

## PART SEVEN

### The Far-Reaching Ground

#### G. THE SEVENTH GROUND: THE FAR-REACHING GROUND

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

Then the congregated devas, their minds filled with joy,  
scattered jewels that formed a cloud hanging up in the sky,  
whereupon they all sang with different sorts of sublime voices  
addressed to The Most Supremely Pure One, saying: <sup>(1)</sup>

“Fully penetrating the supreme meaning with masterful knowledge  
and perfected in a hundred thousand *koṭis* of fine qualities,  
a lotus among men, entirely free of any attachments,  
proclaims here the profound practices to benefit all beings.” <sup>(2)</sup>

The Vaśavartin Heaven King, abiding there in space,  
emanated a great light that illuminated the Buddha's body  
and spread forth the most superior sorts of sublime incense clouds,  
all presented as offerings to he who dispels worries and afflictions. <sup>(3)</sup>

Then, the entire congregation of devas, all of them joyful,  
all sang beautiful sounds in a united chorus of praises:  
“Having heard here of the qualities comprising this ground, we  
have thence all reaped immense and fine benefit.” <sup>(4)</sup>

Then the celestial nymphs, their minds full of celebratory delight,  
vied in chorusing forth a thousand myriad musical sounds and then,  
as all of them availed themselves of the Tathāgata's spiritual powers,  
amidst all those sounds, they joined in uttering phrases like these: <sup>(5)</sup>

“With peerless awe-inspiring presence and quiescent stillness, he  
can train those difficult to train, is worthy of the world's gifts,  
and, though he has already transcended all worlds,  
he still travels forth in the world, extolling the marvelous path. <sup>(6)</sup>

“Although he manifests incalculably many bodies of every kind,  
he realizes each and every body is itself devoid of any existence.  
He is skillful in the use of phrases in his explanation of all dharmas,  
yet does not seize on any signs of words or sounds. <sup>(7)</sup>

“He goes forth to a hundred thousand buddha lands and  
presents all the most supreme gifts as offerings to those buddhas.  
Through sovereign mastery of knowledge, he is free of all attachment  
and so does not generate any conception of ‘my own buddha land.’ <sup>(8)</sup>

“Although diligent in the teaching of all beings,  
he does not have any thought conceiving of either ‘other’ or ‘self.’  
Although he has already cultivated vast goodness to perfection,  
he still does not generate any attachment to good dharmas. {9}

“Because he perceives that all worlds are always fiercely ablaze  
with the fires of desire, hatred, and stupidity,  
he has utterly transcended all forms of thought even as  
he still brings forth the great compassion and the power of vigor.” {10}

After all of those devas and celestial nymphs  
had finished presenting all different sorts of offerings and praises,  
they all simultaneously fell silent and stood there,  
gazing up at the most revered of men, wishing to hear the Dharma. {11}

At that time, Liberation Moon Bodhisattva again set forth a request:  
“The minds of everyone in this assembly are pure.  
We wish only, O Son of the Buddha, that you will explain for us  
the practices and characteristic aspects of the seventh ground.” {12}

## 2. VAJRAGARBHA COMMENCES THE SEVENTH GROUND’S EXPLANATION

At that time, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva addressed Liberation Moon Bodhisattva, saying:

### 3. 10 TYPES OF SKILLFUL MEANS & WISDOM ENABLING 7TH GROUND ACCESS

{A} O Son of the Buddha. The bodhisattva *mahāsattva* who has already completed the sixth ground’s practices and then aspires to gain entry into the seventh ground, the Far-Reaching Ground, should proceed in the cultivation of ten kinds of skillful means and wisdom,<sup>181</sup> thereby bringing forth the most especially supreme path. What then are those ten? Specifically, they are:

Although he has skillfully cultivated the emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness samādhis, through the practice of kindness and compassion, he refrains from forsaking beings;

Although he has acquired the Buddhas’ dharma of uniform equality, he still delights in always making offerings to buddhas;

