard to all these dharmas, they need not use a lot of expedient methods, they just need to use a few. They contemplate and can understand all dharmas. They might use an analogy, or one set of causes and conditions to contemplate all dharmas. They illumine and understand all dharmas as the actual appearance of True Suchness. Once they intuitively reflect on them, they are reflected as if by a mirror and they very naturally understand them. The images appear just like images in a mirror.

They naturally comprehend without others enlightening them. At this time, they don’t need an expedient method; in fact, their minds are opened very spontaneously. They don’t need to rely on expedient devices. They just very naturally open their own minds and become enlightened.

There are ten reasons why this treasury of inexhaustible wisdom is known as inexhaustible. This is the Inexhaustible Treasury of Wisdom. This wisdom treasury is inexhaustible and can’t be spoken to the end. In general, there are ten ways in which it is inexhaustible. The dharmas can be divided into ten varieties. These are reasons why it is called an Inexhaustible Treasury and why one can never reach the end of it.

Sutra:

“What are the ten? They are: It is inexhaustible because they are learned and skillful. It is inexhaustible because they draw near good and wise advisors. It is inexhaustible because they are well able to discern the meanings of phrases. It is inexhaustible because they have entered the depths of the Dharma Realm. It is inexhaustible because they use the wisdom of a single flavor to adorn themselves. It is inexhaustible because they accumulate blessings and virtue without becoming weary at heart. It is inexhaustible because they enter all Dharani doors. It is inexhaustible because they can well discriminate all living beings’ languages, words, voices, and sounds.

Commentary:

This Treasury of Inexhaustible Wisdom is measureless and boundless. In general we can extract ten kinds of inexhaustible dharmas which can represent its multilayered and inexhaustible principles.

“What are the ten? What are the ten ways in which wisdom is represented as inexhaustible? They are: It is inexhaustible because they are learned and skillful. “Learned” means the Bodhisattvas have heard a lot of Buddhadharma. Among all the Buddha’s disciples, the Venerable Ananda was Foremost in Learning. He remembered all of the Dharma the Buddha spoke. He never forgot any of it. He is said to have “broad learning and a very strong memory.” He had heard a lot of Dharma the Buddha spoke. The Venerable Ananda was the Buddha’s attendant. Whatever Dharma the Buddha had spoken before Ananda joined the Assembly, was explained to him by others who had directly heard the teachings. As soon as the sounds passed by his ears, he never, ever forgot them. That’s why the Venerable Ananda was Foremost in Learning. Those who are well read and very learned are able to have skillful and clever ingenuity. Because their learning is inexhaustible, their skillfulness is also inexhaustible.

It is inexhaustible because they draw near good and wise advisors. “Good and wise advisors” give good Dharma to living beings. That’s why they are said to be “good and wise”. These Bodhisattvas draw near to good and wise advisors and stay far away from bad advisors. Good and wise advisors are replete with proper and orthodox knowledge and views. But evil advisors are long on perverted views and deviant knowledge. Those who cultivate should draw near good and wise advisors and stay far away from evil ones. To draw near good and wise advisors doesn’t mean to be close to them for a year or two years and then leave. It means that you forever draw close to them. At the same time you separate far from the proximity of all evil advisors and those of deviant views.

It is inexhaustible because they are well able to discern the meanings of phrases. Bodhisattvas are good at delineating the meanings of the Sutra texts. Every word, phrase, sentence, and passage is clear to them. Their skill at discerning the doctrines is inexhaustible. This never reaches an end either.

It is inexhaustible because they have entered the depths of the Dharma Realm. To “enter the depths” means to “deeply enter” the Dharma Realm. What deeply enters? Their nature deeply enters into the Dharma Realm and unites with it to become one.

It is inexhaustible because they use the wisdom of a single flavor to adorn themselves. What is wisdom of a single flavor? This is the actual appearance of true suchness. It is this real mark of true suchness which they take as adornments. It adorns the Dharma Body, the Bodhimanda, their self-nature, and the Buddhalands. All are adorned with this wisdom of a single flavor. This state is also inconceivable.

It is inexhaustible because they accumulate blessings and virtue without becoming weary at heart. The Bodhisattvas accumulate blessings and virtue. Amassing virtue is done by cultivating all kinds of virtue. This means not considering any good deed too small to do. You don’t want to ignore the small deeds. An accumulation of small deeds is just what goes into making a lot of good deeds. The many come from the few and the big comes from the small. To go high you start low. Blessings and virtue accumulate gradually, a little at a time, bit by bit. Helping other people is accumulating blessings and virtue. Being willing to educate other people’s children so they can come to understand principles and learn how to be good people is also to amass blessings and virtue. When you are creating blessings and merit your mind should not know weariness or fatigue. What does it mean to have a fatigued mind? It means you have an unhappy or angry attitude when you do things. If one’s mind has no fatigue, then one will always be happy. When you do good deeds, don’t act like an Asura. In accumulating blessings and merit don’t use the fire of ignorance, don’t have any anger about you and don’t have any hostility or afflictions. If you don’t have any afflictions yourself, you won’t cause anyone else to have afflictions. If you don’t have any anger within you, then no one around you will be angry. That way you won’t obstruct others.

At all times and in all places you want to use the light of true wisdom to illuminate your body and mind. That is said to be the accumulation of blessings and virtue. It’s said:

Living beings are endless, I vow to save them all.   
Afflictions are numberless, I vow to cut them off.   
Dharma Doors are measureless, I vow to study them.   
The Buddha Way is unsurpassed, I vow to attain it.

Do not forget these Four Great Vows of a Bodhisattva. Our business is to save living beings, not to be saved by them. We should be cutting off afflictions. We don’t want afflictions to cut us off instead. We are studying the Buddhadharma, not having the Buddhadharma study us. We want to attain the Buddha’s Way, and not have the Buddha’s Way come to accomplish us.

So in the text it says, “They accumulate blessings and virtue without becoming weary at heart.” There are no afflictions. This is because this wisdom is inexhaustible.

It is inexhaustible because they enter all Dharani doors. They deeply enter into all Dharani gates or methods. Dharani is a Sanskrit word which means to “unite and uphold”. It unites all dharmas and upholds all meanings. To unite all dharmas, means to gather in the body, mouth, and mind so that no evil karma is committed; the three karmas are purified. This is the method of Dharani Doors. If you create karma with body, mouth, and mind, and these three karmic modes are not pure, then you are not upholding the method of Dharani. To “unite all dharmas” means you are careful in your words and cautious in your actions. You talk less. “To uphold all meanings,” means you do all sorts of meritorious and virtuous deeds to adorn yourself. That’s another reason this treasury is said to be inexhaustible.

It is inexhaustible because they can well discriminate all living beings’ languages, words, voices, and sounds. The Bodhisattvas don’t have to go to a single language class and yet can understand the tongues of all living beings. They need not go to a phonetics class but understand all the sounds that living beings make. Even if one hundred, one thousand, or even ten thousand languages were spoken all at the same time, they could discriminate them equally well. Millions of languages spoken all at once can all be discriminated and understood by the Bodhisattvas because of their skillful ingenuity. Their understanding of all the languages is also inexhaustible and unimpeded.

Sutra:

“It is inexhaustible because they can sever all of living beings’ doubts and delusions. It is inexhaustible because they manifest all Buddhas’ spiritual powers for the sake of all living beings, in order to teach and transform, tame and subdue them, and cause them to cultivate without interruption. These are the ten.

“This is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Seventh Treasury, that of Wisdom. Those who abide in this treasury obtain inexhaustible wisdom and are universally able to enlighten all living beings.

