

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Far-Reaching Ground

G. THE SEVENTH GROUND: THE FAR-REACHING GROUND

1. THE SEVENTH GROUND'S INTRODUCTORY VERSES AND DHARMA REQUEST

At that time, the congregation of devas
abiding above in space
rained down incense, flowers, and precious jewels
that, resembling clouds, spread about above the Buddha.
Exultant with delight and making sublimely wonderful music,
they all sang praises, saying: ⁽¹⁾

“It is good indeed, good indeed, O Vajragarbha,
that you possess such excellent awareness of the ultimate meaning,
possess such an aggregation of countless meritorious qualities,
and are a lotus blossom among men
who expounds on these supremely marvelous practices,
thereby bestowing such benefit on the entire world.” ⁽²⁾

The King of the Paranirmita Vaśavartin Heaven
then rained down light, flowers, and incense
that gently floated down as offerings
to he who dispels worries and afflictions. ⁽³⁾

The devas there along with that king of the devas
then chorused forth sublime voicings in which they said:
“If one but hears of the meaning of this ground,
he will thereby be able to garner great benefit.” ⁽⁴⁾

They then created a hundred thousand varieties
of supremely marvelous music wherein,
by availing themselves of the Buddha's spiritual powers,
those celestial nymphs sang this splendid song: ⁽⁵⁾

“The Buddha is possessed of the most supreme quiescence
and he is able to influence those who are evil to become good.
He is one for whom those in all worlds
all join in expressing their reverence. ⁽⁶⁾

“Although he has entirely transcended the world,
he nonetheless manifests in the midst of worldly dharmas.
He knows the body as identical to dharmas' true character,
and so manifests many different types of bodies.

Although he uses all manner of words and speech
to proclaim the dharma of quiescent cessation,
he still realizes that all speech
is devoid of any of the signs associated with its sounds. (7)

“He is able to travel beyond a hundred thousand lands
to present the most supremely marvelous offerings to all buddhas,
even while knowing the body, buddhas, and lands
with sovereign mastery in the knowledge that relinquishes signs. (8)

“Although he engages in the teaching of beings,
he still remains free of any conception of either ‘others’ or ‘self.’
He pursues extensive accumulation of great meritorious qualities,
yet does not indulge in any attachment for them, (9)

“for he perceives that it is because of seizing upon signs
that the fire of the three poisons burns up the entire world.
He refrains from seizing on any signs whatsoever, and yet
raises forth vigor in implementing kindness and compassion.” (10)

Then all of the devas and the celestial nymphs,
filled with delight, presented offerings,
and, having finished their singing of praises,
they fell silent and gazed up at the Buddha. (11)

At that time, Liberation Moon Bodhisattva
extended a request to Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, saying:
“Everyone in this entire assembly is pure.
They wish you will now explain the features of the seventh ground.”
(12)

2. VAJRAGARBHA COMMENCES THE SEVENTH GROUND’S EXPLANATION

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva then said:

3. TEN TYPES OF SUBLIME PRACTICE ENABLING SEVENTH GROUND ACCESS

(A) Sons of the Buddha, where there is a bodhisattva *mahāsattva*
who has already completely fulfilled the sixth ground’s practices
and who then wishes to gain entry into the seventh bodhisattva
ground, he should draw upon skillful means and wisdom²¹² to
bring forth ten types of sublime practice. What then are these ten?
They are:

Although this bodhisattva thoroughly cultivates emptiness,
signlessness and wishlessness, he still uses the mind of kind-
ness and compassion as he resides among beings;

Although he complies with all buddhas’ dharma of uniform
equality, he still never relinquishes his practice of presenting
offerings to all buddhas;

Although he always delights in the gateway to wisdom of contemplating emptiness, he still engages in extensive cultivation and accumulation of the provision of merit;²¹³

Although he has become detached from the three realms of existence, he is still able to engage in the adornment of the three realms of existence;

Although he has achieved the final extinguishing of the flames of all afflictions, he still brings forth for beings the dharmas for extinguishing the flames of their afflictions of greed, hatred, and delusion;

Although he accords with his realization that all dharmas are like conjurations, like dreams, like shadows, like echoes, like magical transformations, like the moon reflected on the water, and like images in a mirror, and also accords with his realization that they are characterized by non-duality, he still brings forth distinctions in the many different sorts of afflictions and also never errs in his understanding of karmic actions' resulting retributions;

