

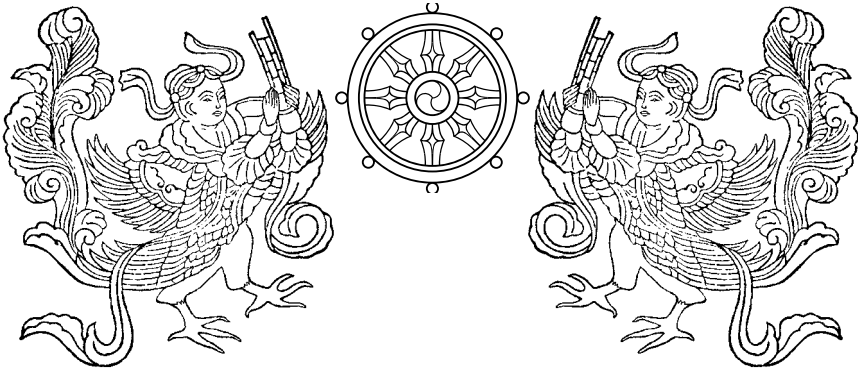
# THE FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA

*The Great Expansive  
Buddha's Flower Adornment Sutra*

An Annotated Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra  
By Bhikshu Dharmamitra

WITH A COMMENTARIAL SYNOPSIS  
OF THE FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA

VOLUME ONE



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Vol. 10, no. 279). It consists of 39 chapters that introduce an interpenetrating,

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worlds while explaining in great detail the cultivation of the bodhisattva path

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## CHAPTER 17

### The Merit of the Initial Resolve

At that time, Śakra Devānām Indra addressed Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva, saying, “Son of the Buddha, how much merit is acquired by the bodhisattva by making his initial resolve to attain bodhi?”

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva replied:

The meaning of this is extremely profound, difficult to describe, difficult to know, difficult to distinguish, difficult to believe, difficult to bring to realization, difficult to carry out, difficult to comprehend, difficult to apprehend through reasoning, difficult to assess, and difficult to penetrate. Although this is so, with the assistance of the Buddha’s awesome powers, I shall explain this matter for you.

Son of the Buddha, suppose there was someone who made offerings of all kinds of pleasing things to all beings in an *asaṃkhyeya* of worlds to the east for an entire kalpa and afterward instructed and enabled them to purely observe the five moral precepts, whereupon he did this in the same way in the south, the west, the north, the four midpoints, the zenith, and the nadir. Son of the Buddha, what do you think? Would this person’s merit be abundant, or not?

Śakra Devānām Indra replied, “This person’s merit would be such that only a buddha could know it. As for everyone else, none of them would be able to measure it.”

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva said:

Son of the Buddha, if one were to compare this person’s merit to the merit acquired by the bodhisattva by making his initial resolve, it would not amount to a hundredth part, would not amount to a thousandth part, and would not amount to a hundred-thousandth part. In this same way, it would not be equal to even one part in a *koṭī* of parts, one part in a hundred *koṭīs* of parts, one part in a thousand *koṭīs* of parts, one part in a hundred thousand *koṭīs* of parts, one part in a *nayuta* of *koṭīs* of parts, one part in a hundred *nayutas* of *koṭīs* of parts, one part in a thousand *nayutas* of *koṭīs* of parts, one part in a hundred thousand *nayutas* of *koṭīs* of parts, one part in the largest numerable number of parts, one part in a *kalā* of parts, one part in the largest calculable number of parts, one part in the highest number of parts demonstrable by analogy, and it would not amount to even a single part in an *upaniṣad* of parts.

Son of the Buddha, for the time being, set aside this analogy. Suppose instead that there was a person who made offerings of all kinds of pleasing things to all beings in ten *asaṃkhyeyas* of worlds throughout the ten directions, doing so for a hundred kalpas, and afterward instructed and enabled them to cultivate the ten courses of good karmic action, after which he made such offerings to them for a thousand kalpas and then taught them to abide in the four *dhyānas*, after which he [made such offerings to them] for a hundred thousand kalpas and then taught them to abide in the four immeasurable minds, after which he [made such offerings to them] for a *koṭī* of kalpas and then taught them to abide in the four formless absorptions, after which he [made such offerings to them] for a hundred *koṭīs* of kalpas and then taught them to abide in the fruit of the *srota-āpanna*, after which he [made such offerings to them] for a thousand *koṭīs* of kalpas and then taught them to abide in the fruit of the *sakṛdāgāmin*, after which he [made such offerings to them] for a hundred thousand *koṭīs* of kalpas and then taught them to abide in the fruit of the *ānāgāmin*, after which he then [made such offerings to them] for a *nayuta* of *koṭīs* of kalpas and then taught them to abide in the fruit of arhatship, after which he [made such offerings to them] for a hundred thousand *nayutas* of *koṭīs* of kalpas and then taught them to abide in the path of a *pratyekabuddha*. Son of the Buddha, what do you think? Would that person's merit be abundant, or not?

Śakra Devānām Indra replied, "Son of the Buddha, this person's merit would be such that only a buddha could know it."

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva said:

Son of the Buddha, if one were to compare this person's merit to the merit acquired by the bodhisattva when he first makes the resolve, it would not amount to a hundredth part, would not amount to a thousandth part, would not amount to a hundred-thousandth part, and so forth on up to its not amounting to even a single part in an *upaniṣad* of parts. And why is this so?