Commentary:

“It is inexhaustible because they can sever all of living beings’ doubts and delusions. Living beings do not obtain a response with the Way because they have a lot of doubts. Their minds vacillate between faith and doubt. You can say they believe and yet they have a bit of doubt. You can say they disbelieve and yet they have a bit of faith. They fluctuate between faith and doubt. For this reason they don’t succeed in their cultivation. The Bodhisattvas who have a Treasury of Wisdom are able to discriminate between right and wrong. They are able to cut off all living beings’ doubts and delusions. No matter what doubt it is, they can resolve it. That is why this kind of expedient Dharma door of wisdom is inexhaustible.

It is inexhaustible because they manifest all Buddhas’ spiritual powers for the sake of all living beings, in order to teach and transform, tame and subdue them, and cause them to cultivate without interruption. For all living beings in the nine Dharma Realms, the Bodhisattva is able to manifest all of the Buddhas’ spiritual powers. The nine Dharma Realms are the Dharma Realms of;

* Bodhisattvas
* Pratyekabuddhas
* Sound Hearers
* Gods
* Humans
* Asuras
* Animals
* Hungry Ghosts
* Hell Beings

Although these Bodhisattvas haven’t become Buddhas, they are still able to display all of the powers of the Buddhas’ spiritual penetrations. They can teach and transform, tame and regulate all living beings and cause them to constantly cultivate. Their intent to cultivate never stops and they do not take any rest. This kind of wisdom is also inexhaustible.

These are the ten. These are the ten aspects of the Wisdom Treasury.

This is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Seventh Treasury, that of Wisdom. We have been discussing the Great Bodhisattvas’ Seventh Treasury, that of Wisdom.

Those who abide in this treasury obtain inexhaustible wisdom and are universally able to enlighten all living beings. ‘Abiding’ refers to cultivating. It means when the Bodhisattvas cultivate this Wisdom Treasury, they are able to obtain inexhaustible wisdom—unfathomable Prajna. In all places they can cause all living beings to obtain enlightenment—to reach the fruition of Buddhahood.

**VIII** **The Treasury of Mindfulness**

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Mindfulness? These Bodhisattvas cast aside and separate from all stupidity and delusion, and become replete with mindfulness. They remember the past one life, two lives, up to ten lives, a hundred lives, a thousand lives, a hundred thousand lives, limitless hundreds of thousands of lives; the coming into being of kalpas, the decay of kalpas, the arising and decay of kalpas—not just the arising of one kalpa, not just the decay of one kalpa, not just the arising and decay of one kalpa—but a hundred kalpas, a thousand kalpas, a hundred thousand million nayutas, up to countless, limitless, boundless, unequalled, incalculable, inexpressible, inconceivable, immeasurable, ineffable, ineffably ineffable kalpas.

Commentary:

After speaking about the Seventh Treasury of Wisdom, the Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue again calls out, “ Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Mindfulness? All of you, do you know what the Great Bodhisattva’s Treasury of Mindfulness is? Now I’ll tell you.”

The following ten meanings are being discussed in the Treasury of Mindfulness.

* Lives
* Kalpas
* Buddhas’ Names
* Bestowing Predictions
* Speaking the Teaching
* The Assembly
* Explaining the Meaning
* The Root Nature
* That which is cured
* That which is able to cure.

These Bodhisattvas cast aside and separate from all stupidity and delusion, and become replete with mindfulness. They are able to forsake all stupidity and doubt. “Delusion” refers to doubt. They can forsake it and leave it behind. They abandon stupidity and have no doubts and their memory is perfect. They don’t forget anything. They remember the past one life—they remember their last life, from their birth all the way through to their death. They remember everything they did in that one life, from childhood through adulthood on into old age, and finally death. They know whether the merit of good works they did was more or less than the offenses they created. The Bodhisattvas can recollect all of this. Remembering the events of one past life doesn’t count as much, but they also remember everything done in two lives.

They also remember what they did and what their names were in the past three lives, up to ten lives. This means that they remember four, five, six, seven, eight, and nine lives, as well as the tenth. They were born and then died. After death they were reborn. They remember the births and deaths and all that happened in between for ten lives past. Not only do they remember for ten lives, but they also remember up to a hundred lives. They remember giving rise to delusion, creating karma, and undergoing retribution. They remember whether or not they cultivated and whether they brought forth the Bodhi heart. With one glance they can understand it all very clearly. Not only do they remember a hundred lives but they are also able to remember all of the activities done in a thousand lives.

All of the causes planted and fruits that were harvested within these thousand lives are clear to them. They are able to remember all of the karma they created in their activities and all of the retributions they had to undergo. They also remember all of the cycle of karmic retribution that occurred in up to a hundred thousand lives. The same is true for up to limitless hundreds of thousands of lives. Not only that, but they can remember the coming into being of kalpas. They remember all of the fruits of karma and the retributions undergone during that long an interval of time.

Does everyone know what the coming into being of a kalpa is? One complete increase and one complete decrease make up one kalpa. A thousand kalpas, each consisting of an increase and a decrease, make up one small kalpa. Twenty small kalpas are a middle-sized kalpa. Four middle-sized kalpas are one great kalpa. The four middle-sized kalpas represent the four stages of a great kalpa. There is coming into being for twenty small kalpas, dwelling for twenty small kalpas, decline for twenty small kalpas, and emptiness for twenty small kalpas.

What comprises one increase and one decrease which makes up one kalpa? Every hundred years, people’s lifespan decreases one year and their height decreases by one inch. From the age of 84,000 years, the lifespan gradually decreases down to ten years and then it gradually increases, so that every one hundred years people’s lifespan increases by one year and their height increases by one inch, from the age of ten back up to 84,000 years again. This is what is meant by one increase and one decrease, which constitutes one kalpa.

Moreover, they remember the decay of kalpas, the arising and decay of kalpas—not just the arising of one kalpa, not just the decay of one kalpa, not just the arising and decay of one kalpa—but a hundred kalpas, a thousand kalpas, a hundred thousand million nayutas, up to countless, limitless, boundless, unequalled numbers of kalpas, all undergoing coming into being, dwelling, decaying, and going empty. For this long a time they remember. The Bodhisattvas are able to remember all of this very clearly and they don’t forget it. This is the Treasury of Mindfulness whereby Bodhisattvas can remember all of the events of the past with extreme clarity.

Not only do the Bodhisattvas remember countless, limitless, boundless, and unequalled numbers of kalpas, but they remember incal-culable, inexpressible, inconceivable, immeasurable, ineffable, ineffably ineffable kalpas. “Kalpas” here refers to great kalpas. The Bodhisattvas can remember everything throughout all that long period of time. Some people wonder if there really was a previous life and if there were past lives reaching back ten lives, a hundred lives, a thousand lives, a hundred thousand lives, limitless hundreds of thousands of lives and many great kalpas? If you think that it is improbable we’ll explain it by way of analogy. We’ll reduce it so that one life is comparable to one day. Now then we’re talking about one day, two days, three days, one hundred days, one thousand days, ten thousand days, up to an ineffably ineffable number of days. You couldn’t disagree at length that one wasn’t able to remember yesterday, the day before yesterday, and several days prior to that. So we start from one life and go up to ineffably numerous great kalpas. Bodhisattvas can remember all of the things included within this very long period of time.

Sutra:

“They remember one Buddha’s name, up to the names of ineffably ineffable Buddhas. They remember one Buddha’s coming into the world and giving a prediction, up to ineffably ineffable Buddhas’ coming into the world and giving of predictions.

Commentary:

“They remember one Buddha’s name, up to the names of ineffably ineffable Buddhas. They can remember all of them.

They remember one Buddha’s coming into the world and giving a prediction to a Bodhisattva, up to ineffably ineffable Buddhas’ coming into the world and giving of predictions to all Bodhisattvas. They can remember all of this.

Sutra:

“They remember one Buddha coming into the world and speaking Sutras, up to ineffably ineffable Buddhas coming into the world and speaking Sutras. As it is with Sutras, so is it with Geyas, Bestowal of Predictions, Gathas, The Nidanas, Udanas, Past Lives, This Life, Vaipulya, That Which Has Never Been Before, Analogies, and Discourses.

