**The Shurangama Sutra**

**VOLUME 7**

**CHAPTER 2**

**The Bodhisattva Stages**

J2 The single position of dry-wisdom.
 **Sutra:

Ananda, these good people's emotional love and desire are withered and dry, the sense-organs and sense objects no longer match, and so the residual habits do not continue to arise.

Commentary:**

Shakyamuni Buddha calls out: Ananda, these good people's emotional love and desire are withered and dry. The people referred to are the ones who have passed through the three gradual stages just discussed. "Withered and dry" means that they have no thoughts of emotional desire and love. The sense-organs and sense objects no longer match. The six sense organs no longer seek to match up with the six sense-objects. And so the residual habits do not continue to arise. "Residual habits" refers to the slight bit of ignorance that these people still harbor. Since the ignorance is so slight, it does not continue to increase.
 **Sutra:

By means of their complete wisdom, they understand that attachments of the mind are false. The bright perfection of their wisdom-nature shines throughout the ten directions, and this initial wisdom is called the 'stage of dry wisdom.'

Commentary:**

The slight bit of ignorance that still remains does not grow and increase. The karmic obstacles are also very few, and so by means of their complete wisdom, they understand that attachments of the mind are false. Their minds become as clear as emptiness itself. Their own natures experience the perfection of wisdom. "Complete wisdom" means they don't have any other false thoughts. The thoughts in their mind are brought forth from wisdom. The bright perfection of their wisdom-nature shines throughout the ten directions. The nature of their wisdom is light and full. And this initial wisdom is called the "stage of dry wisdom". Since emotional love and desire are "dried up," all that's left is wisdom. This stage of dry wisdom is also called "the initial thought of vajra." "Vajra" means "indestructible." This stage is the first step towards the point of being like vajra.

What follows is a discussion of the fifty-five stages of a Bodhisattva:

1. the ten faiths,
2. the ten dwellings,
3. the ten conducts,
4. the ten transferences,
5. the four levels of augmenting practice:

a) heat,
b) summit,
c) patience,
d) foremost in the world;
6. the ten grounds,
7. equal enlightenment.
 **Sutra:

Although the habits of desire are initially dried up, they still have not merged with the Thus Come One's flow of dharma-water.

Commentary:**
Although the habits of desire and emotional love are initially dried up, they still have not merged with the Thus Come One's flow of dharma-water. Here the "flow of dharma-water" does not refer to dharma which is spoken. It is the water of dharma that flows forth from the self-nature. But at this point in their development, they have not merged with the water of genuine wisdom.

The Ten Faiths

J3 The ten positions of the ten faiths.
K1 The mind that resides in faith.
 **Sutra:

Then, with this mind centered on the middle, they enter the flow where wonderful perfection reveals itself. From the truth of that wonderful perfection there repeatedly arise wonders of truth. They always dwell in the wonder of faith, until all false thinking is completely eliminated and the Middle Way is totally true. This is called the Mind that Resides in Faith.

Commentary:**

This begins the discussion on the **ten faiths**:

1. the mind that resides in faith,
2. the mind that resides in mindfulness,
3. the mind that resides in vigor,
4. the mind that resides in wisdom,
5. the mind that resides in samadhi,
6. the mind that resides in irreversibility,
7. the mind that resides in protecting the dharma,
8. the mind that resides in making transferences,
9. the mind that resides in the precepts,
10. the mind that resides in vows.

Then, with this mind centered on the middle, they enter the flow where wonderful perfection reveals itself. "This mind" refers to the mind at the level of dry wisdom, the initial vajra-mind. They use this mind to enter the flow of the Buddhadharma, and they reach the state where "wonderful perfection reveals itself," where it opens out in abundance. One reaches the principle and substance of true suchness. From the truth of that wonderful perfection there repeatedly arise wonders of truth. In the wonderful perfection of the true suchness of the self-nature, truths within truths come forth. They always dwell in the wonder of faith, until all false thinking is completely eliminated and the Middle Way is totally true. Their belief becomes more and more subtle and wonderful.

"Always dwell" means that they will not waver, they will not change their minds. Their faith is constant. At that point, all false thinking goes away, without exception. Even if they wanted to have false thoughts, the false thoughts just wouldn't arise. That is because false thoughts are helped out by ignorance. With false thoughts come love and desire. But now love and desire have been dried up and only a little ignorance remains, so that, quite naturally, they don't have false thoughts.

Why do you have false thinking? It is because you still have love and desire. There are things that you are greedy for. The desires compel you to think about this and that, so that your mind is always climbing on conditions. If people didn't have any greed, they wouldn't have any false thinking.

At this point in their cultivation, these people don't have false thinking. When that happens, one attains the nature of the principle of the Middle Way. It is "totally true," which means that there is no love and desire, no greedy false thoughts. This is called the Mind that Resides in Faith. This is the first of these ten positions. One brings forth genuine faith and dwells in it.

K2 The mind that resides in mindfulness.
 **Sutra:

When true faith is clearly understood, then perfect penetration is total, and the three aspects of skandhas, places, and realms are no longer obstructions. Then all their habits throughout innumerable kalpas of past and future, during which they abandon bodies and receive bodies, appear to them now in the present moment. These good people can remember everything and forget nothing. This is called the Mind that Resides in Mindfulness.

Commentary:**

Prior to this stage, when they were residing in the mind of faith, they cultivated the Middle Way, that wonderful perfection, the principle which one neither enters into nor departs from. Now, since they are replete with faith, true faith is clearly understood. Once one has true faith, one can gain true wisdom. "Clear understanding," then, refers to that true wisdom. Then perfect penetration is total, and the three aspects of skandhas, places, and realms are no longer obstructions. Not only do they accomplish the perfect penetration of the sense organs, but of everything else as well, the five skandhas of form, feeling, thought, activity, and consciousness; the twelve places of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, together with forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects, and dharmas; and the eighteen realms, which include the six sense-organs, the six sense-objects and the consciousnesses which connect them, that is, the eyeconsciousness, the ear-consciousness, the nose-consciousness, the tongue-consciousness, the body-consciousness, and the mindconsciousness.

Once you obtain perfect penetration, these things can no longer hinder you. Then all their habits throughout innumerable kalpas of past and future, during which they abandon bodies and receive bodies, appear to them now in the present moment. For time beyond calculation they have been undergoing rebirth and will continue to undergo rebirth, birth after birth, death upon death. And in each one of those lives, they have different habits. In one life they got into the habit of drinking wine. In another life they were in the habit of smoking. In another life, they were habitual gamblers. Another life found them with habits of lust. In another life they killed. Another life made them into thieves. In one life, they got into the habit of lying. In general, life after life, they developed habits that led them to do all kinds of bad things. That's looking at the bad habits. But there are also good habits. In one life, they got into the habit of bowing to the Buddhas. In another life, they habitually recited the Shurangama Mantra.

In one life, they had the habit of listening to the explanation of the Shurangama Sutra. In another life, they habitually listened to the Lotus Sutra. In general, throughout all those lives in so many kalpas, they walked many paths. As a result, they had accumulated a tremendous number of habits. But now, just like a movie, all those habits appear before them. These good people can remember everything and forget nothing. These good people who are cultivating the Way can bring it all to mind. They can remember it all. When they attain that state, they never forget. That means they always have their mind on what's happening. They are always mindful of those causes and conditions. This is called the Mind that Resides in Mindfulness, the second of the ten faiths.

K3 The mind that resides in vigor.
 **Sutra:

When the wonderful perfection is completely true, that essential truth brings about a transformation. They go beyond the beginningless habits to reach the one essential brightness. Relying solely on this essential brightness, they progress toward true purity. This is called the Mind of Vigor.

Commentary:**
When the wonderful perfection is completely true, that essential truth brings about a transformation. They go beyond the beginningless habits to reach the one essential brightness, which is wisdom. Relying solely on this essential brightness, they progress toward true purity. Their vigor takes them to a place of true purity which is devoid of any defilement. This is called the Mind of Vigor, the mind that resides in vigor.

K4 The mind that resides in wisdom.
 **Sutra:

The essence of the mind reveals itself as total wisdom; this is called the Mind that Resides in Wisdom.

Commentary:**
When one has progressed until the mind is truly pure, then the essence of the mind reveals itself as total wisdom. The mind is clear and understood, which means one has some genuine wisdom. "Total wisdom" means that there is not the least bit of random thinking remaining. The stupidity and false thoughts are all gone. Remember that this was described above, in the passage on the first dwelling of the mind, where it said that "all false thinking is completely eliminated." This is called the Mind that Resides in Wisdom. This is the dwelling of the mind of faith in wisdom.

K5 The mind that resides in samadhi.
 **Sutra:

As the wisdom and brightness are held steadfast, a profound stillness pervades. The stage at which the majesty of this stillness becomes constant and solid is called the Mind that Resides in Samadhi.