Although he realizes that, due to their emptiness, all buddha lands are like empty space, and although he also realizes that all lands transcend their characteristic signs, he still brings forth the practices by which one purifies buddha lands;

Although he realizes that all buddhas' Dharma body free of any "body," he still brings forth as self-adornment the form body's thirty-two marks and eighty subsidiary signs;

Although he realizes that the voice of all buddhas is characterized by ineffability and although he has a resolute conviction that the Tathāgata's voice is fundamentally characterized by quiescence, he still accords with all beings by bringing forth for them many different sorts of well-adorned voices;

And although he knows that, in but a single mind-moment, all buddhas achieve a penetrating comprehension of all phenomena throughout the three periods of time, he still acquires the knowledge of the many different appearances, many different temporal circumstances, and many different types of kalpas in which buddhas' realize *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*. Then, in order to adapt to beings' minds and resolute beliefs, he provides them with teachings accordant with this.

Sons of the Buddha, this is what is meant by generating ten kinds of sublime practice from wisdom and skillful means. The bodhisattva *mahāsattva* who has already completely fulfilled the sixth

ground's practices cultivates these sublime practices and thereby succeeds in entering the seventh ground.

Sons of the Buddha, it is on the basis of the direct manifestation of just such skillful means and wisdom that one achieves entry into the seventh ground.

4. THE BODHISATTVA'S TWENTY KINDS OF PENETRATING COMPREHENSION

(B) When this bodhisattva abides on the seventh ground:

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many realms of beings;

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many dharmas used by the Buddhas in their teaching of beings;

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many world realms;

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the Buddhas' measurelessly many pure lands;

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the differences in the measurelessly many dharmas;

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the Buddhas' measureless knowledge associated with their realization of the unsurpassable path;²¹⁴

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the calculation of the measurelessly many kalpas;

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the Buddhas' measureless fathoming of the three periods of time;

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the differences in beings' measurelessly many different resolute convictions;

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the particular differences in the Buddhas' measurelessly many form bodies;²¹⁵

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the Buddhas' [knowledge of] the measurelessly many differences in beings' mental dispositions and faculties;²¹⁶

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many voices and languages through which the Buddhas inspire delight in beings;

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the Buddhas' [knowledge of] beings' measurelessly many different minds and courses of thought;²¹⁷

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the Buddhas' measurelessly many wisdom-concordant actions;

- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many sorts of resolute convictions of adherents of the Śrāvaka-disciple Vehicle;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many sorts of proclamations of the causes and conditions of the path set forth by the Buddhas in inspiring beings' resolute faith;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of *pratyekabuddhas* measurelessly many sorts of practice and wisdom development;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many sorts of extremely profound wisdom proclaimed by the Buddhas;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many sorts of paths coursed in by bodhisattvas;
- And he acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many works accumulated and accomplished in the Great Vehicle that, when described by the Buddhas, then influence beings to succeed in entering them.

5. HIS ADOPTION OF NON-DISCRIMINATING MIND & MEDITATIVE PRACTICE

(c) The bodhisattvas reflect in this manner:

Such measureless, boundless, and immense powers as these could never be known even through calculations performed across the course of however many hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of kalpas. I should accumulate all such powers of the Buddhas as these, however I shall not succeed in this through the forced distinguishing of this from that, but rather shall succeed in this through refraining from making discriminating distinctions and through refraining from seizing on signs.

(d) Availing himself of wisdom such as this, this bodhisattva applies himself to skillful meditative contemplations and always cultivates great wisdom and skillful means whereby he is caused to become well established in the wisdom of the path to buddhahood. By resort to the dharma of immovability, whenever he wishes to engage in the constant implementation of the many different courses of action that liberate beings, he remains so utterly unimpeded in his efforts that he is able to bring forth these courses of action that liberate beings when coming, when going, and when sitting, lying down, or standing. In doing so, he remains free of the hindrances, abides in the awesome deportment, and never abandons thought such as this.

6. HIS PRACTICE OF TEN PĀRAMITĀS & OTHER DHARMAS LEADING TO BODHI

In each successive mind-moment, this bodhisattva achieves complete fulfillment of the bodhisattva's ten *pāramitās* and the ten grounds' practices. And how is this the case? This is because, in each successive mind-moment, this bodhisattva *mahāsattva* takes the great compassion as what is foremost and it is also because, as he cultivates all of the dharmas of the Buddha, he directs all of this to the realization of the Tathāgata's knowledge.