Commentary:

This section of text discusses the twelve divisions of the Canon. The Mahayana Canon has twelve divisions, whereas the Hinayana Canon has nine divisions. If you want to go into more detail, you can look them up in a Buddhist Dictionary.

The word Sutra is Sanskrit. Some say the meaning of Sutra translated is “to tally”. Above it tallies or brings together all principles of all Buddhas, and below it tallies with the opportunities of all living beings. It’s also translated as “prose”. Prose here includes from the Beginning “Thus I have heard,” to the end where the assembly “Believes, accepts, and respectfully practices the teaching.” This is called prose, exclusive of the verse sections. It is also called “The General Appearance”. This has four meanings.

* The basis of the Dharma
* Sutra
* Straight Speech
* The Sagely Teaching

The Dharma that the Buddha spoke is the teaching of the Sages. Great Master Yuan Kung divided “The basis of the Dharma” into five meanings.

* The teachings are the basis of the principles.
* The Sutras are the basis of the Shastras.
* The General is the basis of the Specifics.
* The first is the basis for the later.
* The expansive is the basis for the summary.

As it is with Sutras, so is it with Geyas. The second of the twelve divisions is geya. Geya is Sanskrit and means repetitive verse or verses which reiterate the meaning of the prose section preceding it. Geyas are condensation in verse form of the principles that have just been spoken above in prose.

The third is Bestowal of Predictions, (vyakaranam). An elder Buddha bestows predictions upon a Buddha-to-be. Or the Buddha may bestow a prediction upon a Bodhisattva and confer upon him a special name.

The next is Gathas . A gatha is a chanted verse. It doesn’t reiterate the meaning of the previous sections of text like the geya, and it doesn’t have any connection with sections of Sutra text which follow. It is an interjection.

The Fifth is The Nidanas ; translated it means “causes and conditions”. It could be that the Buddha’s causes and conditions are spoken about, or that the Buddha’s disciples’ causes and conditions are spoken about.

Udanas , is Sanskrit meaning “spoken without request.” For instance, no one requested or asked about the Amitabha Sutra before the Buddha spoke it. All of the Sutras the Buddha spoke were requested by his disciples. The disciples would request the Sutra and then the Buddha would speak it. But the Buddha spoke the Amitabha Sutra without there first being a request from a disciple. At that particular time, none of the disciples understood how to request the Dharma of reciting Amitabha Buddha’s name and so no one asked. But even though no one asked, the Buddha was still going to speak it. So he spoke it without request. That’s Udana.

Past Lives (Itivrttakah) speak about the Buddha’s past lives or perhaps the disciples’ past lives.

This Life (Jatakam) speaks about deeds done in the present life. Vaipulya is translated as the Broad and Expansive Teaching. This division speaks about the Dharma in very vast and expansive terms.

That Which Has Never Been Before (Adbhuta-dharma) means that all the Buddhas of the past had never spoken this Dharma before. It is a very fresh and new Dharma. Or maybe all the Buddhas of the past spoke a particular Dharma, but now in this age no one speaks or understands it. Or maybe it’s very rarely spoken and miraculous. This too, can be called “that which has never been before.”

When the Sutras were translated in the past, everyone working on the translation knew Chinese as well as Sanskrit. They were all very well versed in the literature of both these languages. And now there are some people around and it doesn’t matter whether they are such and such a professor or scholar—but when they say, “this is not right,” they are just deliberately looking for a fault and specializing in faultfinding. When they specialize in saying “this is wrong”, they try to set themselves apart by having a special style, to cause everyone else to pay attention to them, so that people will say, “Oh, such and such a professor says that something has been translated wrong all along and this represents that he has a lot of learning.” Except that his learning and scholarship, in comparison to the Patriarchs and high monks of the past, is not quite the same.

National Master Ching Liang was quite accomplished in Sanskrit. In the Su Chao, he lists the Twelve Divisions of the Canon in Chinese and also gives the Sanskrit for them. The Sanskrit of “that which has never been before” is Adbhuta-dharma. The meaning of Adbhuta is “rarely existing”. This meaning is all right and so is the meaning of “never been before”. The last part of the Sanskrit word is Dharma, but it is not used in the Chinese translation because if it were, then grammatically it could read, “there has never been any Dharma.” It gets by all right in Chinese to say “never been before” and we could leave it at that.

Analogies (Avadanam) , and Discourses (Upadeshah) are the last two categories of the Twelve Divisions of the Canon.

Sutra:

“They remember one assembly, up to ineffably ineffable assemblies. They remember the explanation of one Dharma, up to the explanation of ineffably ineffable Dharmas.

“They remember the various aspects of one faculty, up to the various aspects of ineffably ineffable faculties. They remember the limitless various aspects of one faculty, up to the limitless various aspects of ineffably ineffable faculties. They remember the various aspects of one affliction, up to the various aspects of ineffably ineffable afflictions. They remember the various aspects of one samadhi, up to the various aspects of ineffably ineffable samadhis.

Commentary:

The Treasury of Mindfulness is about much learning and a strong memory. They remember one assembly, up to ineffably ineffable assemblies. They remember the explanation of one Dharma, up to the explanation of ineffably ineffable Dharmas.

They remember the various aspects of one faculty, up to the various aspects of ineffably ineffable faculties. They remember the limitless various aspects of one faculty, up to the limitless various aspects of ineffably ineffable faculties. Before, it said that the Bodhisattvas remembered the Buddha’s speaking Dharma for living beings in one assembly, and now it’s discussing root natures, or faculties. One kind of living being possesses many types of faculties which are not the same. The Bodhisattvas can remember up to limitless various aspects of ineffably ineffable faculties of limitless, boundless species of living beings. The Bodhisattvas can discriminate between them and remember them very clearly.

They remember the various aspects of one affliction, up to the various aspects of ineffably ineffable afflictions. “Afflictions” refer to “That Which is Cured” (#9 of the list mentioned earlier). They remember all the various things that cause afflictions, and the nature of these various afflictions.

They remember the various aspects of one samadhi, up to the various aspects of ineffably ineffable samadhis. Samadhi refers to “That Which is Able to Cure” the sickness of afflictions (#10 of previous list). By using the water of the wisdom of samadhi, one can cure the limitless afflictions in number like motes of dust or grains of sand. The Bodhisattvas remember one kind of samadhi, and, within each kind of samadhi, all the unspeakably many ramifications.

Sutra:

“These kinds of mindfulness are of ten kinds. They are: Mindfulness which is still and quiet. Mindfulness which is pure. Mindfulness which is not turbid. Mindfulness which is bright and penetrating. Mindfulness which is apart from defilement. Mindfulness which is apart from various defilements. Mindfulness which is apart from filth. Mindfulness which is bright and dazzling. Mindfulness which is pleasing, and mindfulness which is free from obstacles.

“When the Bodhisattvas dwell in these mindfulnesses, nothing in the world can disturb or unsettle them. No strange theories can move them. Their good roots from past lives are made pure and they are not defiled by or attached to any dharma in the world. The multitudes of demons and those of external ways cannot destroy them. They can undergo rebirth and receive different bodies without any lapse in memory. They proclaim the Dharma endlessly throughout the past, present, and future.

Commentary:

These kinds of mindfulness are of ten kinds. “Mindfulness” also refers to memory. They are: Mindfulness which is still and quiet. As it is said;

One is still and unmoving,   
Yet responds to all requests.

This is mindfulness that is still and quiet. Mindfulness which is pure—there is not one bit of defilement in the mindfulness which is pure . Mindfulness which is not turbid. “Not turbid” means not stirred up or murky. The Mindfulness which is bright and penetrating is bright with light and transparent like glass. Mindfulness which is apart from defilement is a state wherein one is far apart from all dusty defilement and false thinking. The Mindfulness which is apart from various defilements, and the mindfulness which is apart from filth are separate from all defiled, impure dharmas. Mindfulness which is bright and dazzling is able to emit light and radiate brightly. It uses the light of wisdom to sparkle and shine on everything. Mindfulness which is pleasing is the mindfulness of that which is likeable. And the mindfulness which is free from obstacles means at state wherein one is not hindered by anything.