Commentary:**

As the wisdom and brightness are held steadfast, a profound stillness pervades. This means that you must hold onto the light of wisdom and not let it go slack. Then there is a profound stillness that extends throughout the dharma-realm. The stage at which the majesty of this stillness becomes constant and solid is called the Mind that Resides in Samadhi. The "profound stillness" represents what is "tranquil and eternally illumining," and the "majesty of this stillness" represents what is "illumining and eternally tranquil." "Solid" here refers to the solidifying of the water of wisdom. It had been shallower before; now it deepens. "Solid" represents samadhi-power. At this point, one will not be moved. One would not say, "That looks good," and run in that direction, and then say, "But that looks even better," and run to the next thing. One would not be always pursuing something better. If one had samadhi-power, one would not run about hither and thither. A wind out of the east would not bend one westward; nor would a west wind blow one eastward. That just means that one would not be moved by the eight winds.

In order to tell about the eight winds, we must talk about the famous Song dynasty scholar and poet Su Dong Po. He was known as layman Dong Po and he carried on a dialogue with Dhyana Master Fo Yin. The former lived on the south bank of the Long River (Yang Tze) at Chen Chiang, and the latter on the north bank of the river.

The poet Su Dong Po meditated and cultivated, and one day in meditation he saw a state that moved him to write a verse. The verse went:

I bow my head to the God among gods.
And a ray of light illumines the great thousand worlds.
The eight winds cannot move me,
As I sit aloft a purple golden lotus.
The "God among gods" refers to the Buddha.

The poet claimed that when he bowed to the Buddha, he emitted a light that went throughout the universe. The eight winds are:

1. praise,
2. ridicule,
3. suffering,
4. bliss,
5. benefit,
6. destruction,
7. gain,
8. loss.

"Praise" is someone's saying things like, "You are an excellent student. You really apply yourself. You have a fine personality and a good moral character." But you shouldn't look upon praise as something good, because if you are moved by it, you just prove that you don't have any samadhi-power. The eight winds are difficult for cultivators to bear.

"Ridicule" means to chide or tease or use sarcasm. It's to use words in such a way as to break a person down. It may sound like praise but it's thick with sarcasm. This wind can cause one to lose one's temper. "How can you treat me like that!" is a typical reaction.

"Suffering" in all its manifold aspects is also one of the winds, as is "bliss." You may feel good, but you should not think that it's a great thing, because as soon as your mind moves to acknowledge the pleasure, a wind has moved you.

"Benefit" refers to something that will help you out. "Destruction" means something unbeneficial which is bad for you. "Gain" refers to getting something, "loss" to losing it. Getting something makes you happy; losing something upsets you. For instance, a person buys the latest model of a very fancy radio. He's so taken with it that he even dreams about it at night. Or maybe it's a camera or a telescope. In general, just imagine the thing that you are most fond of: buying it is what is meant by "gain." But once you have it, of course, other people find it attractive, too, and who would have guessed that someone would wait until you are a bit careless and steal it from you? At that point, your ignorance arises and you are afflicted by your loss. That's to be moved by the eight winds. But Su Dong Po said that the eight winds did not move him as he sat aloft a purple golden lotus. He had his servant take the poem to Chan Master Fo Yin for his critique.

Chan Master Fo Yin scribbled two words across the poem. The two words were very meaningful, but Su Dong Po couldn't handle them. He exploded in a rage as soon as he glanced at them. What were the words? "Fart, fart."

Su Dong Po grabbed the poem, threw on his coat, and stormed across the river to confront Chan Master Fo Yin.

"What kind of bad-mouthed monk are you?" he demanded of the Chan master. "What right do you have to scold people like that?"

"But you said the eight winds would not move you," Chan Master Fo Yin replied calmly. "How is it that my two little farts have blown you all the way across the river?"

Thinking it over, Su Dong Po saw how right the Chan Master was, and so he hung his head and went back home.

K6 The mind that resides in irreversibility.
 **Sutra:

The light of samadhi emits brightness. When the essence of the brightness enters deeply within, they only advance and never retreat. This is called the Mind of Irreversibility.

Commentary:**
Once the mind resides in samadhi, the light of samadhi emits brightness. When the essence of the brightness enters deeply within these good people who are cultivating, they only advance and never retreat. Since they understand, their only intent is to progress, and they never turn around and go back. The reason they are irreversible is that they truly and genuinely understand. They have real wisdom. This is called the Mind of Irreversibility, the mind of faith that never retreats.

K7 The mind that resides in protecting the dharma.
 **Sutra:

When the progress of their minds is secure, and they hold their minds and protect them without loss, they connect with the life-breath of the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions. This is called the Mind that Protects the Dharma.

Commentary:**
When the progress of their minds is secure, they go ever forward; they never fly off the handle. They are firm and at peace, and they hold their minds and protect them without loss, so that their minds never retreat. Then they connect with the life-breath of the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions. When one reaches the point of irreversibility, the energy-force of the Buddhas unites with one's own. This is called the Mind that Protects the Dharma. This means that the Buddhas protect you, and you protect the Buddhadharma. With the Buddha's protection, you can accomplish your karma in the Way. With your protection, the Buddhadharma can spread and grow. So this is the mind of faith that protects the dharma.

K8 The mind that resides in making transferences.
 **Sutra:

Protecting their light of enlightenment, they can use this wonderful force to return to the Buddha's light of compassion and to come back to stand firm with the Buddha. It is like two mirrors that are set facing one another, so that between them the exquisite images interreflect and enter into one another layer upon layer. This is called the Mind of Transference.

Commentary:**

Protecting their light of enlightenment, they can use this wonderful force. To join with the life-breath of the Buddha is a kind of enlightenment. When protected, this enlightenment is replete with wisdom and intelligence which is without loss. These people can return to the Buddha's light of compassion and to come back to stand firm with the Buddha. With this subtle wonderful power, you can unite with the Buddha's bright compassion. Your life-breath and light interact with the Buddha's life-breath and light, like two mirrors that are set facing one another, so that between them the exquisite images interreflect and enter into one another layer upon layer. When two mirrors are placed opposite one another, their images interreflect repeatedly. They display infinite layers of intereflection. This is called the Mind of Transference, the mind of faith that dwells in transference of merit.

K9 The mind that resides in precepts.
 **Sutra:

With this secret interplay of light, they obtain the Buddha's eternal solidity and unsurpassed wonderful purity. Dwelling in the unconditioned, they know no loss or dissipation. This is called the Mind that Resides in Precepts.

Commentary:**
With this secret interplay of light, they obtain the Buddha's eternal solidity and unsurpassed wonderful purity. At this point, there is a hidden connection between the light of your mind and the light of the Buddha's mind; that is what is meant by the "secret interplay of light." The light of your heart reaches to the Buddha's light, and the Buddha's light reaches to your heart. After the light of the Buddha has entered your heart, it returns to the Buddha. After the light of your mind has entered the Buddha's mind, it returns to your own mind. This interplay of light goes full circle. One thus obtains a constant illumination from the Buddha. In fact, one simply becomes one with the Buddha. This purity is incomparable. Nothing surpasses it. Dwelling in the unconditioned, they know no loss or dissipation. One has obtained the unconditioned dharmas, and no loss can occur. This is called the Mind that Resides in Precepts.

K10 The mind that resides in vows.
 **Sutra:

Abiding in the precepts with self-mastery, they can roam throughout the ten directions, going anywhere they wish. This is called the Mind that Resides in Vows.

Commentary:**

Abiding in the precepts, the unsurpassed Vajra Bright Jeweled Precepts, with self-mastery and spiritual penetrations, they can roam throughout the ten directions, going anywhere they wish. Such spiritual penetrations come with freedom and ease. There is no need for mental exertion, no need to set one's mind to it in order to be able to go anywhere in the ten directions. They can go anywhere they wish without any hindrance. This is called the Mind that Resides in Vows. Whatever wish or vow you make can be fulfilled.

The Ten Dwellings

J4 The ten positions of the ten dwellings.
K1 Dwelling of bringing forth the resolve.
 **Sutra:

Ananda, these good people use honest expedients to bring forth those ten minds. When the essence of these minds becomes dazzling, and the ten functions interconnect, then a single mind is perfectly accomplished. This is called the Dwelling of Bringing Forth the Resolve.

Commentary:**
This section of text discusses the ten dwellings, which are part of the Bodhisattva stages. The **ten dwellings** are:

1) the dwelling of bringing forth the resolve,
2) the dwelling of the ground of regulation,
3) the dwelling of cultivation,
4) the dwelling of noble birth,
5) the dwelling of endowment with skill-in-means,
6) the dwelling of rectification of the mind,
7) the dwelling of irreversibility,
8) the dwelling of a pure youth,
9) the dwelling of a dharma prince,
10) the dwelling of anointing the crown of the head.

At this stage, the Bodhisattva is about to reach the position of a Buddha, but isn't there yet. So the Bodhisattva temporarily abides in these dwellings.