Although he has entered the gateway to wisdom of emptiness contemplation, he still diligently pursues the accumulation of merit;

Although he has become detached from the three realms of existence, he still engages in the adornment of the three realms of existence;

Although he has achieved the final extinguishing of the flames of all afflictions, he is still able for the sake of all beings to bring forth the means to extinguish the flames of their greed, hatred, and delusion;

Although he realizes that all dharmas are like conjurations, like dreams, like shadows, like echoes, like mirages, like transformations, like the moon reflected on water, and like images in a mirror, and realizes too that, in their essential nature, they are non-dual, he still accords with his resolve by performing works of countless different sorts;

Although he realizes that, by their very nature, all lands are like empty space, he is still able to use pure and sublime practices to adorn the buddha lands;

Although he realizes that the fundamental nature of all buddhas' Dharma body is free of any "body," he still adorns his own body with the major marks and subsidiary signs;

Although he realizes that, by its very nature, the voice of all buddhas is empty of inherent existence, quiescent, and ineffable, he is still able to accord with all beings by bringing forth for them many different sorts of pure voices;

And although he accords with all buddhas' complete fathoming of the three periods of time as reducible to but a single thought, he still accords with the differences in beings' minds and understandings by manifesting in many different sorts of appearances, many different temporal circumstances, and many different sorts of kalpas wherein he cultivates all the practices.

It is by resort to ten such types of skillful means and wisdom that the bodhisattva brings forth the especially supreme practices by which he leaves the sixth ground and enters the seventh ground. Once he has entered there, these practices always manifest directly before him and henceforth define his abiding on the seventh ground, the Far-Reaching Ground.

#### 4. THE BODHISATTVA'S TWENTY KINDS OF PENETRATING COMPREHENSION

(B) Son of the Buddha, after the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* has achieved entry into the seventh ground:

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

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many works carried out by the Buddhas in their teaching of beings;

He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many networks of worlds;

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

- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many different sorts of dharmas;<sup>182</sup>
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measureless knowledge manifested by the Buddhas' enlightenment;<sup>183</sup>
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the enumeration of the measurelessly many kalpas;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measureless knowledge of the three periods of time to which the Buddhas have awakened;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of beings' measurelessly many different sorts of resolute convictions;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many different sorts of name-and-form bodies manifested by the Buddhas;<sup>184</sup>
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the differences in beings' measurelessly many different mental dispositions and faculties;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many languages and voices through which the Buddhas' inspire delight in beings;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of beings' measurelessly many different courses of thought;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the Buddhas' measurelessly many sorts of utterly complete understanding of vast knowledge;
- 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 proclamations of the path of wisdom set forth by the Buddhas in inspiring resolute faith;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the measurelessly many accomplishments of *pratyekabuddhas*;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the Buddhas' measurelessly many proclamations of gateways of extremely profound wisdom that cause others to enter therein;
- He acquires a penetrating comprehension of the bodhisattvas' measurelessly many practices of skillful means;
- 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 bodhisattvas to enter into them.

## 5. HIS ADOPTION OF EFFORTLESSNESS, NON-DISCRIMINATION &amp; MEDITATION

(C) This bodhisattva reflects thus: “Such measureless domains of the Tathāgatas as these could never be known even in a hundred thousand *koṭis* of *nayutas* of kalpas. I should therefore rather resort to the effortless and non-discriminating mind to succeed in achieving their perfect fulfillment.”

(D) Son of the Buddha, employing deep wisdom, this bodhisattva engages in such contemplative meditations as these whereby he always diligently cultivates these forms of skillful means and wisdom and thus brings forth this especially supreme path wherein he becomes so securely and unshakably established in it that there is not so much as a single moment in which he rests or desists. While walking, standing, sitting, lying down, and even in the midst of sleep and dreams, he never even briefly involves himself with any of the hindrances and he never abandons thought such as this.