When the Bodhisattvas dwell in these mindfulnesses, these ten kinds of dharmas, nothing in the world can disturb or unsettle them. No worldly dharma can move or perplex their minds. No strange theories can move them. None of the theories of the heavenly demons and externalist paths are able to move the Bodhisattvas’ hearts.

Their good roots from past lives are made pure and they are not defiled by or attached to any dharma in the world. The multitudes of demons and those of external ways cannot destroy them. They are unable to destroy the Bodhisattva. They can undergo rebirth and receive different bodies without any lapse in memory. When this life is over and the Bodhisattva goes off to rebirth, in the next life he doesn’t forget anything. He still remembers the things that happened in his past lives.

They proclaim the Dharma endlessly throughout the past, present, and future. Throughout the ten directions and the three periods of time they proclaim the wonderful Dharma with no exhaustion. This is the benefit obtained by the Bodhisattvas who practice this Treasury of Mindfulness.

Sutra:

“They abide together with living beings in all worlds without every making mistakes. They enter the assemblies in the Bodhimandas of all Buddhas, without any obstacles. They can draw near all the places where there are Buddhas. This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Eighth Treasury, that of Mindfulness.

Commentary:

They abide together with living beings in all worlds without every making mistakes. This is referring to the Bodhisattvas who cultivate the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries. They enter, leave, and re-enter worlds without any obstructions—not just in a single world, but in all worlds of the ten directions. Although they are Bodhisattvas, they appear to be exactly like living beings and dwell together with them. They “unite the light and mingle with the common lot.” Lao Tzu had a similar expression;

Unite the light,   
Join with the dust.

But although they manifest bodies and appear to be the same as living beings, they make no mistakes. Their self-nature is pure; they are separate from all attachments and all greed, hatred, and stupidity. Because of this they never make any mistakes. They abide among living beings but they never commit offenses. They remain pure. This is to be just like the lotus flower which is born out of the mud, but remains undefiled.

They can enter the assemblies in the Bodhimandas of all Buddhas, without any obstacles. They attend all the Dharma Assemblies at the Buddhas’ Bodhimandas and become part of the influential assembly. They help all Buddhas propagate the Dharma and encounter no obstacles. They can go to whichever Buddhas’ Bodhimandas they wish to go to. It would be impossible for an obstruction to arise. And when they are in those Bodhimandas no one obstructs them, because they don’t obstruct others.

They can draw near all the places where there are Buddhas. These Bodhisattvas draw near to and make offerings to all Buddhas in Bodhimandas throughout the ten directions and the three periods of time.

This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Eighth Treasury, that of Mindfulness. This is the Eighth Treasury that all Bodhisattvas should cultivate, that of Mindfulness. By means of this Treasury, they are able to remember all experiences of the past. Top of Form

IX The Treasury of Upholding

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Upholding? These Bodhisattvas uphold all the phrases, sentences, meanings, and principles in the Sutras which the Buddhas have spoken, without forgetting or losing any of them. They uphold them for one life and so forth, up to upholding them for ineffably ineffable numbers of lives. They uphold one Buddha’s name and so forth, up to upholding the names of ineffably ineffable Buddhas. They uphold them for one kalpa and so forth, up to upholding them for ineffably ineffable kalpas. They uphold one Buddha’s bestowal of predictions and so forth, up to upholding the bestowal of predictions of ineffably ineffable Buddhas.

Commentary:

The Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue had just finished explaining the Eighth Treasury of Mindfulness. Now, he talks about the ninth, the Treasury of Upholding. Before he begins to explain this Treasury, he first calls out to all the disciples of the Buddha, with the intent of requesting them to be particularly attentive to this explanation of the Dharma Treasury of Upholding.

He calls out, Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Upholding? What is meant by the Treasury of Upholding or Maintaining which is cultivated by all of the Great Bodhisattvas? He then answers, “These Bodhisattvas uphold all the phrases, sentences, meanings, and principles in the Sutras which the Buddhas have spoken, without forgetting or losing any of them. ” They are able to receive and uphold all the Sutras spoken by all Buddhas of the ten directions and the three periods of time. “Sutra” here refers to the entire Three Treasuries of Sutras, Vinaya, and Shastras, and the Twelve Divisions of the Canon. They can receive and uphold all the words of the Sutras from beginning to end. They are able to read, recite, and write them out. They can understand all the phrases, meanings and principles found in the Sutras. Not only do they understand them, but they will never forget them or lose them. As soon as it enters their ear they will never forget. What the eyes see and the ears hear is never forgotten.

They uphold them for one life and so forth, up to upholding them for ineffably ineffable numbers of lives. In a single life they are able to receive and uphold these Treasuries of Dharma. Not only that but they continue to do so throughout ineffably ineffable numbers of lives without forgetting or losing any of them.

They uphold one Buddha’s name and so forth, up to upholding the names of ineffably ineffable Buddhas. They uphold the names of a single Buddha without forgetting or losing it, reaching to receiving and upholding limitless numbers of Buddhas’ names.

They uphold them for one kalpa and so forth, up to upholding them for ineffably ineffable kalpas. They uphold one Buddha’s bestowal of predictions and so forth, up to upholding the bestowal of predictions of ineffably ineffable Buddhas. They can uphold a certain Buddha’s giving a certain Bodhisattva a prediction and a special name, reaching to the point that they can uphold ineffably ineffable numbers of Buddhas’ predictions and bestowals of names on Bodhisattvas, without ever forgetting or losing any of them.

Sutra:

“They uphold one Sutra and so forth, up to upholding ineffably ineffable Sutras. They uphold one Dharma Assembly and so forth, up to upholding ineffably ineffable Dharma Assemblies. They uphold the proclaiming of one Dharma and so forth, up to upholding the proclaiming of ineffably ineffable Dharmas. They uphold the limitless aspects in the nature of one faculty and so forth, up to upholding the limitless aspects in the nature of ineffably ineffable faculties. They uphold the variations in the nature of one affliction and so forth, up to upholding the variations in the nature of ineffably ineffable afflictions. They uphold the various qualities in the nature of one samadhi and so forth, up to upholding the various qualities in the nature of ineffably ineffable samadhis.

Commentary:

They uphold one Sutra and so forth, up to upholding ineffably ineffable Sutras. The meaning of Sutra has been explained many times but maybe there are those who have forgotten them. Sutra has four meanings:

* Stringing together
* Drawing in
* Constancy
* Dharma

“Stringing together” means that the principles which are spoken are strung together just as you would string beads on a string.

“Drawing in” refers to the Sutras’ potential for gathering in and supporting living beings for whom the teaching is opportune. One gathers in and supports all living beings, teaching and transforming them by using the Dharma of the Sutras.

“Constancy” means that from ancient times until the present, there has been no change.

“Dharma” is that which is equally venerated by those of the past, present, and future. Those are the four meanings of Sutra.

Sutra also has the meaning of an “ink cord”, which carpenters make by covering a string with ink, drawing it taut, and snapping it against a board. The ink line that appears is a straight guideline for their saws to follow. This meaning is also referred to as “square, compass, and precise guideline”. The Sutras are likened to these precision instruments in that the methods taught in them act as guidelines for living beings in their practice.

Sutra is also defined as a “bubbling spring”, because principles continually emerge from it just like an endless welling up of water from a spring.

Sutra also has the meaning of “coming forth”, because it continually gives rise to more and more meanings. There are many many meanings to the word Sutra, so the original Sanskrit word is retained.

The Bodhisattvas can receive and maintain a single Sutra without forgetting it, but that does not count as perfecting their ability to receive and maintain. On top of that, they are also able to receive and maintain ineffably ineffable numbers of Sutras without ever forgetting them.