"Ananda," the Buddha calls out, "These good people, these Bodhisattvas who are cultivating the Way, use honest expedients to bring forth those ten minds." The "ten minds" are the ten stages just discussed. When the essence of these minds becomes dazzling, and the ten functions interconnect, then a single mind is perfectly accomplished. The "ten functions" refer to the ways in which the ten minds are used. When they interconnect, they all come back to one single mind. This is called the Dwelling of Bringing Forth the Resolve, the first of the ten dwellings.

K2 Dwelling of the ground of regulation.
 **Sutra:

From within this mind light comes forth like pure crystal, which reveals pure gold inside. Treading upon the previous wonderful mind as a ground is called the Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation.

Commentary:**

From within this mind light comes forth like pure crystal. It is transparent and which reveals pure gold inside. Treading upon the previous wonderful mind as a ground is called the Dwelling of the Ground of Regulation. The "previous wonderful mind" is the "dwelling of bringing forth the resolve", where the functions of the earlier ten minds unite into a single mind. Then one walks upon this wonderful mind and turns it into a ground. This is the second dwelling, that of the "ground of regulation".

K3 Dwelling of cultivation.
 **Sutra:

When the mind-ground connects with wisdom, both become bright and comprehensive. Traversing the ten directions then without obstruction is called the Dwelling of Cultivation.

Commentary:**
This is the third dwelling, that of "cultivation". When the mind-ground connects with wisdom, both become bright and comprehensive. When the mind-ground you tread upon becomes level, it unites with wisdom, and both the mind and the wisdom are extremely clear and lucid. Traversing the ten directions then without obstruction is called the Dwelling of Cultivation. At this point you gain spiritual penetrations. Endowed with both wisdom and spiritual penetrations, you are not hindered from going anywhere at all in the ten directions. You can come and go as you please.

K4 Dwelling of noble birth.
 **Sutra:

'When their conduct is the same as the Buddhas' and they take on the demeanor of a Buddha, then, like the intermediate skandha body searching for a father and mother, they penetrate the darkness with a hidden trust and enter the lineage of the Thus Come One. This is called the Dwelling of Noble Birth.

Commentary:**

This passage discusses the Bodhisattvas of the fourth dwelling, the "dwelling of noble birth". It means being born in the household of the Dharma King, the home of the Buddha. The Buddha's family is the most honorable, and so this dwelling is called "noble birth." When their conduct is the same as the Buddhas' and they take on the demeanor of a Buddha, they are at the stage of the fourth dwelling. Everything the Bodhisattvas of the fourth dwelling do is like what a Buddha would do. Those Bodhisattvas have taken on the demeanor of a Buddha. They have learned to be just like Buddhas. Then they are like the intermediate skandha body searching for a father and mother. We have discussed the meaning of "intermediate skandha body" before. It refers to our "soul," or efficacious nature, which transmigrates. The definition of the intermediate skandha body is that which exists,

Before a new set of five skandhas is taken on,
But after the old set of five skandhas is gone.

An intermediate skandha body, the body between the skandhas, lives in a world as black as ink. There is no light for it at all. Although the sun and moon are still there, the skandha body dares not look at them when they appear. And when they are not in evidence and the skandha body is conscious, there is total darkness wherever it looks. However, when its future parents engage in intercourse, then no matter how far away from them the intermediate skandha body may be, it perceives a bit of yin light, and it reaches the spot immediately in response to its thought. Its compulsion to reach that place is like that of iron filings toward a magnet. But in this case, the force, as it were, of the magnetic field extends for thousands of miles. Attracted in this way, the intermediate skandha body arrives, and rebirth immediately takes place: conception occurs.

Here the birth of the Bodhisattva of the fourth dwelling into the household of the Buddha is likened to this process, but this is only an analogy, of course. It is used to describe the force of attraction that brings these Bodhisattvas to birth in the household of the Dharma King. They penetrate the darkness with a hidden trust. No matter how many thousands of miles away it may be, it is as if there is a mutual connection based on faith. The Bodhisattvas in this way enter the lineage of the Thus Come One. This is called the Dwelling of Noble Birth. They are born into an honorable and wealthy household, the Buddha's home.

"Oh?" you wonder. "The Buddha has a home? I thought the Buddha had left home." The home referred to here is just the home of leaving home. It is the place where the Buddha dwells. This is all just an analogy.

K5 Dwelling of endowment with skill-in-means.
 **Sutra:

Since they ride in the womb of the Way and will themselves become enlightened heirs, their human features are in no way deficient. This is called the Dwelling of Endowment with Skill-in-Means.

Commentary:**
Since they ride in the womb of the Way: they roam in the household of the Buddha; they are carried, as it were, in the womb of the Way. And they will themselves become enlightened heirs. They have received the bequest of enlightenment. Their human features are in no way deficient. Their eyes, ears, nose, and other characteristics are perfect and full. Their appearance as Buddhas, as Bodhisattvas, will also be without deficiency. This is called the Dwelling of Endowment with Skill-in-Means. This is the fifth dwelling.
. **Sutra:

With a physical appearance like that of a Buddha and a mind that is the same as well, they are said to be Dwelling in the Rectification of the Mind.

Commentary:**
At this point the Bodhisattvas of the sixth dwelling have a physical appearance like that of a Buddha. Their features are replete with the thirty-two hallmarks and eighty subtle characteristics. They also have a mind that is the same as the Buddhas'. Then they are said to be Dwelling in the Rectification of the Mind, the sixth dwelling.

K7 Dwelling of irreversibility.
 **Sutra:

United in body and mind, they easily grow and mature day by day. This is called the Dwelling of Irreversibility.

Commentary:**

Their body and mind are the same as the Buddhas'. They have united with the Buddhas and easily grow and mature day by day. Although they resemble the Buddhas, they are like children who have not yet grown up. This means that at this level the wisdom of these Bodhisattvas is not yet as great as a Buddha's. They are like newborn children. But every day their wisdom grows, so they are not far from Buddhahood. They are courageous and vigorous, and so this is called the Dwelling of Irreversibility. At this point they do not turn back. They have reached the seventh dwelling and will not retreat hereafter.

K8 Dwelling of a pure youth.
 **Sutra:

With the efficacious appearance of ten bodies, which are simultaneously perfected, they are said to be at the Dwelling of a Pure Youth.

Commentary:**

At this stage, the Bodhisattva can make ten bodies appear all at the same time. Each of these ten bodies can produce ten more bodies in turn, so that a hundred bodies come into being. Each of these hundred bodies brings forth yet another ten bodies, making a thousand bodies in all. This all happens simultaneously due to the magnitude of the Bodhisattva's spiritual penetrations. This is called the "dwelling of a pure youth."

K9 Dwelling of a dharma prince.
 **Sutra:

Completely developed, they leave the womb and become sons of the Buddha. This is called the Dwelling of a Dharma Prince.

Commentary:**

The ninth is the "dwelling of a dharma prince". At the previous level, when the ten bodies efficaciously appeared, they were able to change and transform endlessly. However, the Bodhisattvas have still not become genuine dharma princes. In the analogy, they have not yet left the womb. Now, completely developed, with the appearance of great heroes, they leave the womb and become sons of the Buddha. The accomplishment of the body of a Buddha is likened in the analogy to birth from the womb. This is called the Dwelling of a Dharma Prince. They themselves are now sons of the Buddha. That describes the Bodhisattva at the ninth dwelling.

K10 Dwelling of anointing the crown of the head.
 **Sutra:

Reaching the fullness of adulthood, they are like the chosen prince to whom the great king of a country turns over the affairs of state. When this Kshatriya king's eldest son is ceremoniously anointed on the crown of the head, he has reached what is called the Dwelling of Anointing the Crown of the Head.

Commentary:**

Reaching the fullness of adulthood, they are like the chosen prince to whom the great king of a country turns over the affairs of state. A "great king" refers to a wheel-turning sage king. When such a king is ready to relinquish the duties of the throne to his son, he performs a ritual in which he anoints the crown of the prince's head with the waters of the four seas. When this ceremony is completed, the prince is said to have inherited the throne. Here the passage refers to the Bodhisattva who can become the son of the Buddha, who is the Dharma King. At this point the Buddha anoints the crown of the Bodhisattva's head, making him a full-fledged Bodhisattva. That's what's meant by the passage: When this Kshatriya king's, the Buddha's, eldest son, the Bodhisattva of the tenth dwelling, is ceremoniously anointed on the crown of the head, he has reached what is called the Dwelling of Anointing the Crown of the Head.

The Ten Conducts

J5 The ten positions of the ten conducts.
K1 The conduct of happiness.
 **Sutra:

Ananda, after these good people have become sons of the Buddha, they are replete with the limitlessly many wonderful virtues of the Thus Come Ones, and they comply and accord with beings throughout the ten directions. This is called the Conduct of Happiness.