## 6. HIS PRACTICE OF 10 PĀRAMITĀS &amp; OTHER DHARMAS LEADING TO BODHI

In each successive moment, this bodhisattva is always able to completely fulfill the ten *pāramitās*. And how is this the case? This is because he takes the great compassion as foremost in every successive mind-moment as he cultivates the Buddha’s Dharma and proceeds toward realization of the Buddha’s knowledge. In particular:

He bestows on beings all roots of goodness he develops in the course of seeking to acquire the Buddha’s knowledge. This is what constitutes *dāna pāramitā*.

He is able to extinguish the heat of the afflictions. This is what constitutes *śīla pāramitā*.

Taking kindness and compassion as foremost, he refrains from inflicting harm on beings. This is what constitutes *kṣānti pāramitā*.

He is insatiable in seeking supremely good dharmas. This is what constitutes *vīrya pāramitā*.

He always keeps the path of all-knowledge directly present before him, never becoming scattered or distracted. This is what constitutes *dhyāna pāramitā*.

He is able to patiently acquiesce in all dharmas as neither produced nor destroyed. This is what constitutes *prajñā pāramitā*.

He is able to bring forth measureless knowledge. This is what constitutes the *pāramitā* of skillful means.

He is able to seek out higher and higher levels of knowledge. This is what constitutes the *pāramitā* of vows.

None of the deviant doctrines or hordes of *māras* are ever able to obstruct him or bring about his ruination. This is what constitutes the *pāramitā* of powers.

He utterly knows all dharmas in accordance with reality. This is what constitutes the *pāramitā* of knowledge.

Son of the Buddha, this bodhisattva is able to completely fulfill all of these ten *pāramitās* in every successive mind-moment. It is in this way that, in each successive mind-moment, he is able to completely fulfill the four means of attraction, the four types of retention,<sup>185</sup> the thirty-seven factors conducing to enlightenment, the three gates to liberation, and, to state it briefly, all dharmas assisting the realization of bodhi.

#### 7. VIMUKTICANDRA ASKS ABOUT PERFECTION OF BODHYAṄGA DHARMAS

(E) At that time, Liberation Moon Bodhisattva asked Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, saying, “O Son of the Buddha. Is it only on this seventh ground that the bodhisattva fulfills all dharmas assisting realization of bodhi?<sup>186</sup> Or is it rather that he is also able to completely fulfill them on all grounds?”

#### 8. VAJRAGARBHA ON THE PERFECTION OF BODHYAṄGAS ON ALL GROUNDS

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva then replied:

O Son of the Buddha. The bodhisattva is able to completely fulfill the dharmas facilitating realization of bodhi on all ten grounds. Still, it is on the seventh ground where this ability becomes most especially supreme in its implementation. How is this the case? This is because it is on this seventh ground that his effortfully implemented practice becomes complete, thereby enabling his entry into practice characterized by sovereign mastery in wisdom.<sup>187</sup>

O Son of the Buddha, on the first ground, it is because of his aspiration taking all Buddha dharmas as its object that the bodhisattva perfects the dharmas assisting realization of bodhi.

On the second ground, this occurs due to his abandonment of the mind’s defilements.

On the third ground, this occurs due to the ever increasing strength of his vows and due to his acquiring the light of the Dharma.

On the fourth ground, this occurs through his entry into the path.

On the fifth ground, this occurs through his adaptation to the ways of the world.

On the sixth ground, this occurs through his entry into the extremely profound Dharma gateways.

On the seventh ground, it is due to bringing forth all Buddha dharmas and completely fulfilling all dharmas assisting realization of bodhi.

(F) How is this the case? From the first ground through the seventh ground, the bodhisattva achieves the complete development of the effortfully implemented preliminary practice factors conducive to knowledge. It is due to the power produced by this that, from the eighth ground to the tenth ground, all of his effortless practices then become completely developed.