As for the ten *pāramitās*:

The bodhisattva's bestowal on all beings of all roots of goodness he cultivates in pursuing the path to buddhahood constitutes *dāna pāramitā*;

His ability to extinguish all heat associated with the afflictions constitutes *śīla pāramitā*;

His taking of kindness and compassion as foremost and his refraining from harming any being are what constitute *kṣānti pāramitā*;

His insatiable striving to acquire ever more supreme roots of goodness constitutes *vīrya pāramitā*;

His preventing the path-cultivating mind from becoming scattered as he always progresses toward all-knowledge constitutes *dhyāna pāramitā*;

His acquiescent patience in the originally and perpetually unproduced nature of all dharmas constitutes *prajñā pāramitā*;

His ability to bringing forth countless gateways to knowledge constitutes the *pāramitā* of skillful means;

His aspiration to ever more superior wisdom constitutes the *pāramitā* of vows;

His ability to remain invulnerable to obstruction or ruination by any followers of non-Buddhist paths or by any of the *māras* constitutes the *pāramitā* of the powers;

His accomplishment of knowing the characteristic aspects of all dharmas in accordance with reality constitutes the *pāramitā* of knowledge.

It is in this way that, in each successive mind-moment, he completely fulfills the ten *pāramitās*. Even as this bodhisattva perfects the ten *pāramitās* in each successive mind-moment, he also perfects the four means of attraction, the dharma of the thirty-seven factors facilitating realization of bodhi, and the three gates to liberation. To state the essential point, he perfects all of the dharmas conducing to *anuttarasamyakṣambodhi* in each successive mind-moment.

7. VIMUKTICANDRA ASKS ABOUT THE PERFECTION OF BODHYAṄGA DHARMAS

(E) At that time, Liberation Moon Bodhisattva inquired of Vajragarbha Bodhisattva: “O Son of the Buddha, does the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* only perfect the dharmas facilitating realization of bodhi on the seventh ground or can he perfect them on all of the grounds?”

8. VAJRAGARBHA ON THE PERFECTION OF BODHYAṄGAS ON ALL GROUNDS

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva replied:

O Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* may perfect all of the dharmas facilitating realization of bodhi on all ten of the grounds. It is only because they become supremely well implemented on the seventh ground that the seventh ground is accorded this particular designation. How does this come to be the case? It is because the bodhisattva *mahāsattvas'* implementation of effortful preparatory practice²¹⁸ reaches complete fullness on this seventh ground and then enables their entry into the path of wisdom and spiritual superknowledges.²¹⁹

Son of the Buddha, on the first ground, it is through generation of the vow taking all dharmas of buddhahood as its objective focus that the bodhisattva perfects the dharmas facilitating realization of bodhi.

On the second ground, it is through ridding himself of defilements of mind that he perfects the dharmas facilitating realization of bodhi.

On the third ground, it is through increased development in implementation of vows and through acquisition of the radiant brilliance associated with the Dharma that he perfects the dharmas facilitating realization of bodhi.

On the fourth ground, it is through success in entering the path that he perfects the dharmas facilitating realization of bodhi.

On the fifth ground, it is through adapting his practice to the ways of the world that he perfects the dharmas facilitating realization of bodhi.

On the sixth ground, it is through entering extremely profound Dharma gateways that he perfects the dharmas facilitating realization of bodhi.

On this seventh ground, it is through bringing forth all Buddha dharmas that he perfects the dharmas assisting realization of bodhi.

(F) And how is this so? Sons of the Buddha, it is on this ground that the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* acquires all paths reached through wisdom. Due to the power arising from this, he naturally succeeds in reaching the eighth ground.

Sons of the Buddha, it is as if there were two great trichilocosms of which one is definitely pure and the other is definitely defiled and it is so difficult to pass from one to the other that it is only by resort to the power of great vigor, the power of great spiritual superknowledges, and the power of great vows that one may then successfully pass from one to the other.

Sons of the Buddha, just so it is for the bodhisattvas who pursue a mixed path and thus find it difficult to successfully pass beyond it. It is only by resort to the power of great vows, the power of great wisdom, and the power of great skillful means that they then succeed in passing beyond it.

9. VIMUKTICANDRA ASKS ABOUT TRANSCENDENCE OF AFFLICTIONS

Liberation Moon Bodhisattva then inquired, “Is the seventh ground characterized by pure practices or by defiled practices?”