They uphold one Dharma Assembly and so forth, up to upholding ineffably ineffable Dharma Assemblies. They are able to uphold a single assembly which resides in one particular Bodhimanda. They can remember everything that transpires. They are also able to remember ineffably ineffable numbers of assemblies in Bodhimandas. They can remember everything that transpires in all of them.

They uphold the proclaiming of one Dharma and so forth, up to upholding the proclaiming of ineffably ineffable Dharmas. They receive and uphold one method of teaching, reaching to ineffably ineffable numbers of methods of teaching.

They uphold the limitless aspects in the nature of one faculty and so forth, up to upholding the limitless aspects in the nature of ineffably ineffable faculties. They can uphold limitless aspects of a single faculty of one living being, up to upholding and correcting ineffably ineffable aspects in the nature of ineffably ineffable numbers of faculties.

They uphold the variations in the nature of one affliction and so forth, up to upholding the variations in the nature of ineffably ineffable afflictions. They uphold and correct the variations in the nature of a single affliction and so forth up to the point that they can accept, maintain, and correct the various natures of ineffably ineffable numbers of afflictions.

They uphold the various qualities in the nature of one samadhi and so forth, up to upholding the various qualities in the nature of ineffably ineffable samadhis. They can use a single samadhi to cure all kinds of afflictions. They can do this to the point that they are able to use an ineffable number of samadhis to cure an ineffable number of afflictions. The Bodhisattvas at this level of the Treasury of Upholding are able to receive and maintain the Treasury of Dharma of all Buddhas.

The Bodhisattvas who cultivate this Treasury of Upholding can maintain a store of Dharma which pervades the reaches of empty space and the Dharma Realm. They maintain all the Sutras, Vinaya, and Shastras throughout the entire Dharma Realm. How are they able to maintain them? It is because they are empty. This is called “upholding without upholding”. They are empty of everything, so all Dharmas appear before them. If they weren’t empty, then there would be no way to uphold a store of Dharma which pervades empty space to the end of the Dharma Realm.

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, this Treasury of Upholding is boundless. It is difficult to fulfill and difficult to reach its depths. It is difficult to draw near. It cannot be curtailed or subdued. It is limitless, inexhaustible, and replete with great awesome power. It is the state of a Buddha, which only a Buddha can comprehend. This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Ninth Treasury, that of Upholding.

Commentary:

Forest of Merit and Virtue Bodhisattva once again calls out to all the Bodhisattvas, wanting them all to pay special attention: Disciples of the Buddha, this Treasury of Upholding is boundless. This kind of Dharma door is without bounds, its source is inexhaustible. Its scope and magnitude are unending and hard to reach. It is difficult to fulfill. It is not easy to cultivate the Treasury of Upholding to perfection. And it is difficult to reach its depths. It is limitlessly vast and far-reaching. It is difficult to perfect this Dharma door of Upholding and it is equally hard to fathom its depths. It is difficult to draw near. It’s hard to be able to approach this Dharma door. One has to always be mindful, receive and hold, and remember it. Since it’s not easy to always cultivate this Dharma, it is said to be “difficult to fulfill”, “difficult to reach its depths”, and “difficult to draw near”.

It cannot be curtailed or subdued. When one cultivates this kind of Dharma door, the heavenly demons and those of outside ways cannot destroy one’s practice.

It is limitless, inexhaustible, and replete with great awesome power. With the Treasury of Upholding, one is capable to subduing all heavenly demons and those of outside ways. One will not be subdued by them instead. This Treasury is endowed with vast, great, limitless, and boundless awesome spiritual power.

It is the state of a Buddha, which only a Buddha can comprehend. Only Buddhas can achieve this ultimate state. It’s not easy for any Bodhisattva to understand. Only at the level of Buddha-fruition can this state by totally fathomed.

This is called the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Ninth Treasury, that of Upholding. This is the Treasury that the Great Bodhisattvas among Bodhisattvas cultivate, that of Upholding.

X. The Treasury of Eloquence

Sutra:

“Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Eloquence? These Bodhisattvas have profound wisdom. They understand and know the real mark. They expansively explain all Dharmas for living beings. They do not go counter to any of the Buddhas’ Sutras. They explain one section of Dharma and so forth, up to explaining ineffably ineffable sections of Dharma. They explain one Buddha’s name and so forth, up to explaining ineffably ineffable Buddhas’ names. In the same way they can explain about one world realm, one Buddha’s prediction, one Sutra, and one Assembly. They can proclaim one Dharma. They can explain the limitless variations in the nature of one faculty. They can explain the limitless variations in the nature of one affliction. They can explain the limitless various qualities in the nature of one samadhi and so forth, up to explaining the limitless various qualities in the nature of ineffably ineffable samadhis.

Commentary:

Forest of Merit and Virtue Bodhisattva says, “ Disciples of the Buddha, what is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Treasury of Eloquence? ” He asks, “What kind of Dharma do the Great Bodhisattvas cultivate in order to obtain unobstructed eloquence?” How is it possible to obtain this Treasury of Eloquence?” The following Sutra text gives the answer.

These Bodhisattvas have profound wisdom. They have measureless and boundless, deep Prajna wisdom. They understand and know the real mark. They understand the principle and substance of the real mark of all dharmas. They can expansively explain all Dharmas for living beings. Using all kinds of similes, metaphors, causes and conditions, and different approaches, they speak the Dharma for all kinds of living beings. Using expedient means they clearly explain the Dharma so that all the various kinds of living beings may come to understand.

They do not go counter to any of the Buddhas’ Sutras. What they speak is in accord with the mind of the Buddhas and the principles in the Sutras.

They explain one section of Dharma and so forth, up to explaining ineffably ineffable sections of Dharma. They explain from as little as one aspect of a single Dharma, reaching to the extent of ineffably ineffable aspects of all Dharmas.

They explain one Buddha’s name and so forth, up to explaining ineffably ineffable Buddhas’ names. In the same way they can explain about one world realm, one Buddha’s prediction, one Sutra, and one Assembly, and so forth up to ineffably ineffable world realms, Buddhas’ predictions, Sutras, and Assemblies.

They can proclaim one Dharma, one superior teaching. They can explain the limitless variations in the nature of one faculty, and so forth up to limitless aspects in the nature of ineffably ineffable faculties.

They can explain the limitless variations in the nature of one affliction. They know which methods can cure a certain kind of affliction with its limitless variations.

They can explain the limitless various qualities in the nature of one samadhi and so forth, up to explaining the limitless various qualities in the nature of ineffably ineffable samadhis.

All of these are examples of the one expanding to the many and the many returning to the one. One becomes limitless and the limitless turns into the one. The Bodhisattvas have this kind of wisdom of eloquence. For this reason they can speak the Dharma to teach and transform all living beings so they will accomplish Buddhahood quickly.

**Question:** In the study of Ch’an, is it the true self which guides each individual on his or her own path through life? Or is it only no self? Could you define no self and are the two the same?

**Answer:** Saying there is a self-nature, then one has an attachment. If one thinks there is no self-nature, then one is without attachment. If one has attachment then one still has afflictions and ignorance. If one doesn’t have any attachments, then one is without afflictions and ignorance. If there are no attachments at all, then there is no place from which afflictions come forth and there is no ignorance. We say, “make the ‘self’ empty, that originally there isn’t a thing.” That’s right, it is empty; however, one as an individual still exists. If one, in fact exists here and now and speaks of being “empty, empty”, while still continuing to exist as an individual, then one is still here. One isn’t empty.

This teaching is to help people get rid of their attachments. Don’t be attached to the existence of a self. That is emptiness. However, this doesn’t mean that your body will disappear, or that your fundamental nature will disappear. One’s self-nature should disappear in the sense that it becomes of the same substance as empty space. That is basically the way it should be. The fundamental nature is emptiness and emptiness is the fundamental nature. But if one is still attached to the existence of a fundamental nature, then one cannot unite with empty space because one has still not broken through that attachment. Why is it that the Buddha’s body is like empty space? It is because he has no attachments.