Son of the Buddha, It is as if there were two worlds of which one is characterized by admixture with defilements whereas the other is entirely pure and it is difficult to pass between them, the sole exception being in the case of the bodhisattva who possesses the powers of great skillful means, spiritual superknowledges, and vows.

Son of the Buddha, so too it is with the grounds of the bodhisattva wherein there are those in which the practices are admixed with defilement and there are those in which the practices are pure. It is difficult for anyone to pass between these two with the sole exception of the bodhisattva possessed of great vow power, skillful means, and wisdom who only then is able to pass between them.

#### 9. VIMUKTICANDRA ASKS ABOUT TRANSCENDENCE OF AFFLICTIONS

Liberation Moon Bodhisattva then asked, “O Son of the Buddha. Does this seventh ground bodhisattva engage in defiled practices or does he instead engage in pure practices?”

#### 10. VAJRAGARBHA EXPLAINS THE TRANSCENDENCE OF AFFLICTIONS

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva replied:

O Son of the Buddha. From the first ground to the seventh ground, all practices in which he engages involve abandoning affliction-related actions. This is because they are directed toward realizing unsurpassably supreme bodhi. However, because he has still only achieved a partial realization corresponding to the level of his position on the path, this still cannot be referred to as stepping completely beyond all affliction-related actions.

#### 11. VAJRAGARBHA’S CAKRAVARTIN SAGE KING ANALOGY

Son of the Buddha, this circumstance is comparable to that of a wheel-turning sage king who mounts his precious heavenly

elephant and roams the four continents. In doing so, he becomes well aware that there are poverty-stricken people in difficult straits who are afflicted with suffering, even as he himself remains unsullied by those many disastrous situations. In such a circumstance, he would still not qualify as having truly stepped entirely beyond the position of being human.

Suppose, however, that he were to relinquish the body in which he serves as a king and then take rebirth in the Brahma Worlds where he would mount a heavenly palace from which he could view a thousand worlds as he roams throughout a thousand worlds manifesting the radiance and awesome qualities of a Brahma Heaven deva. In such a case, he would only then truly qualify as having stepped entirely beyond the station of being human.

Son of the Buddha, so too it is with the bodhisattva. Beginning with the first ground and going on through to the seventh ground, he mounts the vehicle of the *pāramitās*. As he roams about in the world, he becomes well aware of all the world's afflictions, faults, and disastrous aspects. Because he rides along on the path of right conduct, he remains unsullied by the faults associated with the afflictions. Still, he does not yet truly qualify as having stepped entirely beyond actions associated with afflictions.

However, if he were to then relinquish all of the effortfully implemented preliminary practices, he would then go forth from the seventh ground and enter the eighth ground and would then travel through the world mounted on the pure vehicle of the bodhisattva wherein he would be cognizant of the faults associated with the afflictions and yet would still remain unsullied by them. It is only then that he would qualify as having truly stepped entirely beyond the practices associated with the afflictions, this due to his having successfully stepped beyond them all.

Son of the Buddha, in coming to abide on this ground, this seventh ground bodhisattva has stepped entirely beyond the many sorts of afflictions such as abundant desire and the other sorts of afflictions. Abiding on this ground, he is not designated as someone who possesses the afflictions and yet he is not designated as entirely devoid of the afflictions, either. How is this the case? This is because, since none of the afflictions directly manifest in his practice, he is not designated as possessing them. However, because he seeks to acquire the Tathāgata's knowledge and his intentions have not yet become completely fulfilled, he is not yet designated as entirely free of them, either.

(G) Son of the Buddha, through profound purified intentions, the bodhisattva abiding on the seventh ground perfects his physical karma actions, perfects his verbal karmic actions, and perfects mental karmic actions. He has already entirely abandoned all bad courses of karmic action criticized by the Tathāgata and he always thoroughly cultivates all good courses of karmic actions praised by the Tathāgata. As for everything related to the world's classical texts, skills, and arts, his actions here are as described earlier in relation to the fifth ground. He naturally practices all of these without having to expend any particular effort in doing so.