10. VAJRAGARBHA EXPLAINS THE TRANSCENDENCE OF AFFLICTIONS

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva replied:

Beginning with the first ground, the Ground of Joyfulness, and continuing on forward from there, whatever the bodhisattva practices is devoted to abandoning actions involving afflictions and karmic offenses. How is this the case? This is because all that he does is dedicated to realization of *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*. However, because the purity of what he practices corresponds to that of the particular ground on which he abides, this circumstance cannot yet be referred to as one in which he has gone entirely beyond such actions.

11. VAJRAGARBHA’S CAKRAVARTIN SAGE KING ANALOGY

Sons of the Buddha, this circumstance is analogous to that of a wheel-turning sage king who roams the four continents mounted on his precious elephant. In so doing, he becomes well aware that there are those beset by poverty, suffering, and afflictions. Still, the fault in that circumstance does not lie with the King. Rather this is simply due to the King’s having not yet avoided rebirth in a human body. However, if he were to relinquish his king’s body

and take rebirth in the Brahma World, he could then dwell in a Brahma Heaven deva's palace wherein he could roam the chiliosm's worlds displaying a Brahma Heaven king's awesome powers. In that case, he would have then abandoned the circumstances attendant upon having a human body.

Sons of the Buddha, so too it is with the bodhisattva. From the first ground onward, as he abides in the vehicle of the *pāramitās*, he becomes aware of the actions of all beings' minds and their affliction-related defilements. Even so, he remains unsullied by such affliction-related defilements because he abides in the courses of good karmic action. Still, he does not yet qualify as having gone entirely beyond such circumstances.

If the bodhisattva leaves behind the path involving cultivation of all of the deliberately effortful preliminary practices, he then advances from the seventh ground into the eighth ground. At that time, he becomes one who abides in the bodhisattva's pure vehicle wherein he is entirely cognizant of all worlds' affliction-related defilements even as he remains unsullied by those afflictions. At that point, he too qualifies as having gone beyond them.

Sons of the Buddha, the bodhisattva abiding on this seventh ground has for the most part gone beyond the multitudes beset by desire and the other afflictions. One who resides on the seventh ground is not designated as possessed of afflictions nor is he designated as entirely free of the afflictions. Why is this so? It is because he does not generate any of the afflictions that he is not designated as possessed of the afflictions. However, because he desires to acquire the Tathāgata's knowledge and he has not yet fulfilled his aspirations, he is not yet designated as entirely free of afflictions, either.

(G) The bodhisattva abiding on this seventh ground perfects deeply purified physical karmic actions, deeply purified verbal karmic actions, and deeply purified mental karmic actions. As for all bad courses of karmic action censured by all Buddhas and all of the defilements associated with the secondary afflictions, this bodhisattva has already passed beyond all such karmic actions. And as for whatever all Buddhas have praised, these are the actions that he always practices.

Additionally, as for the world's classics, texts, skills, and cultural arts, his actions here are as described earlier in relation to the fifth ground. Here, his knowledge of these is naturally acquired. He is the most rare of any who reside anywhere in all the worlds of the great trichiliosm. He succeeds in becoming a

greatly eminent teacher whose resolute intentions and marvelous practices cannot be rivaled by any being with the sole exception of a *tathāgata* or those bodhisattvas who have entered the eighth ground.

Although this bodhisattva has not yet reached the point wherein all of his *dhyāna* concentrations, spiritual superknowledges, liberations, and samādhis are spontaneously produced as a matter of karmic reward, he is still freely able to invoke them at will. In each successive mind-moment, the bodhisattva who abides on this Far-reaching Ground completely implements his cultivation and accumulation of the power of skillful means and wisdom as well as all dharmas assisting realization of bodhi, all of which become ever more supremely fulfilled herein.

12. THIS CONQUEST OF SAMĀDHIS & UNPRODUCED-DHARMAS PATIENCE

(H) As he abides on the Far-Reaching Ground, he becomes able to enter:²²⁰

- The bodhisattva's samādhi of skillful investigative contemplation;
- The skillful consideration of meanings samādhi;
- The mind-augmenting samādhi;
- The distinguishing of the treasury of meanings samādhi;
- The selection of dharmas in accordance with reality samādhi;
- The secure abiding in solidly established roots samādhi;
- The gateway to knowledge²²¹ and spiritual superknowledges samādhi;
- The Dharma realm samādhi;
- The Tathāgata's benefit samādhi;
- The treasury of many different meanings samādhi;
- And the samādhi leading neither toward *saṃsāra* nor toward nirvāṇa.²²²

In this way, he completely acquires hundreds of myriads of bodhisattva samādhis whereby he is able to carry out the purifying cultivation of this ground.