Commentary:**

These are called the **ten conducts**. They are the next step in the stages of a Bodhisattva:

1) the conduct of happiness,
2) the conduct of benefiting,
3) the conduct of non-opposition,
4) the conduct of endlessness,
5) the conduct of freedom from deluded confusion,
6) the conduct of wholesome manifestation,
7) the conduct of non-attachment,
8) the conduct of veneration,
9) the conduct of wholesome dharma,
10) the conduct of true actuality.

Now we will discuss the first conduct, that of happiness. These ten conducts correspond to the ten perfections, the ten paramitas, so the first conduct relates to giving.

Shakyamuni Buddha called out: Ananda, after these good people have become sons of the Buddha, they are replete with the limitlessly many wonderful virtues of the Thus Come Ones. The crown of their heads are anointed, and they become sons of the Buddha. They are well on their way to possessing the virtuous conducts of a Buddha. They comply and accord with beings throughout the ten directions. This is called the Conduct of Happiness. To "comply and accord" means to practice giving. We have discussed giving many times and have mentioned that there are three kinds of giving:

1) the giving of wealth,
2) the giving of dharma,
3) the giving of fearlessness.

However, there are also two aspects to giving, which are not the same as the three kinds. The two aspects comprise another explanation entirely. Since it is called the "conduct of happiness", the first aspect is that one should practice giving with a happy heart. One should enjoy giving. It's not that one decides to give only under duress; it's not forced, such that on the one hand one wants to give, but on the other hand one doesn't want to. It's not that one is indecisive, thinking, "I'd like to make a gift, but it's my money." It's said that giving up some money is like cutting off a piece of one's flesh. On the other hand, one knows that if one does not practice giving, one will not generate any merit. So it's a real dilemma: if one gives, one fears one will have no money left; if one doesn't give, one fears one will have no merit. So there one stands, not knowing whether to take a step forward or backward. That's certainly not called the "conduct of happiness". That's more like the "conduct of forcing it". Now you can't say that there wouldn't be any merit in this kind of giving, but the merit certainly would be depleted by the internal struggle. One is not doing it with a true mind.

Rather, one should he happy about the giving one does. Even if it means one must do without money oneself, one should be happy to give away to others whatever one has.

The second aspect of giving is that one should make living beings happy. When you practice giving, you should not act like someone tossing crumbs to a beggar. It shouldn't be that they have to come crawling to your door crying, "Old uncle, old auntie, can't you spare a little?" only to have you open the door a crack, throw out a dime or a quarter, and shout, "Take it and get out!" That can't even be called giving. There's no merit in that kind of act, and certainly the person on the receiving end will not be happy. In China there's the phrase: "One doesn't eat what is rudely offered." That's just what's been described above. People with any selfpossession will not accept food or money that is offered in that way, even if they have to go hungry.

One should give sincerely and in good faith. But be careful not to give in such a way that one expects gratitude in response. If you avoid doing it in a way that makes people feel they must thank you, then you are giving in a way that causes people to be happy, which is the second aspect of giving. In the "conduct of happiness", both parties, oneself and the person one is giving to, are happy.

K2 Conduct of benefiting.
 **Sutra:

Being well able to accommodate all living beings is called the Conduct of Benefiting.

Commentary:**
Being well able to accommodate all living beings means to use precepts. It means getting beings to follow the precepts and in that way rescuing them. If everyone holds the precepts, the entire world is benefited. This is called the Conduct of Benefiting living beings. It is the second of these ten Bodhisattva practices.

K3 Conduct of non-opposition.
 **Sutra:

Enlightening oneself and enlightening others without putting forth any resistance is called the Conduct of Non- Opposition.

Commentary:**

Enlightening oneself and enlightening others is something we all should do. Thus, it is not enough to study the Buddhadharma and come to understand it oneself. We must also enable all beings to come to understand it, to the extent that we should help bring all beings to the accomplishment of Buddhahood. We must benefit ourselves and benefit others. Don't be selfish and concerned about your own gains. Nor should you be jealous or obstructive of others. If someone understands the Buddhadharma better than you do, under no circumstances should you be jealous. If you are jealous of others, you will undergo the retribution of being stupid in the future. Do your utmost with regard to the dharma, but never, never become jealous of others. Don't have ideas of obstructing other people. It shouldn't be that if someone gets enlightened and you haven't, you have a fit, saying, "Really, the Buddhas are simply too unfair. How could they let him get enlightened instead of me?" With that, your ignorance arises. Or perhaps someone hears the dharma and grasps it immediately. He learns fast and masters the Shurangama Mantra within a couple of month's time. But someone else who hasn't mastered it by then goes into a jealous rage. "How did you get ahead of me? How did you learn it so fast?" Whatever you do, no matter what, under no circumstances should you be jealous of others. You should be happy at heart. "His mastering the mantra is just like my mastering it." "His enlightenment is like my own." You should give rise to thoughts of accordance with other beings, praising them and congratulating them. The most undesirable thing to have when you study the dharma is a jealous attitude.

I repeat, if you are jealous of others, you will be stupid in the future. So stupid will you be that you won't know how to do anything at all, even eat. What a mess you'll be in then! It happens, you know. There are living beings who are so dumb they don't even know how to feed themselves, and they end up starving to death. If someone is more accomplished than you, you should be happy for them.

The Bodhisattvas reach the point of not putting forth any resistance. This method of non-resistance refers to patience, the third paramita. When something pleasant happens, one is happy; when something unpleasant happens, one is still happy. One doesn't put up any resistance; one doesn't oppose the opinions of others. That's patience. In all circumstances, one forebears. I've recited the poem by Maitreya Bodhisattva for you before:

The Old Fool wears tattered clothes
And fills his belly with bland food;
Mends his clothes against the cold,
And just puts up with whatever comes along.
If someone scolds the Old Fool,
He just says, "Fine."
If someone strikes the Old Fool,
He lays down to sleep.
"Spit on my face? I'll just let it dry.
I save the energy and you don't get upset."
This kind of paramita
Is the jewel within the wonderful.
If you get this good news,
What worry can there be
about not perfecting the Way?
The third conduct is the practice of patience; it is called the
Conduct of Non-Opposition. No matter how you are treated, you
don't get angry.

K4 Conduct of endlessness.
 **Sutra:

To undergo birth in various forms continuously to the bounds of the future, equally throughout the three periods of time and pervading the ten directions, is called the Conduct of Endlessness.

Commentary:**
To undergo birth in various forms means to be able to appear by transformation within any of the twelve classes of living beings. One can send transformation bodies among all those kinds of beings, appearing in forms like theirs, continuously to the bounds of the future, equally throughout the three periods of time, past, present, and future. One can "pervade the ten directions" without end and has what is called the Conduct of Endlessness, the fourth conduct. It corresponds to the perfection of vigor.

K5 Conduct of freedom from deluded confusion.
 **Sutra:

When everything is equally in accord, one never makes mistakes among the various dharma doors. This is called the Conduct of Freedom from Deluded Confusion.

Commentary:**

This conduct corresponds with the perfection of dhyana samadhi, which aids those who are scattered and easily confused. When everything is equally in accord, one never makes mistakes among the various dharma doors. Within any dharma door spoken by the Buddha one naturally gains understanding and knows the function of any given dharma. This is called the Conduct of Freedom from Deluded Confusion.

K6 Conduct of wholesome manifestation.
 **Sutra:

Then within what is identical, myriad differences appear; the characteristics of every difference are seen, one and all, in identity. This is called the Conduct of Wholesome Manifestation.

Commentary:**

Then within what is identical, myriad differences appear. What is identical is the principle. What are different are the specifics. At the noumenal level there is identity; at the phenomenal level there are differences. The characteristics of every difference are seen, one and all, in identity. That is, the phenomena all tally with principle. There is:

1) the unobstructedness of principles in specifics;
2) the unobstructedness of specifics in principles;
3) the unobstructedness of specifics with specifics;
4) the unobstructedness of both principles and specifics.
Therefore, in identity appear differences; within differences identity is found. This is called the Conduct of Wholesome Manifestation.

Identity and differences do not obstruct one another, and each appears within the other. This is the perfection of wisdom.

K7 Conduct of non-attachment.
 **Sutra:

This continues until it includes all the dust motes that fill up empty space throughout the ten directions. In each and every mote of dust there appear the worlds of the ten directions. And yet the appearance of dust motes and the appearance of worlds do not interfere with one another. This is called the Conduct of Non-Attachment.

Commentary:**
This continues until it includes all the dust motes that fill up empty space throughout the ten directions. Not only is it the case that within identity, differences can appear, and within differences, identity is evident, but within the few the many can appear, and within the many the few are evident. Within the small the great can appear; within the great the small are evident. "Empty space" is the manifestation of the great. "Dust motes" are the manifestation of the small. Within every dust mote, worlds appear, so that every world can fit within a mote of dust. But when a world appears in a dust mote, it's not the case that the world shrinks. Nor is it the case that the dust mote has to expand to contain the world. This is the great appearing in the small and the small manifesting the great without any hindrance.