This bodhisattva serves as a greatly illustrious teacher for those throughout the worlds of a great trichiliocosm, one who, with the sole exceptions of the Tathāgatas and those on the eighth ground and above, is unmatched by any of the other bodhisattvas in his resolute intentions and the marvelousness of his practice. All of the *dhyāna* samādhis, *samāpattis*, spiritual superknowledges, and liberations become directly manifest for him. Still, their cultivation and development here is not like that occurring on the eighth ground wherein they become completely realized as a function of karmic reward. In every successive mind-moment, the bodhisattva on this ground completely cultivates 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. THE CONQUEST OF SAMĀDHIS AND UNPRODUCED-DHARMAS PATIENCE

(H) Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva abiding on this ground enters:<sup>188</sup>

- The bodhisattva's skillful investigative contemplation samādhi;
- The skillful consideration of meanings samādhi;
- The most supreme intelligence samādhi;
- The distinguishing of the treasury of meanings samādhi;
- The distinguishing of meaning in accordance with reality samādhi;
- The skillful abiding in solidly established roots samādhi;
- The gateway to knowledge and spiritual superknowledges samādhi;
- The works throughout the Dharma realm samādhi;
- The supreme benefit of the Tathāgata samādhi;
- And the samādhi of the treasury of many different meanings and the gateway to *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

He enters hundreds of myriads of samādhis such as these that are gateways to complete fulfillment of great knowledge and spiritual

superknowledges whereby he is able to carry out the purifying cultivation of this ground.

(i) Having acquired these samādhis, due to thoroughly purifying skillful means and wisdom and due to the power of the great compassion, this bodhisattva steps beyond the Two Vehicles' grounds and reaches the wisdom contemplation ground.<sup>189</sup>

(j) Son of the Buddha, because the bodhisattva dwelling on this ground well purifies countless signlessness practices related to physical karma, well purifies countless signlessness practices related to verbal karma, and well purifies countless signlessness practices related to mental karma, he consequently acquires the light of the unproduced-dharmas patience.

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

Liberation Moon Bodhisattva then asked, "O Son of the Buddha. How could it be that all of the measurelessly many physical, verbal and mental deeds performed by each of the bodhisattvas from the first ground onward have not already stepped entirely beyond the Two Vehicles' practices?"

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

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva then replied:

Son of the Buddha, all of those bodhisattvas do step entirely beyond them, however, they do so only due to their aspiration to acquire the Dharma of all buddhas. It is not due to their own cognition's power of meditative contemplation.<sup>190</sup> Now, however, on this seventh ground, it is, however, on this seventh ground, this occurs by virtue of their own power of wisdom of the Buddhas. It is not by virtue of because of their own power of cognition that Two Vehicles practitioners are unable to even approach them.

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

This circumstance is analogous to that of a prince born of a queen into the house of a king entirely possessed of all of the marks of a king. Right at birth, he is immediately deemed superior even to all of the government ministers. This, however, is solely due to the power associated with kingship and not due to any power he as yet possesses himself. If as he grows to adulthood he becomes accomplished in the various sorts of skills, it will only then be due to his own powers that he steps entirely beyond everyone else.

So too it is with the bodhisattva *mahāsattva*. When he first brings forth the resolve, because he has established the great Dharma as the goal of his determination, he right then steps

entirely beyond all *śrāvaka*-disciples and *pratyekabuddhas*. Now, in dwelling on this ground, it is due to the power of wisdom that he surpasses all adherents of the Two Vehicles.

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

(K) Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva dwelling on this seventh ground acquires the ability to engage in extremely profound and secluded non-practice even as he still always practices deeds of body, speech, and mind through which he diligently pursues the supreme path, thus never abandoning that quest. Therefore, although the bodhisattva practices in accordance with ultimate reality,<sup>191</sup> he still refrains from bringing about its complete realization.