(I) Having acquired these samādhis, due to thoroughly purifying wisdom and skillful means and due to deep realization of the great compassion's power, this bodhisattva then becomes one who has passed beyond the grounds of *śrāvaka*-disciples and *pratyekabuddhas* and progressed toward the ground of the Buddha's wisdom.²²³

(j) The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground engages in countless signlessness practices related to physical karma, countless signlessness practices related to verbal karma, and countless signlessness practices related to mental karma. Due to his purification of these practices, this bodhisattva then manifests the illumination of the unproduced-dharmas patience.

13. VIMUKTICANDRA: "DOESN'T THE 1ST GROUND SURPASS THE TWO VEHICLES?"

Liberation Moon Bodhisattva then asked, "O Son of the Buddha, is it not the case that the measurelessly many physical deeds, measurelessly many verbal deeds, and measurelessly many mental deeds of the bodhisattva dwelling on the first ground are already able at that point to surpass the practices characteristic of the *śrāvaka*-disciple and *pratyekabuddha* grounds?"

14. VAJRAGARBHA: "IN ASPIRATION, YES. BY VIRTUE OF PRACTICE, NOT YET"

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva then replied, "Because they take the great Dharma as their objective, they are able to surpass them, but they have not yet done so through the power of their actual practice. However, on this seventh ground, it is because of the power of their actual practice that they cannot be overcome by any *śrāvaka*-disciple or *pratyekabuddha*.

15. VAJRAGARBHA'S ANALOGY OF A PRINCE NOT YET ASCENDED TO POWER

Son of the Buddha, this circumstance is analogous to that of someone born as a prince in a royal family who thereby immediately achieves supremacy over even the many ministers and the hundred officials. Why does this occur? It is due to the power of his power as one of aristocratic and venerable birth. Once he has grown to adulthood and his wisdom has become fully established, he then truly acquires supremacy.

Sons of the Buddha, when the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* first brings forth his resolve, he has right then already achieved supremacy over all *śrāvaka*-disciples and *pratyekabuddhas*. This is due to having already brought forth the great vow with pure resolute intentions. Now, however, on this ground, he achieves superiority due to the power of his own knowledge.

16. THIS BODHISATTVA'S UNIQUE PRACTICE & RESTRAINT FROM FINAL NIRVĀṆA

(k) Sons of the Buddha, the bodhisattva dwelling on the seventh ground acquires the ability to engage in extremely profound and secluded non-practice even as, in his actions of body, speech, and mind, he strives ever more to acquire the supreme Dharma and

thereby refrains from abandoning that quest. It is because of this intention to reach what is ever more superior that, although he practices in accordance with ultimate reality, he still refrains from bringing about the complete realization of ultimate reality.²²⁴

17. VIMUKTICANDRA: "WHEN CAN ONE ENTER THE CESSATION SAMĀDHI?"

(L) Liberation Moon Bodhisattva then inquired, "O Son of the Buddha, beginning with which of the grounds is the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* able to enter into quiescent cessation?"

18. VAJRAGARBHA: "FROM 6TH GROUND ON; NOW HE ENTERS & ARISES AT WILL"

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva then replied:

It is beginning with the sixth ground that the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* has the ability to enter quiescent cessation. Now, even as he abides on this ground, he is able, even in each successive thought, to enter into quiescent cessation while nonetheless still refraining from entering absolute realization of quiescent cessation. This is what is known as the bodhisattva's perfection of the inconceivable karma of body, speech, and mind wherein he courses in the sphere of ultimate reality and yet still refrains from entering the absolute realization of ultimate reality.

19. VAJRAGARBHA LIKENS PRACTICE TO SAILING ON THE OPEN OCEAN

Son of the Buddha, this circumstance is analogous to that of a person who has set sail in a boat out into the great ocean and who, well versed in the methods of such travel, is skillful in recognizing the signs occurring on the water so that he is thereby able to avoid injury through a calamity at sea. In this same way, the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* dwelling on this ground who has set sail in the ship of the *pāramitās*, is able to travel along in the sphere of ultimate reality and yet refrain from absolute realization of ultimate reality.