In each and every mote of dust there appear the worlds of the ten directions. The worlds of the ten directions are tremendously large, while a fine mote of dust is minute; yet none of the worlds get smaller, nor does the mote of dust expand. And yet the appearance of dust motes and the appearance of worlds do not interfere with one another. They include one another without any obstruction. This is called the Conduct of Non-Attachment. Worlds are motes of dust; motes of dust are worlds. Little is big; big is little. To experience this is the "conduct of non-attachment." This is the seventh perfection, that of expedience.

K8 Conduct of veneration.
 **Sutra:

Everything that appears before one is the foremost paramita. This is called the Conduct of Veneration.

Commentary:**
The "conduct of veneration" is also the perfection of vows. It is brought to accomplishment through the power of vows. Everything that appears before one is the foremost paramita. All the states that manifest are the number one paramita, the dharma for reaching the other shore. This is called the Conduct of Veneration. This is the eighth conduct.

K9 Conduct of wholesome dharma.
 **Sutra:

With such perfect fusion, one can model oneself after all the Buddhas of the ten directions. This is called the Conduct of Wholesome Dharma.

Commentary:**

With such perfect fusion, when everything becomes the foremost paramita, one can model oneself after all the Buddhas of the ten directions. In one's cultivation one can be in accord with all the rules and regulations established by all the Buddhas of the ten directions. This is called the Conduct of Wholesome Dharma. It is the perfection of strength. One's own practice is strong. This is the ninth conduct.

K10 Conduct of true actuality.
 **Sutra:

To then be pure and without outflows in each and every way is the primary truth, which is unconditioned, the essence of the nature. This is called the Conduct of True Actuality.

Commentary:**

The tenth is called the "conduct of true actuality". To then be pure and without outflows in each and every way is the primary truth, which is unconditioned, the essence of the nature. "In each and every way" means that all the previous nine entries into conduct are conducted purely and without outflows. Then there is only one truth, that of the unconditioned. And that's the way the nature originally is. This is called the Conduct of True Actuality. This corresponds with the perfection of knowledge. These are the ten conducts of a Bodhisattva.

The Ten Transferences

J6 The ten positions of the ten transferences.
K1 Transference apart from appearances.
 **Sutra:

Ananda, when these good people replete with spiritual penetrations, have done the Buddhas' work, are totally pure and absolutely true, and remain distant from obstacles and calamities, then they take living beings across while casting aside the appearance of taking them across. They transform the unconditioned mind and go toward the path of nirvana. This is called the Transference of Saving and Protecting Living Beings, While Apart from the Appearance of Living Beings.

Commentary:**

Ananda, when these good people, these people who have cultivated the ten conducts, develop genuine wisdom to the point that their practice is said to be true and real, then they are replete with spiritual penetrations, and have done the Buddhas' work. Throughout the ten directions they perform a tremendous number of deeds on behalf of the Buddhas. And yet:

The myriad practices they cultivate are but flowers in space.
The Bodhimandas they sit in are like the moon in water,
And subduing the demonic armies mere reflections in a mirror.
They do great deeds of the Buddhas while in the midst of a dream.

That represents their non-attachment. Everything is like an illusion, a transformation; nothing really exists. So don't be attached to anything. See through it all, put it down, and you can obtain selfmastery.

They are totally pure and absolutely true; they have accomplished that state, and they remain distant from obstacles and calamities. They are not hindered in any way. Then they take living beings across while casting aside the appearance of taking them across. They rescue those whom they should rescue without having any thought of having rescued them. The Vajra Sutra explains this as well; Shakyamuni Buddha says there: "I should take all beings across to extinction, and yet when all beings are thus taken across, there should not be any beings taken across to extinction."

Again, this means one must not be attached and think, "I did this, I did that." One builds a temple and then cannot get the thought out of one's mind that one was the builder and has accrued so much merit. That is to still have an appearance left.

They take living beings across while casting aside the appearance of taking them across. You don't look upon the deed as something you did, but rather as something you should have done. It was your responsibility in the first place; why would you need to let anyone know it had been done? If you brag about what you've done, it implies that it was something you didn't have to do. Conversely, some people say, "I didn't steal anything or kill anyone in this life. I've never done anything bad, so why aren't things better for me?" This implies that they were originally destined to steal and kill, but that they refrained from doing so and should be rewarded for that. This is a mistaken point of view.

They transform the unconditioned mind and go toward the path of nirvana. They turn the unconditioned mind of the small vehicle toward nirvana. This is called the Transference of Saving and Protecting Living Beings, While Apart from the Appearance of Living Beings. They see it as their responsibility to rescue living beings, and so they are apart from the appearance of having rescued them. They do not ponder the amount of merit and virtue involved in rescuing living beings. "It's my job. That's what I should be doing," should be how you think of it.

"But," you ask, "Isn't there merit and virtue involved in rescuing living beings?" Yes, there is. But don't dwell on it. What's past is past. What you've done, you've done. Don't hold on to the idea of having rescued living beings. This is not to say that you should not rescue beings; it's to say that you shouldn't harbor the appearance of having taken them across.

K2 Transference of indestructibility.
 **Sutra:

To destroy what should be destroyed and to remain far removed from what should be left behind is called the Transference of Indestructibility.

Commentary:**
To destroy what should be destroyed means to get rid of the things that one should not keep. What are they? No matter how much we talk it always comes back to the same things: karmic obstacles, ignorance, and afflictions. Get rid of these. Destroy them.

To remain far removed from what should be left behind means to get rid of your faults. For instance, people who cultivate the Way should not have any greed, anger, or stupidity. You should destroy them. All good dharmas should be embraced. All bad dharmas should be rejected. Get them far behind you. This is called the Transference of Indestructibility. What is indestructible? Your inherent good roots are indestructible. Your originally existent enlightened nature is indestructible. With the transference of indestructibility you have to destroy what should be destroyed and keep what is indestructible.

K3 Transference of sameness with all Buddhas.
 **Sutra:

Fundamental enlightenment is profound indeed, an enlightenment equal to the Buddhas' enlightenment. This is called the Transference of Sameness with All Buddhas.

Commentary:**
Fundamental enlightenment refers to the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One inherent in us all. It is profound indeed, and pure. It is an enlightenment equal to the Buddhas' enlightenment. The enlightenment of our minds is the same as the enlightenment of the Buddhas. This is called the Transference of Sameness with All Buddhas.

K4 Transference of reaching all places.
 **Sutra:

When absolute truth is discovered, one's level is the same as the level of all Buddhas. This is called the Transference of Reaching All Places.

Commentary:**
When the absolute truth of the previous transference is discovered, one's level is the same as the level of all Buddhas. This is a level which is a prelude to the Buddha's position. This is called the Transference of Reaching All Places.

K5 Transference of the treasury of inexhaustible merit and virtue.
 **Sutra:

Worlds and Thus Come Ones include one another without any obstruction. This is called the Transference of a Treasury of Inexhaustible Merit and Virtue.

Commentary:**

Worlds and Thus Come Ones include one another without any obstruction. Worlds are the very body of the Thus Come One; the very body of the Thus Come One is itself the worlds. The wonderful function of spiritual penetrations enables them to contain one another. Nor is there any hindrance for either, nor anything contrived about it. This is called the Transference of a Treasury of Inexhaustible Merit and Virtue.

The Emperor Wu of Liang is a case in point of someone who was attached to the idea of creating merit. When he encountered the Patriarch Bodhidharma, he asked him, "I have built many grand temples. I have commissioned a tremendous number of people to enter the Sangha. I have made extensive vegetarian offerings. I've built bridges, improved highways, and much more. Tell me, how much merit have I accrued?"

Who would have guessed that the patriarch would scowl and retort, "None whatsoever."

The emperor was duly affronted and refused to have anything more to do with the patriarch. Actually, Patriarch Bodhidharma was intent upon saving the emperor. But because the emperor's karmic obstructions were so heavy he missed his chance, even though he was face to face with the first patriarch of China. It was like the saying, "Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva was right before him and he didn't even recognize him." The "Mind from the West" was right before the Emperor Wu of Liang and he failed to see him.

Why did he need rescuing by Patriarch Bodhidharma? It's because the patriarch knew that the emperor had a disaster in store for him. He was hoping to wake him up so he would either leave the home life and cultivate or at least yield the throne to someone else, thereby avoiding having to starve to death. Basically the emperor was a devout believer in Buddhism, and during his reign Buddhism flourished because he used his imperial position to spread the Buddhadharma, building temples all about the land. The majority of the population was Buddhist during that reign period. But he had created some heavy karma in past lives. In a former life the emperor was a bhikshu who cultivated in the mountains. At one point he began to be visited every day by a monkey who stole the fruits and vegetables he had planted. Pretty soon there wasn't much left for him to eat. Because of that, he trapped the monkey in a cave and sealed the opening with a boulder. He had originally intended to leave it there for a few days to teach it a lesson and then let it go. The trouble was that he forgot about it, and the monkey starved to death in the cave.