The Bodhisattva should also learn about this kind of state of the Buddha. Therefore, don’t have any attachments. If one has attachments, then automatically one will give rise to ignorance and afflictions. If one has attachments, there is selfishness, and then one is bound to have afflictions. When one has no attachments and there is no self, then there is no selfishness and there are no afflictions. To be without any afflictions is to see the nature. Those who see the nature, know no anxiety, they don’t know the meaning of worry

Sutra:

“Perhaps they explain for one day, for half a month, or for one month. Perhaps they explain for a hundred years, a thousand years, or a hundred thousand years. Perhaps they explain for one kalpa, a hundred kalpas, a thousand kalpas, or a hundred thousand kalpas. Perhaps they explain for billions of nayutas of kalpas. Perhaps they explain for uncountable, limitless, up to including ineffably ineffable kalpas. The number of kalpas can be exhausted, but the meanings and principles in a single phrase or a single sentence are difficult to exhaust.

Commentary:

Perhaps they explain for one day. The Bodhisattvas who cultivate the Treasury of Eloquence may speak for one day, for half a month, or for one month. Perhaps they explain for a hundred years, a thousand years, or a hundred thousand years. Perhaps during these periods of time these Bodhisattvas cultivate the Dharma Treasury of Eloquence.

Perhaps they explain for one kalpa, a hundred kalpas, a thousand kalpas, or a hundred thousand kalpas. Perhaps they explain for billions of nayutas of kalpas. Perhaps they explain for uncountable, limitless, up to including ineffably ineffable kalpas. The number of kalpas can be exhausted —kalpas are periods of time which exist and then are gone, but, in the Treasury of Eloquence, the meanings and principles in a single phrase or a single sentence are difficult to exhaust. The Dharma which is proclaimed is limitless and incalculable, so its meanings are difficult to exhaust.

Sutra:

“Why is this? These Bodhisattvas accomplish the ten kinds of Inexhaustible Treasuries, and because they perfect this Treasury, they are able to gather in the Dharani Doors of all Dharmas and have these appear before them with a million asamkhyeyas of dharanis as their retinue. Having attained these dharanis, they use the light of Dharma to expansively proclaim the Dharma for living beings.

“When they speak the Dharma they use their vast and long tongues to emit wonderful sounds that pervade all worlds of the ten directions, and cause those in them to be fulfilled according to their faculties and natures so that their hearts are happy. They destroy all afflictions and the bonds of defilement. They skillfully enter into all sounds, words, languages, and phrases, perfecting and eloquence which causes living beings’ Buddha seed to not be cut off and their pure minds to be continuous. Also, they use the light of Dharma to speak the Dharma without end, and they never grow weary.

Commentary:

In the previous passage of text, it says that whether time is short or long it eventually will come to an end. But with regard to the Dharma, from the superficial one is able to enter the profound; from what is near one is able to enter what is distant; from the small one is able to understand what is great; from the concise one is able to understand what is vast and expansive. The meanings are endless and inexhaustible. Just a single word or phrase of a Sutra includes and infinite number of meanings. And so it says that the Dharma cannot be exhausted. Why is this? These Bodhisattvas accomplish the ten kinds of Inexhaustible Treasuries. The Bodhisattvas who cultivate the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries are able to bring them all to perfection. And because they perfect this Treasury of eloquence, they are able to gather in the Dharani Doors of all Dharmas and have these appear before them. Having cultivated, they obtain the Treasury of Eloquence, which is the door of encompassing and upholding. They obtain all Dharmas and Dharani Doors, with a million asamkhyeyas of dharanis as their retinue. The retinue is as large as hundreds of thousands of asamkhyeyas in number. Having attained these dharanis, they use the light of Dharma to expansively proclaim the Dharma for living beings. For the sake of all living beings, they use the light of wisdom and eloquence to vastly proclaim the Dharma. Unafraid of trouble, they delineate the doors and distinguish the different classes and broadly proclaim the Dharma for all living beings.

When they speak the Dharma they use their vast and long tongues. In the Amitabha Sutra it says;

Each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue,   
Everywhere pervading the three thousand great thousand worlds.

Here, when the Bodhisattvas use their vast and long tongues to speak the Dharma, they are able to emit wonderful sounds that pervade all worlds of the ten directions. All living creatures like to hear these sounds. They totally fill all worlds of the ten directions, and cause those in them to be fulfilled according to their faculties and natures so that their hearts are happy. The Bodhisattvas go along with the basic nature of living beings and enable all living beings to obtain benefits from the Dharmas which are appropriate for them. The basic nature is described in the Lotus Sutra. It tells how all the different kinds of grasses and trees obtain just the exact amount of rain that they need so that they can be moistened. In the same way each living being receives the exact amount of Dharma rain he or she needs, causing each heart to be happy, then all of the heated afflictions are extinguished.

Afflictions are born from unhappiness. Once afflictions arise, there is defilement and bondage. When there aren’t any afflictions, then there is just happiness. So the text says, “They destroy all afflictions and the bonds of defilement. They skillfully enter into all sounds, words, languages, and phrases, perfecting and eloquence which causes living beings’ Buddha seed to not be cut off and their pure minds to be continuous. ” Bodhisattvas have the unobstructed eloquence which enables them to enter into all languages and literature. They are able to cause all living beings to obtain the Samadhi of all Sounds and Languages and to gain eloquence with words and meanings in the Sutras. They can cause living beings Buddha seed to not be cut off. When the afflictions and bonds of defilement are destroyed, then one’s precepts, samadhi, and wisdom are complete. When precepts, samadhi, and wisdom are complete, then all living beings’ Buddha seed will not be cut off. The pure and clear heart of Bodhi is able to be continuous without end.

Also, they use the light of Dharma to speak the Dharma without end. They use the light of the Dharma of wisdom and eloquence to speak the Dharma extensively for all living beings, without exhaustion. Regardless of how long they speak the Dharma there is never any end to it; it never stops. And they never grow weary. Some people who do this kind of work get tired before they finish it. If living beings’ good roots aren’t complete and perfected, then after cultivating for awhile they become tired. Originally, these living beings have jumped out of the sea of suffering to cultivate the Way, but after cultivating for awhile, they get tired of studying the Buddhadharma and decide not to cultivate but to go back to the sea of suffering again. This happens because they get tired. Bodhisattvas will speak the Dharma throughout the infinite scope of future time without every becoming tired. They will never say that speaking Dharma is exhausting and that they’d like to rest or better yet, retire. The Bodhisattvas are not capable of quitting or retiring.

Sutra:

“Why is this? It is because these Bodhisattvas perfect a boundless body which exhausts empty space and pervades the Dharma Realm. This is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Tenth Treasury, that of Eloquence.

“This Treasury cannot be exhausted, cannot be divided, cannot be interrupted, cannot be cut off, cannot be changed, cannot be obstructed, and cannot be retreated from. It is deep without bottom and difficult to enter. It is the gate of universal entry into all Buddhadharmas.

“Disciples of the Buddha. These ten kinds of Inexhaustible Treasuries have ten kinds of inexhaustible Dharmas by which the Bodhisattvas ultimately accomplish Unsurpassed Bodhi.

Commentary:

Why is this? Why are these Bodhisattvas able to explain the Dharma without end and never get tired? It is because these Bodhisattvas perfect a boundless body which exhausts empty space and pervades the Dharma Realm. The Bodhisattva’s body is vast with nothing outside, and yet is so small that there can be nothing inside of it. As it says in the Avatamsaka Preface of National Master Ching Liang;

Going and returning with no border,   
Movement and stillness have one source.   
There is no limit to where this kind of unbounded body can go.   
When it goes, there is no place that it reaches;   
When it returns, there is no place that it can return to.