20. 10 PARADOXICAL ASPECTS OF THE 7TH GROUND BODHISATTVĀ'S PRACTICE

(M) Because of the power of his great vows, because he has acquired the power of wisdom, and because he brings forth the power of skillful means from his *dhyāna* absorptions and wisdom:

Although he has a deep fondness for nirvāṇa, he still manifests bodies in *saṃsāra*;

Although he may be surrounded by a retinue of followers, his mind is still always detached;

- Although, employing the power of vows, he takes on births within the three realms of existence, he still remains undefiled by worldly dharmas;
- Although his mind is always thoroughly quiescent, through the power of skillful means, he may appear as if ablaze even as, although ablaze, he is not burned;
- Although he practices in accordance with the knowledge of the Buddha, he still manifests transformations on the grounds of the Śrāvaka-disciples and the Pratyekabuddhas;
- Although he succeeds in acquiring the Dharma treasury of the Buddhas,²²⁵ he still manifests within the realms of *māras*.
- Although he has already stepped beyond the paths of the four types of *māras*,²²⁶ he may still manifest as practicing the *māras*' practices;
- Although he may manifest practices characteristic of non-Buddhist traditions, his resolute intentions still never relinquishes the Dharma of the Buddha;
- Although he manifests bodies in all worlds, his mind still always abides in the world-transcending Dharma.
- And although all of his adorning phenomena are superior to those of the devas, dragons, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinṅaras*, *mahoragas*, humans, non-humans, the Four Heavenly Kings, Śakra Devānām Indra, or the Brahma Heaven King, he still never relinquishes his delight in the Dharma or his cherishing of the Dharma.²²⁷

21. THE BODHISATTVA'S SEEING AND SERVING OF COUNTLESS BUDDHAS

{N} Having completely developed wisdom such as this, the bodhisattva dwelling on this Far-Reaching Ground encounters hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of myriads of *nayutas* of buddhas, making offerings to them, paying reverence to them, venerating them, praising them, and presenting them with robes, food and drink, bedding, and medicines. Having made offerings to all those buddhas, he then guards and sustains the Dharma of the Buddhas and becomes one who can never be overcome by the wisdom or challenging questions of any *śrāvaka*-disciple or *pratyekabuddha*.

Because of this bodhisattva's kindly pity for beings, his patience with respect to dharmas becomes ever more purified. The roots of goodness of this bodhisattva become increasingly supreme in their purification across the course of countless hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of kalpas.

22. GOOD ROOTS PURIFICATION LIKENED TO GOLD INLAY AND SUNLIGHT

Sons of the Buddha, this circumstance is comparable to when, in fashioning adornments of real gold, one inlays it with fine jewels, thus making it ever more supremely fine in its radiance so that it cannot be rivaled in its beauty by any other sort of jewelry. Sons of the Buddha, so too it is with the bodhisattva dwelling on the bodhisattva's Far-Reaching Ground whose roots of goodness born from skillful means and wisdom become ever more supremely bright in their radiance so that they then remain invulnerable to ruin by anyone.

Sons of the Buddha, this circumstance is comparable to the sun's radiance that cannot even be approached by the light of stars, constellations, or the moon in its ability to dry up all of the muddy waters throughout the entire continent of Jambudvīpa. So too it is with the bodhisattva dwelling on this Far-Reaching Ground whose roots of goodness become so developed in their supremacy that no *śrāvaka*-disciple or *pratyekabuddha* can ever rival them in their ability to dry up the defiling mud of beings' afflictions.

23. VAJRAGARBHĀ'S FINAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE 7TH GROUND BODHISATTVA

Sons of the Buddha, this has been a description of the bodhisattva *mahāsattva*'s seventh ground, the Far-Reaching Ground.

a. THE BODHISATTVA'S STATION AND DHARMA PRACTICE

The bodhisattva *mahāsattva* dwelling on this ground often becomes a king of the Paranirmita Vaśavartin Heaven, one whose faculties are so fiercely sharp that he is able to bring forth those wholesome causes²²⁸ and conditions facilitating beings' awakening to the path.

b. THE BODHISATTVA'S MINDFULNESS

In all of the good karmic deeds that he carries out, whether they be done with the aid of giving, pleasing words, beneficial actions, or joint endeavors, he never departs from his mindfulness of the Buddha, never departs from his mindfulness of the Dharma, never departs from his mindfulness of all of his companions among the bodhisattva *mahāsattvas* and so forth until we come to his never departing from his mindfulness of his quest to reach perfect fulfillment of the knowledge of all modes.

c. THE BODHISATTVA'S ASPIRATION TO SERVE BEINGS

He always brings forth this thought: "Oh, when will I be able to finally become one who can serve as a leader for beings, one

worthy of their veneration, and one who serves them in other such ways up to and including being able to serve them as one upon whom all beings can rely?"

d. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE BODHISATTVA'S VIGOR AND VOWS

If this bodhisattva wishes to bring the diligent practice of vigor to bear in this, in but a moment, he becomes able to acquire hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of *samādhis*, and so forth until we come to his becoming able to manifest hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of bodhisattvas serving him as a retinue. Were he to avail himself of the power of vows, this bodhisattva could freely manifest these phenomena in even greater numbers so large that one could never calculate them even in however many hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of kalpas one might attempt to do so.