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

(L) Liberation Moon Bodhisattva then asked, "O Son of the Buddha. Beginning with which ground can the bodhisattva enter the cessation concentration?"

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

Vajragarbha Bodhisattva replied:

Son of the Buddha, it is from the sixth ground onward that the bodhisattva has the ability to enter the cessation concentration. Now, as he abides on this ground, he can enter it in each successive mind-moment and can also arise from it in each successive mind-moment and yet still refrain from bringing about its complete realization. So it is that this bodhisattva is known as one who has completely developed inconceivable deeds of body, speech, and mind.

19. VAJRAGARBHA LIKENS PRACTICE TO SAILING ON THE OPEN OCEAN

His practicing in accordance with ultimate reality even while still refraining from bringing about its complete realization is analogous to someone who sets sail in a boat out onto the open ocean and who then, by resorting to the power of his skillfulness, remains able to avoid disastrous difficulties out on those waters. So too it is with the bodhisattva dwelling on this ground. He sets sail in the ship of the *pāramitās* out onto the ocean of ultimate reality and, in doing so, through his reliance on the power of vows, he still refrains from bringing about the complete realization of cessation.

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

{M} Son of the Buddha, having acquired powers of samādhi and knowledge such as these, he employs great skillful means by which:

Although he manifests within *saṃsāra*, he still constantly abides in nirvāṇa;

Although surrounded by a retinue, he still always delights in detachment;

Although, by resort to the power of vows, he takes birth in the three realms, he still remains undefiled by worldly dharmas;

Although he always abides in a state of quiescence, through the power of skillful means, he is as if ablaze, but, although ablaze, he remains unburned;

Although he proceeds in accordance with the knowledge of the Buddha, he may still manifest entry into the grounds of the Śrāvaka-disciples and the Pratyekabuddhas;

Although he has acquired the treasury of the Buddha's realms of cognition,<sup>192</sup> he may still manifest as dwelling in the realms of *māras*;<sup>193</sup>

Although he has stepped beyond the paths of the *māras*, he may still manifest as practicing the dharmas of *māras*;

Although he may manifest practices identical to those of non-Buddhist traditions, he still never relinquishes the Dharma of the Buddha;

Although he manifests in ways that adapt to those in all worlds, he still always practices all world-transcending dharmas;

And although all of his adorning phenomena<sup>194</sup> surpass anything possessed by any of the devas, dragons, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras*, *mahoragas*, humans, non-humans, Śakra Devānām-Indra, the Brahma Heaven King, the Four Heavenly Kings, or anyone else, he still never relinquishes the mind that delights in the Dharma.

{N} Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva who has completely developed wisdom such as this abides on the Far-Reaching Ground.

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

Due to the power of his vows he succeeds in seeing many buddhas, that is to say, he can see many hundreds of buddhas and so forth until we come to his seeing of many hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of buddhas. He goes forth wherever those buddhas dwell and then, with a vast mind and with an especially supreme mind, he makes offerings to them, pays reverence to

them, venerates them, praises them, presents them with robes, food and drink, bedding, medicines, and all amenities supporting their existence, offering up all of these things while also making offerings to those within all of their sangha assemblies. He then dedicates the merit associated with these roots of goodness to *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*. So too does he then respectfully listen to the teachings on Dharma in those places where those buddhas dwell. Having heard these teachings, he takes them on and retains them, gains reality-concordant samādhis and the light of wisdom, and then accords with these in his cultivation.

Wherever the Buddhas dwell, he guards and preserves right Dharma. He is always one whom the Tathāgatas praise and express delight in. No proponent of the Two Vehicles can cause him to retreat or prevail over him through questioning or challenging him. His benefiting of beings purifies his realization of the patience with respect to dharmas. He passes through incalculably many hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of kalpas in this way during which all of his roots of goodness achieve ever greater supremacy.