In his life as an emperor, then, the monkey was reborn as a monkey-spirit who led an army and attacked Nan Jing. After conquering Nan Jing, the monkey-spirit locked the emperor in a tower, removed all food, and left him to starve. The bhikshu's retribution for having starved a monkey to death was that the monkey returned in a later life when the bhikshu was an emperor and starved him to death.

Patriarch Bodhidharma saw that the emperor had amassed a lot of merit and virtue, and he thought that the emperor might make use of the merit to lessen the offense. But in order for that to happen, the causes and conditions had to be right as well. That's why Patriarch Bodhidharma was so severe with him. But the emperor thought himself a mighty monarch to whom a penniless monk had no right to talk in such a way, so he shunned the patriarch. Although Patriarch Bodhidharma wanted to save him, there was nothing he could do but leave, since the emperor would have nothing to do with him and did not seek to be saved. In the end, the emperor starved to death at the hands of the monkey-spirit.

K6 Transference of the identity of all good roots.
 **Sutra:

Since they are identical with the Buddha-ground, they create causes which are pure at each and every level. Brilliance emanates from them as they rely on these causes, and they go straight down the path to nirvana. This is called the Transference of Following in Accord with the Identity of All Good Roots.

Commentary:**

After the Bodhisattvas have reached the accomplishment of the previous transference of a treasury of inexhaustible merit and virtue, then, since they are identical with the Buddha-ground, they create causes which are pure at each and every level. At each level along the way they give rise to causes which are clear and pure and undefiled. Brilliance emanates from them as they rely on these causes, and they go straight down the path to nirvana. They hold to the Way which is neither produced nor destroyed. This is called the Transference of Following in Accord with the Identity of All Good Roots.

K7 Transference of contemplating all living beings equally.
 **Sutra:

When the true roots are set down, then all living beings in the ten directions are my own nature. Not a single being is lost as this nature is successfully perfected. This is called the Transference of Contemplating All Living Beings Equally.

Commentary:**

When the true roots are set down, then all living beings in the ten directions are my own nature. They are one and the same as the Bodhisattvas. That is why Bodhisattvas want to rescue living beings without there being an appearance of living beings. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas see all living beings as their own substance. They are one with them. Therefore, for them to save living beings is not really to save other living beings; it's just to save themselves. Not a single being is lost, as this nature is successfully perfected. Since they are one with all beings, no being is neglected. This is called the Transference of Contemplating All Living Beings Equally.

To say that all beings are their own nature is to speak of living beings who exist outside themselves. But we can also speak of internal beings, because there are boundlessly many beings within the body of each of us. Science describes the white corpuscles and the red corpuscles and verifies that our bodies contain innumerable microscopic organisms. If you were to open your Buddha eye and look into people's bodies, you would see an unknown number of beings there, uncountably many tiny forms of life, even to the point that when you exhale, you send a lot of beings out in your breath. At that point they are incarnated again as beings. By the same token, you ingest innumerable beings when you inhale. So it's pretty hard to draw a clear line between being a carnivore and not being one, if you get down to the subtler aspects of it. Here you are taking life with every breath, and that, too, is a form of killing if you do it with a murderous intent. Of course, we're getting down to details here.

The beings in your body are just ordinary creatures if you don't cultivate. If you do cultivate, they become the Buddha-nature. They can all return to the source. You return to the origin and they go right along with you, all those tiny forms of life that you harbor. If you cultivate to the point where you have some skill, then the beings external to you and the beings within you all become one with you. But as of right now, there are basically too many living beings.

K8 Transference of the appearance of true suchness.
 **Sutra:

All dharmas are themselves apart from all appearances, and yet there is no attachment either to their existence or to separation from them. This is called the Transference of the Appearance of True Suchness.

Commentary:**

All dharmas are themselves apart from all appearances. Right within dharmas one must be apart from all appearances. In the appearance of dharmas one must separate from the appearance of dharmas. And yet there is no attachment either to their existence or to separation from them. This is called the Transference of the Appearance of True Suchness.

K9 Transference of liberation.
 **Sutra:

That which is thus is truly obtained, and there is no obstruction throughout the ten directions. This is called the Transference of Unfettered Liberation.

Commentary:**
One definition of true suchness is that which is thus being truly obtained. It is also described as "wisdom which is thus giving rise to principle which is thus." When that is obtained, there is no obstruction throughout the ten directions. You can roam throughout the Buddha realms of the ten directions without any hindrances. This is called the Transference of Unfettered Liberation. Nothing is tying you up. You are free.

K10 Transference of the limitlessness of the dharma realm.
 **Sutra:

When the virtue of the nature is perfectly accomplished, the boundaries of the dharma-realm are destroyed. This is called the Transference of the Limitlessness of the dharmarealm.

Commentary:**

Before the virtue of the nature is perfectly accomplished, before you have become one with the dharma-realm, you do not even know the boundaries of the dharma-realm. When the virtue of the nature has been perfectly accomplished and you become one with the dharma-realm, then you know the boundaries of the dharmarealm.

But since it still has a boundary, you have not yet reached the ultimate accomplishment. Now, when the virtue of the nature is perfectly accomplished, the boundaries of the dharma-realm are destroyed. Even the dharma-realm is empty. This is called the Transference of the Limitlessness of the dharma-realm.

The Four Positions of Additional Practices

J7 Four positions of additional practices.
K1 Concludes the former discussion and begins the next.
 **Sutra:

Ananda, when these good people have completely purified these forty-one minds, they further accomplish four kinds of wonderfully perfect additional practices.

Commentary:**

The Bodhisattva, the person practicing, reaches a state of purity with regard to these forty-one minds. The "forty-one minds" are:

1) the level of dry wisdom;
2-11) the ten faiths;
12-21) the ten dwellings;
22-31) the ten conducts;
32-41) the ten transferences.

The level of dry wisdom, you'll remember, is also called "initial dry wisdom" and "the initial vajra mind." Following these forty-one positions are four further levels. They are known as the wonderfully perfect additional practices; they are:

1) heat;
2) summit;
3) patience;
4) first in the world.

K2 Specific explanation of the four positions.
L1 The level of heat.
 **Sutra:

When the enlightenment of a Buddha is just about to become a function of his own mind, it is on the verge of emerging but has not yet emerged, and so it can be compared to the point just before wood ignites when it is drilled to produce fire. Therefore it is called the Level of Heat.

Commentary:**
This is the first of the four additional practices, the level of heat. The analogy is given of wood which is drilled to get fire; this level is compared to the point just before the wood ignites. When the enlightenment of a Buddha is just about to become a function of his own mind means that what the Buddhas are enlightened to and what he himself is enlightened to are the same thing. When it is on the verge of emerging but has not yet emerged, and so it can be compared to the point just before wood ignites when it is drilled to produce fire. The igniting of the wood being drilled is like enlightenment. The wood is right on the point of bursting into flame. With the enlightenment there is also heat, therefore it is called the Level of Heat. This is the forty-second position in the Bodhisattva's progression.

L2 Level of the summit.
 **Sutra:

He continues on with his mind, treading where the Buddhas tread, as if relying and yet not. It is as if he were climbing a lofty mountain, to the point where his body is in space but there remains a slight obstruction beneath him. Therefore it is called the Level of the Summit.

Commentary:**
He continues on with his mind, treading where the Buddhas tread, as if relying and yet not. His own mind goes down the path the Buddhas take. He seems to be dependent and yet he is also independent. A different analogy is used here. It is as if he were climbing a lofty mountain, to the point where his body is in space but there remains a slight obstruction beneath him. He is like someone climbing a mountain, and when he gets to the top, it is as if he physically enters into empty space because he is so high up. But under his feet, as he stands on the mountain, there is still a slight hindrance. He still has not yet ascended into empty space. Therefore it is called the Level of the Summit.

L3 Level of patience.
 **Sutra:

When the mind and the Buddha are two and yet the same, he has well obtained the Middle Way. He is like someone who endures something when it seems impossible to either hold it in
or let it out. Therefore it is called the Level of Patience.

Commentary:**
When the mind and the Buddha are two and yet the same, he has well obtained the Middle Way. The mind is the Buddha; the Buddha is the mind. Although they are said to be two, they come together as one. What is the mind is the Buddha. There is no Buddha outside the mind; there is no mind outside the Buddha. The mind and the Buddha are in a state of suchness. He has the genuinely obtained the principle and substance of the Middle Way. He is like someone who endures something when it seems impossible to either hold it in or let it out. It is as if a situation arises which a person must bear: he'd like to keep it contained, but that is impossible; at the same time, it's impossible for him to let it out. So at that point he bears with it. He'd like to keep it in his mind and he'd like to release it. He can't decide which would be the better thing to do. So he bears with it. He'd like to let it go, but he can't give it up. And yet he'd still like to let it go. At this time he must be patient. Therefore it is called the level of Patience. It is the third of the additional practices.

L4 Level of being first in the world.

Sutra:

When numbers are destroyed, there are no such designations as the Middle Way or as confusion and enlightenment; this is called the Level of Being First in the World.