24. VAJRAGARBHA BODHISATTVA'S SUMMARIZING VERSES

At that time, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, wishing to once again clarify the meaning of his discourse, thereupon uttered verses, saying:

When, with deep wisdom and concentrated mind,
he has already completed the practice of the sixth ground,
he simultaneously brings forth skillful means
together with wisdom and then enters the seventh ground. (13)

Although he practices emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness,
he still cultivates the minds of kindness and compassion.
Though he complies with the Buddha's dharma of uniform equality,
he still makes offerings to all buddhas.

Although availing himself of knowledge in contemplating emptiness,
he is still insatiable in his cultivation of merit.
As a consequence, he then becomes able to enter
the seventh ground, the Far-Reaching Ground. (14)

Although he is able to carry on the adornment of the three realms,
his mind still delights in detachment from them.
Though his own mind is always quiescent,
he still facilitates the extinguishing of others' afflictions.

Although he practices emptiness and perceives dharmas as non-dual,
as like mere conjurations, as like a dream, and so forth,
he still implements the minds of kindness and compassion
and thus succeeds in entering the seventh ground. (15)

Although, through contemplation, he observes all lands
as empty and as comparable to empty space,

he is still able to carry forth skillful adorning practices whereby he pursues the purification of all buddha lands.

Although he realizes that the bodies of all buddhas are identical to dharmas' aspects in their signlessness, he still plants the causes for acquiring the thirty-two marks and all of the eighty subsidiary signs.

Although he realizes that, as it is present in all buddhas, it is characterized by its ineffability, he still avails himself of the adornments of the Buddha's voice to cause delight in the inhabitants of the world.

Although he knows that as it occurs among all buddhas, realization of the path takes place in but a single mind-moment, he still appears in all periods of time and all enumerations of kalpas in order to provide guidance to all beings. (16)

If one possesses just such knowing awareness of Dharma as this, then one succeeds in acquiring the radiant illumination of Dharma. The bodhisattva who has become of this sort immediately succeeds in entering the seventh ground.

One who abides on this ground becomes able to contemplate the measurelessly many beings and their actions while also comprehending the Buddhas' powers that are themselves so immeasurably extensive. (17)

He also comprehends the worlds, the kalpas, and the realms of dharmas, all of which are measureless, while also comprehending what all beings desire and what they delight in.

He comprehends and proclaims the dharmas of the Three Vehicles, all of which are measureless, reflecting, "I should engage in such teaching to bring about the complete development of these beings." (18)

Utilizing contemplative reflection such as this along with the combination of skillful means and wisdom, he always practices a path such as this in the midst of all four of the awesome departments.

Even in each successive thought, he is able to perfectly implement the bodhi-realization factors, in particular the ten types of *pāramitās* and the other such associated dharmas. (19)

Bodhisattvas such as these
take the merit arising from what they cultivate
and bestow all of it on beings.

It is this that constitutes the perfection of *dāna pāramitā*.

It is the utter extinguishing of mental defilements
that constitutes the perfection of *śīla pāramitā*.

Refraining from harm inflicted for the sake of the six sense objects
is what constitutes the perfection of *kṣānti pāramitā*.

His ability to bring forth increasingly superior dharmas
is what constitutes the perfection of the vigor *pāramitā*.

It is remaining unmoving even as one pursues the path
that constitutes the perfection of *dhyāna pāramitā*. (20)

It is realization of the unproduced-dharmas patience that defines
the perfection of *prajñāpāramitā*.

It is dedication of one's endeavors to realization of the buddha path
that constitutes the perfection of the skillful means *pāramitā*.

It is the pursuit of ever more supreme dharmas
that defines the perfection of the *pāramitā* of vows.

Becoming one who cannot be overcome by anyone
is what constitutes the perfection of the powers *pāramitā*.

The ability to comprehend discourse accordant with reality
is what constitutes the perfection of the knowledge *pāramitā*.