It doesn’t go out and it doesn’t come back. It doesn’t move and it isn’t still. This kind of limitless Dharma body takes the Dharma Realm and empty space as its substance. Pervading everywhere throughout the Dharma Realm to the exhaustion of empty space is the limitless, unbounded body of the Bodhisattva. Because of this, there is no end to the explanation of all Dharmas.

This is the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas’ Tenth Treasury, that of Eloquence. This is the Tenth Treasury of the Great Bodhisattvas among Bodhisattvas, that of Eloquence.

This Treasury cannot be exhausted. There is no time when it is finished. It is infinite without limits. It cannot be divided, or analyzed. It cannot be interrupted, and it cannot be cut off. It cannot be changed, it will always be as it is and has been. It cannot be obstructed, there is nothing that can break up or obstruct this Treasury. And it cannot be retreated from. One who cultivates this Treasury will not retreat or turn away. One will only vigorously progress.

It is deep without bottom and it is difficult to enter. It’s not easy to understand and obtain this unobstructed eloquence. It is the gate of universal entry into all Buddhadharmas. Even though this Treasury is difficult to understand, when one cultivates it one is able to universally enter all the doors of the Buddhadharma. Every Buddhadharma is replete with the Treasury of Eloquence.

The Bodhisattva Forest of Merit and Virtue again calls out, “ Disciples of the Buddha. These ten kinds of Inexhaustible Treasuries have ten kinds of inexhaustible Dharmas by which the Bodhisattvas ultimately accomplish Unsurpassed Bodhi. ” These ten kinds of Dharmas enable all Bodhisattvas who wish to cultivate the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries to ultimately obtain the Unsurpassed Fruition of Bodhi.

I often talk to you about how the meanings in the Avatamsaka Sutra are inexhaustible and infinite. One can explain them in a variety of ways, all of which have principle, as long as the explanations are appropriate to the meaning of the Sutra and are proper and orthodox. That is why we investigate the Buddhadharma together. Each person is possessed of his or her own share of wisdom. Therefore, if anyone makes mistakes when speaking the Dharma, those who are aware of the errors can bring them up for discussion at a later time so the points can be clarified.

You should all make use of your wisdom in investigating the Buddhadharma. If you ever notice that someone’s explanation of any given passage of Sutra text is inappropriate and does not tally with the meaning, you can bring it up for discussion.

**Sutra:**

“What are the ten?” They are: Benefiting of all living beings; wholesome transference of one’s basic vows; ceaseless practice throughout all kalpas;

Commentary:

Above, the Ten Kinds of Inexhaustible Treasuries were explained. Within them there are also Ten kinds of Inexhaustible Dharmas, and these ten kinds are used to perfect the Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries, which is equivalent to fully perfecting the Buddha fruition of Unsurpassed Bodhi.

What are the ten? What are these ten kinds of Dharmas? They are: the first is benefiting of all living beings. To benefit all living beings is the first kind of Dharma. There is benefit for oneself and benefit for others. One benefits oneself and causes all living beings to receive benefit also. In the practice of the Bodhisattva Path, one uses the entire measure of one’s own strength to benefit all living beings. This is the first Dharma. One practices whatever is beneficial. One does the things one is able to do. If one doesn’t have the power to benefit other living beings, one still wants to do it. Urge yourself on to do what is difficult. This is what is known as being able to practice what is difficult to practice. One should be this way in one’s benefiting of all living beings.

The next is, wholesome transference of one’s basic vows. The person who practices the Bodhisattva Path must make the vows that Bodhisattvas make. What are the vows that Bodhisattvas make? They are the Four Vast Vows:

Living beings are boundless,   
I vow to save them all.   
Afflictions are inexhaustible,   
I vow to cut them off.   
Dharma Doors are limitless,   
I vow to study them.   
The Buddha Way is unsurpassed,   
I vow to realize it.

These are the basic vows of a Bodhisattva. Universal Worthy Bodhisattva made Ten Great Vows:

* To worship and respect all Buddhas.
* **To praise the Thus Come Ones.**
* **To vastly cultivate the Giving of Offerings.**
* **To repent and reform of all karmic faults.**
* **To follow along with and rejoice in merit and virtue.**
* **To request the turning of the Dharma Wheel.**
* **To request that all Buddhas dwell in the world.**
* **To always follow the Buddhas in study.**
* **To forever accord with all living beings.**
* **To universally transfer all merit and virtue.**

These are what are meant by the “wholesome transference of one’s basic vows.” One universally transfers the merit from the vows one has originally made to all living beings throughout the Dharma Realm. One does not seek for oneself only. It is for the sake of all living beings that one practices the path of a Bodhisattva. This is called “Transferring from Oneself to Others.”

Next, there is ceaseless practice throughout all kalpas. “All kalpas” means all countless, numberless, ineffably ineffable great kalpas. During all of those kalpas one does not cut off one’s cultivation. One doesn’t cut off the bringing forth of the heart of Bodhi. One doesn’t cut off the practice of the Bodhisattva Path. One doesn’t cut off benefiting living beings. One doesn’t cut off the transferring of the merit and virtue of one’s original vows to all living beings of the Dharma Realm. At all times, in all places, throughout all kalpas, one does not cut off the practice of the Bodhisattva Path. One benefits oneself and benefits others; one enlightens oneself and enlightens others. One takes oneself across and takes others across. One uses this spirit of selfless giving without weariness for the sake of living beings, in order to benefit them so that they leave suffering and obtain happiness. One goes on ceaselessly and never stops.

Sutra:

“Boundlessness of the totally enlightened mind which exhausts the realms of empty space; transference to what is conditioned without any attachment; having one thought encompass all Dharmas without exhaustion; unalterability of the mind of great vows; well gathering in all dharanis; being those of whom all Buddhas are mindful and protective; and understanding that all dharmas are like an illusion. These are the ten kinds of inexhaustible dharmas which can enable anyone in the world who uses them to obtain these ultimate, inexhaustible, great Treasuries.

Commentary:

Boundlessness of the totally enlightened mind which exhausts the realms of empty space. One understands that the self-nature completely pervades the realm of empty space. Empty space is the self-nature and the self-nature is empty space. We may speak of the limits of empty space, but in fact there are none. If empty space had limits then it wouldn’t be empty space. It would be obstructed. Exhausting empty space and pervading the Dharma Realm, one awakens to the original substance of the Dharma Realm.

One understands the mind and sees the nature,   
And turns back to the original source.

One realizes the boundless body of the Dharma Realm. This is the boundless body spoken of before. The Bodhisattva certifies to the principle of emptiness, its original substance. If one is able to certify to this, then one won’t have any attachments at all, nor any afflictions or obstructions. One would be just the same as empty space. If one certifies to the wisdom of empty space while in this world, although one is still in the world, it is as though one were:

Practicing as if not practicing;   
Doing as if not doing;   
Cultivating as if not cultivating;   
Certifying as if not certifying.

This kind of state is that of an awakened mind that is boundless. Within this mind there is a meshing together with empty space. There is no boundary between them. But although it’s like that, we must still make transference to what is conditioned without any attachment. You can’t say, “I’ve been certified to the principle of emptiness. I don’t do anything. I cultivate without cultivating anything, I certify without certifying to anything, I practice without practicing anything, I do things without doing anything. That’s what I call emptiness!” No, it’s not that way. Although one is certified to the unconditioned principle of emptiness, one should still make transference to the conditioned. This means that when you understand the principle of true emptiness, you must still give rise to wonderful existence. To not give rise to wonderful existence and only know true emptiness is of no use at all. Therefore:

Within true emptiness there is wonderful existence.   
Wonderful existence doesn’t obstruct true emptiness.

We make transference to all conditioned dharmas. What’s meant by “conditioned”? Everything that has shape and appearance is called conditioned.

All that has appearance is empty and false.   
If you see all appearance as no appearances,   
Then you see the Thus Come One.