**Commentary:**

When numbers are destroyed. At the tenth transference, the boundaries of the dharma-realm are destroyed. Now all numbers and boundaries are destroyed. What is meant? It's the same as a zero. I've talked about zero before. It is the absence of numbers. At that point there are no such designations as the Middle Way or as confusion and enlightenment. Perfection is total and the light brilliant. There are no designations because it's a situation that's like zero. There's nothing that can be said about zero. Zero means the absence of everything. And yet everything outside the zero is contained within it. The zero is the mother of all things. But it is not designated as a mother, because there isn't anything there. To understand what I'm saying right now is enlightenment.

There isn't any confusion; there isn't any enlightenment. Why isn't there any confusion? Because he is not confused. Why isn't there any enlightenment? He's already enlightened; what further enlightenment could there be? For there to be no confusion and no enlightenment is zero. All the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, the plants, and all the myriad appearances come forth from it. There is no designation for enlightenment and confusion, or for the Middle Way. Even though there's no name for this state, we still have to call it something, so we force the issue and call it the Level of Being First in the World. It's first in the world because there is no second. This is the last of the additional practices.

The Ten Positions of the Ten Grounds

J8 The ten positions of the ten grounds.
K1 Ground of happiness.
 **Sutra:

Ananda, these good men have successfully penetrated through to great Bodhi. Their enlightenment is entirely like the Thus Come One's. They have fathomed the state of Buddhahood. This is called the Ground of Happiness.

Commentary:**

Ananda, these good men have successfully penetrated through to great Bodhi. The "good men" are the Bodhisattvas who have obtained the "level of being first in the world". Although the text says he has successfully penetrated through to great Bodhi, there really isn't anything that's been penetrated through to. Their enlightenment is entirely like the Thus Come One's. Their enlightenment is the Thus Come One; the Thus Come One is enlightenment. They have become enlightened to that which the Thus Come One has become enlightened to. They can be called a Thus Come One when they have enlightened to that zero. And yet the zero isn't anything at all, so don't get attached to it! They have fathomed the state of Buddhahood. True emptiness is the state of being nothing at all. But when they fathom the state of a Buddha, then within true emptiness arises wonderful existence. That wonderful existence is happiness. "Oh, so originally it's just that way!" That's the arising of happiness. "I didn't understand before, but now I do." They are inexpressibly happy. This is called the Ground of Happiness. It's the first ground.

K2 Ground of leaving filth.
 **Sutra:

The differences enter into identity; the identity is destroyed. This is called the Ground of Leaving Filth.

Commentary:**

On the previous ground there was still happiness, and so an identity still existed, too. Although there were no designations, there was still an identity. That was when the differences enter into identity and become one. That is, although the phenomena and the noumenon are united, the noumenon still remains. Now when they reach the second ground, the identity is destroyed. The second ground is called the "ground of leaving filth," which means that they separate from ignorance. Basically there isn't much ignorance left by this time, for their enlightened natures are already like that of a Buddha. A slight bit of attachment, a little defilement remains for them. Now "identity is destroyed"; their likeness to the Buddha ceases to be. That's to return to the source, to go back to the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One, which is a great storehouse of light. It has no name or appearance. This is called the Ground of Leaving Filth. Happiness is still a kind of defilement. If there is something you like, then you still have emotional reactions. At the second ground, all the defilements are left behind. Subtle ignorance is also lessened. But at this level the ignorance is still not completely cut off.

K3 Ground of emitting light.
 **Sutra:

At the point of ultimate purity, brightness comes forth. This is called the Ground of Emitting Light.

Commentary:**

A Bodhisattva on the first ground does not know the state of a Bodhisattva on the second ground. A Bodhisattva on the second ground doesn't know the state of a Bodhisattva on the third ground. At the point of ultimate purity, brightness comes forth. The previous ground was that of leaving filth. But as long as there is a necessity to "leave" it, there must still be defilement. Only when one has completely left the filth is one clean. Let's take sweeping as an example. We sweep in order to clean up the floor. We put the broom aside when the floor is clean. As long as we are still sweeping, it isn't clean yet.

When he reaches the ultimate purity, light comes forth. There is brightness. So the third ground is called the Ground of Emitting Light.

K4 Ground of blazing wisdom.
 **Sutra:

When the brightness becomes ultimate, enlightenment is full. This is called the Ground of Blazing Wisdom.

Commentary:**
When the brightness becomes ultimate, enlightenment is full. The light reaches its maximum and the enlightened nature is perfected. This is called the Ground of Blazing Wisdom. "Blazing" is descriptive of the wisdom that is bright like a torch.

K5 Ground of invincibility.
 **Sutra:

No identity or difference can be attained. This is called the Ground of Invincibility.

Commentary:**
No identity or difference can be attained. Not only are things that are the same identical at this stage; all things are identical. The Bodhisattva cannot come to any distinction between sameness and difference. There is no way to represent them because basically there is no identity or difference. This is called the Ground of Invincibility. There isn't anything that can overcome this level of understanding. It transcends all the other previous grounds. This is the name given to the fifth level of these stages of the Bodhisattvas' development.

Is it the case that one Bodhisattva reaches the Ground of Invincibility? Yes, it is the case that one Bodhisattva does. And yet this one Bodhisattva is not just a single Bodhisattva. There is only one, and yet there is not. Here is where the Buddhadharma is to be found. One Bodhisattva comes up to this level. But millions of billions of other Bodhisattvas also come up to this level. For instance, when someone earns a Ph.D. degree, is that one person alone in earning it? Certainly that one person has earned it, but someone else can also earn one. Everyone who has one has earned it. And so how many earn one? Millions. Not just one. The same principle applies here. Probably more Bodhisattvas than there are sand grains in the Ganges River are certified as having attained each of these grounds.

K6 Ground of manifestation.
 **Sutra:

With unconditioned true suchness, the nature is spotless, and brightness is revealed. This is called the Ground of Manifestation.

Commentary:**
With unconditioned true suchness, the nature is spotless, and brightness is revealed. It is unconditioned, and yet there is nothing which is not conditioned. True suchness refers to the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One. It is the one true dharmarealm. With unconditioned true suchness everything is in a state of suchness, everything is true. There is nothing which is not true, nothing which is not in a state of suchness. The nature is extremely pure, and light shines forth. This is the sixth ground, called the Ground of Manifestation. That's because the Bodhisattva's nature reveals itself.

K7 Ground of traveling far.

**Sutra:

Coming to the farthest limits of true suchness is called the Ground of Traveling Far.

Commentary:**

True suchness has no limits and no farthest point, so how can this be? Again, it is descriptive. There really isn't any end to true suchness, because it really doesn't have any limits, so that's why the sutra says it this way: Coming to the farthest limits of true suchness. It's just like when we say that empty space is obliterated. But since empty space isn?t even a substance to begin with, how can it be obliterated? This is the same kind of attempt to describe what is basically beyond comprehension.

True suchness doesn't have any limits. It includes the ten dharma-realms with all their beings. How could it have a boundary? What's beyond the ten dharma-realms? Nothing. And so it says "Coming to the farthest limits of true suchness." That is to travel far indeed! How far? Who knows? All we can say is that it's called the Ground of Traveling Far. Ordinary people could never get there. Only a Bodhisattva at the seventh ground can go that far.

K8 Ground of immovability.
 **Sutra:

The single mind of true suchness is called the Ground of Immovability.

Commentary:**
The single mind of true suchness is the one true dharmarealm. It was said above that the mind is the Buddha and the Buddha is the mind. Now true suchness is the mind and the mind is the Buddha. There is no distinction between true suchness and the mind. Since true suchness has no limits, the Bodhisattva's mind has no limits. When his mind has no limits, where does he go? He doesn't go anywhere. Therefore, it is called the Ground of Immovability. Unmoving in the Bodhimanda, he pervades the dharma-realm. This is the eighth ground.

K9 Ground of good wisdom.
 **Sutra:

Bringing forth the function of true suchness is called the Ground of Good Wisdom.

Commentary:**

At the eighth ground, true suchness and the mind become one, and this was called the ground of not moving. But to simply be unmoving and to never make a move would be useless. However, within true suchness, the function now comes forth. What is the function of true suchness? The function of true suchness is gigantic. If it were small, it would have only a single function. But this gigantic function can be used however one wishes. According with conditions, one is unmoving; unmoving, one accords with conditions. One constantly accords with conditions and yet is constantly unmoving; one is constantly unmoving and yet constantly accords with conditions. Such a functioning must be connected with wisdom. Therefore, bringing forth the function of true suchness is called the Ground of Good Wisdom. This is the ninth ground. This wisdom is totally true and real.
 **Sutra:

Ananda, all Bodhisattvas at this point and beyond have reached the effortless way in their cultivation. Their merit and virtue are perfected, and so all the previous positions are also called the Level of Cultivation.