## 22. GOOD ROOTS PURIFICATION LIKENED TO GOLD INLAY AND SUNLIGHT

This circumstance is comparable to when one inlays in real gold many sorts of marvelous gems as adornments, thereby making it ever more superior in quality and thereby redoubling its radiance to the point that no other article of adornment can rival it in these respects. All of the roots of goodness of the bodhisattva who dwells on the seventh ground are of just this very sort. Employing the power of skillful means and wisdom, he brings them to a state of ever increasing brightness and purity unrivaled by any followers of the Two Vehicles.

Son of the Buddha, this circumstance is comparable to the light of the sun which the light cast by the stars, the moon, and other heavenly bodies cannot even approach it in its brilliance that is even able to dry up all of the marshes on the entire continent of Jambudvīpa. So too it is with the bodhisattva on this Far-Reaching Ground who cannot be rivaled by any follower of the Two Vehicles, for he is able to entirely dry up all of the marshes of delusion possessed by all beings.

## 23. THE 7TH GROUND BODHISATTVA'S FOCUS ON SKILLFUL MEANS PĀRAMITĀ

Among the ten *pāramitās*, this bodhisattva most extensively practices the *pāramitā* of skillful means. It is not that he does not practice the others. Rather, he simply accords them an amount

of emphasis corresponding to his own strengths and to what is fitting.

#### 24. VAJRAGARBHA'S FINAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE 7TH GROUND BODHISATTVA

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

##### a. THE BODHISATTVA'S STATION AND DHARMA PRACTICE

The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground often becomes a Vaśavartin Heaven king who, through skillfully explaining for beings the means to achieve the realization of knowledge, thereby influences them to realize it and enter therein.

##### b. THE BODHISATTVA'S MINDFULNESS

In his practice of giving, pleasing words, beneficial actions, and joint endeavors and in all such works that he pursues, he never departs from mindfulness of the Buddha, and so forth until we come to his never departing from mindfulness of his quest to achieve complete fulfillment of the knowledge of all modes and the cognition of all-knowledge.

##### c. THE BODHISATTVA'S ASPIRATION TO SERVE BEINGS

He also has this thought: "I should become one who serves these beings as a leader, as one who is supreme," and so forth until we come to "as one who relies on the cognition of all-knowledge."

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

If this bodhisattva brings forth diligently vigorous practice, then, in but a moment, he will become able to enter hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of samādhis, and so forth until we come to his becoming able to transformationally manifest hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of bodhisattvas to serve as his retinue. If he resorts to the especially supreme power of the bodhisattva's vows, he will become freely able to manifest them in numbers beyond even this even to the point that one could never calculate their number even in a period of hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of kalpas.

#### 25. VAJRAGARBHA BODHISATTVA'S SUMMARIZING VERSES

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

As, on the path of the supreme meaning's knowledge and samādhi, his sixth ground mind cultivation reaches complete fullness, he straightaway perfects skillful means and wisdom.

It is due to this that the bodhisattva enters the seventh ground. (13)

Though awakened to three liberations, he is kind and compassionate.  
 Though the same as *tathāgatas*, he is diligent in offerings to Buddhas.  
 Though contemplating emptiness, he still accumulates merit.  
 Through these things, a bodhisattva ascends to the seventh ground. (14)

He has become detached from the three realms yet still adorns them.  
 He's put out his own delusions' fires, yet douses others' fires as well.  
 He knows dharmas' non-duality and yet is diligent in doing works.  
 He fathoms all lands as empty, yet delights in adorning lands. (15)

Even knowing the body as unmoving, he embodies all of its signs.  
 Though aware voice's nature is transcendent, he is skilled in discourse.  
 Though he fathoms all as one thought, he distinguishes all matters.  
 It is due to this that the wise ascend to the seventh ground. (16)

Closely contemplating these dharmas, he gains utter illumination,  
 broadly brings forth benefit for the multitudes who are so confused,  
 and enters the boundlessly many realms of beings as well as  
 the Buddhas' acts of transformative teaching that are also countless. (17)