-Vajra Sutra

Although we speak of the conditioned, ultimately it does not exist. However, in dealing with conditioned existence, one should not be attached to the conditioned. The Vajra Sutra says:

All conditioned dharmas   
Are like dreams, illusions, bubbles, shadows,   
Like dewdrops and a lightening flash:   
Contemplate them thus.

One should not make transference to the conditioned and not be attached to it. Act as if nothing were going on.

Having one thought encompass all Dharmas without exhaustion. Within a single thought, one pervades the Three Thousand Great Thousand worlds. It’s said that;

One thought reaches three thousand worlds;   
Three thousand worlds are in one thought.

Everything in the human realm is created from a single thought. Take for instance a cultivator who has been at his practice for several years. For him, “not a single thought arises.” But then suddenly, he gives rise to a thought. What kind of thought? He thinks, “In this day and age, worldly dharmas are important. If the worldly dharmas were used to protect the transcendental dharmas, wouldn’t that be great?” So with that one thought he is off and running. He decides he’d like to be President. In his next life what do you suppose happens? He’s carried along by that thought and becomes President. But once he gets to be President, he finds out that the internal workings of government are quite complex and there’s always a lot of trouble to contend with. There are many nationalistic considerations to be taken into account. And there are international relations which always have to be considered. Government is also closely connected with family concerns and the relationships that occur among individual people. He’s immersed in a situation which is a mixture of good and evil, purity and defilement, and it all came about from that one thought of wanting to be President. That single thought brought into being all the subsequent changes and transformations. That’s one way of explaining the scope of a single thought.

Being President is like that, but so is being a cabinet member, or an administrator, or being a chairman or a minister of the interior. Even being an ordinary citizen, a laborer, a scientist, a chemist, a lecturer, or any other kind of professional person is the same. They are all created from a single thought of the mind.

One observes that throughout the world, the leaders of every country are basically very good-natured. They must have all cultivated at one time or another. In previous lives they worked very hard and suffered a lot, but because of a single thought of glory, they become attached to the five desires and end up where they are now. Perhaps they were greedy for wealth. They wanted to be a petroleum magnate or automobile magnate, or an airline magnate. They may have wanted to be a great cotton king, or the great commodity king, or they wanted to be the great excrement king! They had all kinds of plans of wanting to be this or that kind of magnate. And it all comes from a single thought of being greedy for wealth.

Those who are greedy for beautiful forms are unable to smash through the gate of form. With a single unclean thought, sexual desire arises and they aren’t able to smash through the gate of sexual desire. They become attached to beauty and in their next life, they are confused by beauty. If one is greedy for wealth, one becomes confused by wealth. If one is greedy for sex, one becomes confused by that. There are also those who are greedy for fame. They cultivate but then they have a single thought of greed for fame. Pursuing that thought, they imagine how in their next lives their fame will fill the entire world and everyone will know about them. That’s what one thought of greed for fame will do. One becomes confused by fame.

Some may have a single thought of being greedy to eat good things and they are confused by greed for good food. Some are confused by sleep, and they feel that sleep is very comfortable. Experiencing the five defiling objects of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tangibles causes one to be really upside down. All are created from a single thought. The transformations of a single thought are inexhaustible. Within the transformations of a single thought there is defilement and purity, good and evil. Everything is included within a single thought, and so the text says, “having one thought encompass all dharmas without exhaustion.” So in cultivating the Way, one must be extremely careful not to have false thinking. It’s just because of striking up a single false thought that we don’t have any way of separating ourselves from the revolving wheel of birth and death. Would you say that is suffering or not?

Unalterability of the mind of great vows. In cultivating, one doesn’t ever retreat from the Bodhi mind. One doesn’t change one’s Bodhi mind. “I intend to cultivate so that at all times I am making my Bodhi mind firmer. I don’t want to ever change it. I don’t want to retreat, but always want to go forward and be courageously vigorous.” How does one do this? One must make great vows. A cultivator is like a person who wants to cross the sea. The great vows of a cultivator are like a boat which can carry him or her across the suffering sea of birth and death to the other shore of Nirvana. The mind which makes great vows must be solid and durable. It must be permanent and unchanging. It must be indestructible. It must be like vajra. One has to make vows with a resolve which is as solid as vajra. One’s vow power shouldn’t be as soft as a pile of ashes. A pile of ashes could be as large as a mountain, but when the wind blows, it all disappears. Don’t let your vows be like that. Don’t let it be that a bit of praise from someone is enough to topple your vows and make them disappear. If someone says, “Oh, you’re really a good cultivator,” and you feel it’s just as sweet as eating honey, or if someone scolds you and you think it’s as bitter as eating goldenseal, then you have been turned by those situations and your resolve isn’t solid. You don’t have vajra resolve. To be like vajra is to be in a state of unmoving suchness. No matter what comes up, your resolve doesn’t waver. You are clear and constantly bright. Great vows should be like vajra so they won’t change.

Well gathering in all dharanis. Dharani is Sanskrit and means “encompassing and upholding”. This doesn’t mean encompassing and upholding just one thing, but encompassing and upholding limitless, boundless things. It is just like how each of the 84,000 Dharma doors is itself both a part of the whole, and foremost in and of itself. That’s why it is said that there is no second Dharma door. That’s why they are called “non-dual” doors. All 84,000 doors are number one. “How do you figure that?” you ask. You figure it as 84,000, that’s how. That is because the Dharma is level and equal, there is no high or low. If any one of them were to be calculated as number two, that Dharma would be unhappy, because Dharmas, too like to be number one. Leaving home is also that way. Everyone is number one and there is no number two. Cultivating the Way is also that way. Everyone is number one and there is no number two. How can I say that? Some are number one in eating, some are number one in wearing clothes, some are number one in sleeping, some are number one in liking fame, some are number one in liking wealth, and some are number one in liking sex. So isn’t that a case of everyone being number one? But even if you are all number one, you have to put down the number one, too. Of the 84,000 Dharma doors there isn’t a single one which is really established.

When not even a single Dharma is established,   
The myriad dharmas are all empty.

So don’t be attached to there being a “one”. “One” what? If they are all number one it means that they all don’t exist. In that way, every Dharani is number one. “Gathering in and holding” means skillfully being able to use all Dharanis. If you can’t use it, it’s not number one. Whatever Dharma door you are capable of using, that Dharma door is number one for you. Whatever Dharma door you like to cultivate, whatever Dharma door benefits you is the number one Dharma door. But the other Dharma doors still aren’t number two because they are number one for someone else. Although they might not accord with your particular opportunities, they accord with the opportunities of other people. So all Dharma doors are number one.

Being those of whom all Buddhas are mindful and protective. All Buddhas are protective and mindful of one who is able to gather in and hold all Dharanis. That’s because the Buddhas make vows to protect all of those who gather in and hold all Dharanis.

And understanding that all dharmas are like an illusion. You cultivate back and forth, but in the final analysis:

All conditioned dharmas   
Are like dreams, illusions, bubbles, shadows,   
Like dewdrops and a lightening flash:   
Contemplate them thus.

All conditioned dharmas should be seen as empty, and unconditioned dharmas basically don’t exist. All dharmas are like an illusion, they are all empty and false. Everything about being people is empty and false. We shouldn’t be attached to how things are for us, because no matter how things are, they really aren’t at all! As long as there is a self—a “you”—then you won’t be able to leave the Triple World. The Buddha wants us all not to have a view of self or others. If there isn’t any self but there are still other people, that’s not okay either. There should be no self, no others, no living beings, and no lifespan. That is “sweeping away all dharmas and leaving all appearances.”

These are the ten kinds of inexhaustible dharmas which can enable anyone in the world who uses them to obtain these ultimate, inexhaustible, great Treasuries. They enable all those in the world who practice the Bodhisattva Way, who teach and transform living beings and do what Bodhisattvas should do, to obtain ultimate, perfect, inexhaustible, great treasuries. Ultimately, how many are there? Inexhaustibly many.

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