Commentary:**

Ananda, you should understand that all Bodhisattvas at this point and beyond have reached the effortless way in their cultivation. From the beginning, the level of dry wisdom, also known as the initial vajra mind, to the culmination of the ninth ground, there are a total of fifty-four positions. When the Bodhisattvas have passed through to this point, they've reached the effortless way. They have graduated. Their merit and virtue are perfected. In their study leading toward Buddhahood, they are just about to earn this degree; they're about to become Buddhas. And so all the previous positions are also called the Level of Cultivation.

K10 Ground of the dharma cloud.
 **Sutra:

Then with a wonderful cloud of compassionate protection one covers the sea of nirvana. This is called the Ground of the Dharma Cloud.

Commentary:**
"Wonder" and "compassion" are dharmas. "Protection" and "covering" belong to the analogy of the cloud and represent asheltering influence. Then with a wonderful cloud of compassionate protection one covers the sea of nirvana. One shelters all living beings. All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas emerge from the sea of nirvana, and so the tenth ground is called the Ground of the Dharma Cloud. At this level one shelters and protects all living beings.

The Position of Equal and Wonderful Enlightenment

J9 The position of equal enlightenment.
K1 Describing the position.
 **Sutra:

The Thus Come Ones counter the flow as the Bodhisattvas thus reach this point through compliance with practice. Their enlightenments intermingle; it is therefore called Equal Enlightenment.

Commentary:**

The Thus Come Ones counter the flow. This means that the Thus Come Ones have already become Buddhas. But they counter the flow and appear in the world to rescue living beings. Thus from the Buddha-position, they come back along the Bodhisattva path in order to greet the Bodhisattva. That's what's meant by countering the flow. The Bodhisattvas thus reach this point through compliance with practice. The Bodhisattvas comply with the flow. This "flow" refers to going from an ordinary person to Arhatship, through Bodhisattvahood, and on to Buddhahood, which the Bodhisattvas have not yet experienced at this point. So they are going along with the flow that leads to the Buddha's enlightened position. Now, they actually encounter the Buddhas. Their enlightenments intermingle. The enlightenment of the Buddhas and the enlightenment of the Bodhisattvas merge at this point. It is therefore called Equal Enlightenment. These Bodhisattvas are equal to the Buddha. But theirs is still not wonderful enlightenment. It is still only similar to the Buddha's enlightenment, because at this level they still have left one bit of ignorance that seems to be that of production. They still must destroy that. So ignorance is difficult to leave behind. Once they smash it, however, they will be Buddhas.

When people claim to be Buddhas, I ask them, "From where did you come? What path did you take?" If they don't even know the name of the first position, have never seen the path that leads to the second position, and don't know how to get to the third position, then how can they have arrived at Buddhahood? They took a plane, perhaps? In that case a rocket would have been even faster. I suspect that such people will never reach the Buddha position. Why not? It is because they say they are there when in fact they are not. Do they speak the truth, or do they lie? They have not cultivated or done anything within the Buddhadharma, and yet they profess to be Buddhas. It just doesn't add up. How about those people who have practiced within the Buddhadharma for decades and still are not Buddhas? Maybe those people who say they are Buddhas have effected some scientific means to get themselves there so fast.

K2 Bringing out the wisdom obtained.
 **Sutra:

Ananda, the enlightenment which encompasses the mind of dry wisdom through to the culmination of equal enlightenment is the initial attainment of the vajra mind. This constitutes the level of Initial Dry Wisdom.

Commentary:**

Ananda, the enlightenment which encompasses the mind of dry wisdom, also called the initial vajra mind and the level of dry wisdom, through to the culmination of equal enlightenment is the initial attainment of the vajra mind. This refers to the latter vajra mind. This constitutes the level of Initial Dry Wisdom of the latter vajra mind. The previous level of dry wisdom referred to the drying up of emotional love and desire. At that point, he had not yet joined with the Thus Come One's dharma-water. Now, even though this latter level of dry wisdom is more encompassing, he still has not yet joined the sea of wonderful adornments of a Thus Come One, so it's also referred to as dry wisdom. However, it pertains to the latter vajra mind and is the final step.

J10 The position of wonderful enlightenment.
 **Sutra:

Thus there are totals of twelve single and grouped levels. At last they reach wonderful enlightenment and accomplish the Unsurpassed Way.

Commentary:**
Thus there are totals of twelve single and grouped levels. There are seven single levels:

1) initial dry wisdom;
2) heat;
3) summit;
4) patience;
5) first in the world;
6) equal enlightenment;
7) wonderful enlightenment.

There are five grouped levels:

1) the ten faiths;
2) the ten dwellings;
3) the ten conducts;
4) the ten transferences;
5) the ten grounds.

Because each of these levels includes ten positions, they are classed as groups. Together the seven single levels and the five groups make twelve. There are fifty-four positions from the initial dry wisdom to equal enlightenment. Some count the initial dry wisdom of the latter vajra mind as the fifty-fifth, but actually that level of dry wisdom is the same as equal enlightenment.

At last they reach Wonderful Enlightenment and accomplish the Unsurpassed Way. They come to the end of the path to wonderful enlightenment and accomplish the reward and the substance of wonderful enlightenment. They have accomplished Buddhahood.

I2 Conclusion: manifestation of pure dharmas.
 **Sutra:

At all these levels they use vajra contemplation of the ten profound analogies for the ways in which things are like an illusion. In shamatha they use the Thus Come Ones' vipashyana to cultivate them purely, to be certified to them, and to gradually enter them more and more deeply.

Commentary:**
At all these levels they use vajra contemplation of the ten profound analogies for the ways in which things are like an illusion. These levels are the ones just described, from the level of dry wisdom of the initial vajra mind through the ten faiths, the ten dwellings, the ten conducts, the ten transferences, the ten grounds, and the four additional practices. They use the vajra mind to cultivate with, to contemplate by. They contemplate how things are like an illusion. "Illusion" means that you say it is real, but it isn't; you say it's false, but it isn't. It's as I mentioned before:

The myriad practices he cultivates are but flowers in space.
The Bodhimanda he sits in is like the moon in water.
And subduing the demonic armies, mere reflections in a mirror.
He does great deeds of the Buddhas while in a dream.

The "ten profound analogies" are as follows:

1. All karma is like an illusion. You should look upon karmic obstacles as illusory, not real.

2. All dharmas are like a mirage. Sometimes in the spring you'll see what seems to be smoke rising, but when you approach the spot, you find there's really nothing there at all. It's just a mirage. You should look upon all dharmas in the same way.

3. All physical bodies are like the moon in water.

4. All wonderful forms are like flowers in space.

5. All wonderful sounds are like echoes in a valley.

6. All Buddhalands are like gandharva cities.

Basically the Buddhalands are real, but you should look upon them as if they were but the cities of gandharvas.

7. All deeds of the Buddha are like dreams.

8. The Buddha's body is like a reflection.

9. The reward body is like an image.

10. The dharma body is like a transformation.

You should not look upon any of these things as real. You should neither grasp nor reject these illusory states. That is because everything is empty; you should not regard anything as actually existent. What is the meaning behind these ten profound analogies? They tell you not to be attached to anything at all. You have to put everything down. If you see through it and put it all down, then you will obtain self-mastery.

In shamatha they use the Thus Come Ones' vipashyana to cultivate them purely, to be certified to them, and to gradually enter them more and more deeply. "Shamatha" means stopping and "vipashyana" means contemplating. We are to cultivate the dharma door of stopping and contemplating. "Vipashyana" also means "subtle, secret contemplation and illumination." Gradually, bit by bit, one progresses and enters into this purification and certification.

I3 He stresses the importance of vigor in the initial resolve.
 **Sutra:

Ananda, because they put to use the three means of advancement throughout all of them, they are well able to accomplish the fifty-five stages of the true Bodhi Path.

Commentary:**
The three means of advancement have already been explained. They are:

1) getting rid of aiding causes;
2) cleaning up the proper nature;
3) guarding against the manifestation of karma.

The fifty-five stages are:

1) the ten faiths;
2) the ten dwellings;
3) the ten conducts;
4) the ten transferences;
5) the four additional practices;
6) the ten grounds;
7) equal enlightenment.

I4 He decides the division of proper and deviant.
 **Sutra:

This manner of contemplation is called 'proper contemplation.' Contemplation other than this is called 'deviant contemplation.'

Commentary:**

This manner of contemplation is called "proper contemplation." If you can look upon the triple world as upon flowers in space; if you can regard all deeds of the Buddha as if done in a dream; and if you rely on the three means of advancement in your cultivation, your contemplation is proper. If you can use the vajra mind in your contemplation to make a subtle, secret contemplation and illumination as you pass through the fifty-five stages, then you are practicing proper contemplation. This is proper cultivation of the dharma of neither production nor extinction. Contemplation other than this is called "deviant contemplation." If you don't cultivate this dharma-door; if you do not contemplate in this way; if you cultivate dharmas subject to production and extinction, your contemplation is deviant.