All lands, all dharmas, and all categories of kalpas,  
 beings' convictions and mental dispositions—he enters them all,  
 proclaiming Three Vehicles Dharma in a manner equally boundless,  
 carrying on in this way the teaching of all the multitudes of beings. (18)

The bodhisattva diligently pursues the supreme path  
 and, moving or still, never forsakes skillful means and wisdom.  
 He dedicates each and every act to gaining Buddha's bodhi,  
 and, in each successive mind-moment, he perfects the *pāramitās*. (19)

Generating the resolve and making dedications constitute giving.  
 Extinguishing delusions is moral virtue and non-harming is patience.  
 Insatiable pursuit of goodness—this is vigor's goad.  
 Being unshakable on the path is the cultivation of *dhyāna*. (20)

Patient acquiescence in the unproduced is what constitutes prajñā.  
 Dedicating merit constitutes skillful means. Aspirations form vows.  
 Invincibility is the mark of powers. Skillful fathoming is knowledge.  
 It is in this way that he develops all of these to complete fullness. (21)

On the first ground, grasping fine qualities' conditions is fulfilled.  
 On the second, one abandons defilement. The third: Disputes cease.  
 On the fourth, one enters the path. The fifth: Practice is compliant.  
 On the sixth, light shines from wisdom that fathoms the unproduced.  
 (22)

On the seventh, merit from the bodhi practices becomes full  
 and all the different types of great vows become perfectly complete.  
 It is because of this that one is able to cause  
 everything one does on the eighth ground to become entirely pure. (23)

This ground is difficult to traverse. With wisdom, one steps beyond. This is analogous to going between two worlds and also like a sage king's degree of freedom from defiling attachment, for it does not yet qualify as totally stepping beyond it. (24)

When he comes to abide on the eighth ground of knowledge he then passes on beyond those domains of mind. As Brahmā deva, viewing the world, steps beyond the human realm, and like a lotus atop the water, he is free of defiling attachments. (25)

Although on this ground one oversteps the many sorts of afflictions, one is not said either to have afflictions or to be free of afflictions.<sup>195</sup> This is because there are no afflictions that are active therein even as the mind seeking Buddha's knowledge has not yet become fulfilled. (26)

He entirely fathoms all of the many types of worldly skills, the classical texts, books, literary skills, and polemics while, as for the *dhyāna* concentrations, samādhis, and spiritual superknowledges, he cultivates all such endeavors to the point of complete mastery. (27)

In cultivating and perfecting the path of the seventh ground, the bodhisattva steps entirely beyond all Two Vehicles' practices. First ground success arises from vows. Here it is from knowledge. This is analogous to a prince whose powers are utterly perfected. (28)

Though perfect in the very profound, he still advances on the path. His every moment is quiescent cessation, yet he forgoes realization. It is just as when one goes forth in a boat out into the open ocean, and yet still keeps from being capsized by its waters. (29)

His practice of skillful means and wisdom and perfection of qualities are such that no one in the entire world can completely fathom. By offerings to many buddhas and his mind's growing radiance he becomes like gold that has been adorned with marvelous gems. (30)

The wisdom of this ground's bodhisattva is the most brilliant of all. Like flourishing sunlight, it dries up the waters of craving. He also serves as a lord of the Paranirmita Vaśavartin Heaven who teaches and guides beings in the cultivation of right knowledge. (31)

If he resorts to the power of valiant and vigorous diligence, he acquires numerous samādhis and sees multitudes of buddhas, hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *nayutas* in number. With freely exercised vow power, the number goes even beyond this. (32)

This is the bodhisattva's Far-Reaching Ground, the path of the purification of skillful means and wisdom. It is such that no deva, human, *śrāvaka*-disciple, or *pratyekabuddha* anywhere in any world would be able to comprehend it. (33)