He is able in each successive mind-moment
to subsume all of these dharmas assisting the realization of bodhi. (21)

It is because he brings forth the vast and magnificent vow
taking the great endeavor as the object of his resolve
that his meritorious qualities as possessed on the very first ground
qualify then as fully implemented.

On the second ground, this qualification is defined
by his ridding the mind of evil's defilements.

On the third ground, it is through his vow's increasing brilliance.

On the fourth ground, it is through his then abiding in the path.

On the fifth, this is defined by practice adapted to those in the world.

On the sixth, this is defined by entry into deep dharmas
through partial acquisition of aspects of the unproduced's realization
that then gradually develop thereafter. (22)

On the seventh ground, he accumulates all
dharmas conducing to realization of bodhi,
and becomes able to develop all of the meritorious qualities
while also availing himself of all of the vows.

Such meritorious qualities as these cause the development of that circumstance on the eighth ground wherein everything that he practices is then naturally characterized by purity. {23}

The Far-Reaching Ground is difficult to pass beyond. Those possessed of the power of great wisdom are able to do so. This circumstance is analogous to one wherein there are two lands in which it is difficult to be able to pass from one into the other.

On the seventh ground, his avoidance of defilements is comparable to that of the sage king, for, while he still abides in these paths, he cannot yet qualify as having passed on beyond them all. {24}

In that circumstance where he reaches the eighth bodhisattva wisdom ground, he then passes beyond the sphere of deliberately intentional practice and then abides in karmic deeds arising from knowledge.

This circumstance is comparable to that of the Brahma Heaven King who, as he observes the world, no longer qualifies as merely human. This bodhisattva is unsullied by any karmic offenses and, in this, he is analogous to the lotus blossom resting on the water. {25}

The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground has himself passed beyond the various sorts of afflictions. Thus he cannot be designated as one possessed of afflictions. Still, he has not yet entirely exhausted all of the afflictions.

Having entered into this right path, he does not possess any of the afflictions. Nonetheless, having vowed to continue on the path to buddhahood, he is not one who puts a complete end to the afflictions. {26}

He is one who is naturally able to entirely fathom all of those matters in the world that are associated with the classics, texts, technical skills, arts, literature, poetry, proficiency in the use of mantras, and such.

He cultivates and practices all of the *dhyāna* absorptions as well as all of the spiritual superknowledges and such. Employing the immeasurable minds, he strives to benefit the world. Thus he is able to bring forth all of these endeavors. {27}

It is at this point in time that this bodhisattva passes beyond the practices associated with the Two Vehicles and becomes securely established in the bodhisattva practices associated with the seventh ground.

He first acquires this supremacy due to the power of his great vow brought forth at the time of bringing forth the initial resolve. Now, in abiding on this ground, it is due to the power of wisdom that he is established in supremacy.

This circumstance is analogous to that of a son born to a king who, even when young, is superior by virtue of aristocratic caste, but who later, due to accomplishment in meritorious service, indeed becomes, among all the people, the one who is supreme. (28)

Abiding herein, he acquires profoundly deep wisdom and increasingly brings forth the supreme practice of vigor. In each successive moment, he is immersed in quiescent cessation and yet still refrains from opting for its absolute realization.

This circumstance is like that of a person setting sail in a ship who, having ventured out onto the great sea is able to avoid being brought to harm by the waves even though he may encounter difficult conditions in deep waters. (29)

The practice of the bodhisattva becomes increasingly supreme due to skillful means and wisdom. His acquisition of meritorious qualities becomes entirely complete and such that it would be difficult to fathom by anyone in the world.

He makes offerings to countless many buddhas and, due to the purification of his mind, he becomes comparable to real gold wherein the various jewels have been inlaid in order to adorn it. (30)

He acquires the brilliant light of the Buddha's wisdom whereby he becomes able to dry up the waters of the desires just as the light of the sun dries up the pools of muddy water.

The bodhisattva who abides on this ground may become a king of the Paranirmita Vaśavartin Heaven who, possessed of faculties that are all fiercely sharp, acquires a penetrating comprehension of the fruits of the path. (31)

If he wishes to avail himself of the diligent application of vigor, he becomes able to see tens of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of buddhas.

By resort to the power of his vows, the number exceeds even this. (32)

The purification of the wisdom characteristic of the seventh ground is such that even all inhabitants of the world and the Two Vehicles combined would find difficult to completely fathom.

Here we now conclude a brief explanation of the seventh ground. (33)