Son of the Buddha, when all buddhas first make their resolve, they do not resolve to attain bodhi solely for the sake of using all kinds of pleasing things to make offerings to all beings in ten *asaṃkhyeyas* of worlds throughout the ten directions for a hundred kalpas, and so forth on up to doing so for a hundred thousand *nayutas* of *koṭīs* of kalpas.

Nor do they resolve to attain bodhi solely for the sake of teaching and enabling just such a particular number of beings to cultivate the five precepts or the ten courses of good karmic action, or for

the sake of teaching them to abide in the four *dhyānas*, in the four immeasurable minds, or in the four formless absorptions, or for the sake of teaching them to gain the fruit of the *srota-āpanna*, the fruit of the *sakṛdāgāmin*, the fruit of the *ānāgamin*, the fruit of the arhat, or the path of the *pratyekabuddha*. When they make the resolve to attain bodhi, it is:

- To prevent the lineage of the *tathāgatas* from being cut off;
- To [enable the Dharma] to pervade all worlds;<sup>259</sup>
- To liberate the beings in all worlds;
- To fully know the creation and destruction of all worlds;
- To fully know the defilement and purity of the beings in all worlds;
- To fully know the purity of the nature of all worlds;
- To fully know all beings' mental dispositions, afflictions, and habitual karmic propensities;
- To fully know with regard to all beings their dying in this place and their being born in that place;
- To fully know all beings' faculties and skillful means;
- To fully know the mental actions of all beings;
- To fully know the knowledge of all beings throughout the three periods of time; and
- To fully know the equality of the spheres of action of all buddhas.

Son of the Buddha, again, setting aside this analogy, suppose instead that there were a person who, in but a single mind-moment, was able to go beyond an *asaṃkhyeya* of worlds to the east and then was able to continue to do this for an entire *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa. No one would be able to know the bounds of these worlds through which he passed.

Then suppose that there was a second person who was able in but a single mind-moment to go beyond even more worlds than that previous person had passed beyond during that entire *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa, and assume also that he continued to do this for an entire *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa. Assume, too, that, in this same manner, there continued to be yet others up to the tenth such successive superseding of the previous person's abilities even as this also occurred in the same way in the south, the west, the north, the four midpoints, the zenith, and the nadir.

Son of the Buddha, given that there were these hundred people, each of whom had gone beyond all that many worlds, the far boundaries of all these worlds might be knowable. Even so, there still could never be anyone who could know the bounds of all the roots of goodness acquired by the bodhisattva when making his initial resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

Why is this? Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva is not limited to making the resolve to attain bodhi only to being able to completely know just such a particular number of worlds as were passed in such a circumstance. Rather, it is to completely know all worlds of the ten directions that he makes the resolve to attain bodhi. That is to say, he makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*:

Wishing to completely know that sublime worlds are just coarse worlds, that coarse worlds are just sublime worlds, that upward-facing worlds are just inverted worlds, that inverted worlds are just upward-facing worlds, that small worlds are just large worlds, that large worlds are just small worlds, that vast worlds are just narrow worlds, that narrow worlds are just vast worlds, that a single world is just an ineffable number of worlds, that an ineffable number of worlds are just a single world, that an ineffable number of worlds enter into a single world, that a single world enters into an ineffable number of worlds, that defiled worlds are just pure worlds, and that pure worlds are just defiled worlds;

Wishing to know within the tip of a single hair the different natures of all worlds and know the single essential nature of the tip of a single hair in all worlds;

Wishing to know the production of all worlds within but a single world;

Wishing to know all worlds as being devoid of any essential nature at all; and

Wishing to completely and unimpededly know all the vast worlds in the space of but a single mind-moment of mental attention.

Son of the Buddha, again, setting aside this analogy, suppose instead that there was a person who, in the instant of but a single mind-moment, was able to know the number of kalpas involved in the creation and destruction of an *asamkhyeya* of worlds to the east and then continued in this way in each and every subsequent mind-moment, doing so for an entire *asamkhyeya* kalpa. There is no one who would be able to know the bounds of the number of kalpas involved. But now suppose that there was a second person who in but a single mind-moment was able to know the number of kalpas which the previous person took an entire *asamkhyeya* kalpa to know. And then suppose that, when extensively described, there came to be ten such persons [each of whom knew in a single mind-moment what the previous person had taken an *asamkhyeya* of kalpas to know] and suppose that, in this same way, this same circumstance

occurred in the south, the west, the north, the four midpoints, the zenith, and the nadir.

Son of the Buddha, the bounds of the number of kalpas involved in the creation and destruction of all of these *asaṃkhyeyas* of worlds throughout the ten directions might be knowable. Even so, there still could never be anyone who could know the bounds of the merit and roots of goodness acquired by the bodhisattva when making his initial resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

Why is this? The bodhisattva is not limited to making the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* only in order to completely know the number of kalpas that transpired in the creation and destruction of just such a particular number of worlds. Rather, it is in order to completely know all the kalpas without exception that transpired in the creation and destruction of all worlds that he makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*. That is to say, he makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*:

To know the equality of long kalpas with short kalpas and to know the equality of short kalpas with long kalpas;

To know the equality of a single kalpa with innumerable kalpas and to know the equality of innumerable kalpas with a single kalpa;

To know the equality of kalpas in which there are buddhas with kalpas in which there are no buddhas and to know the equality of kalpas in which there are no buddhas with kalpas in which there are buddhas;

To know that in a kalpa in which there is one buddha, there are an ineffably large number of buddhas and to know that, in a kalpa in which there are an ineffable number of buddhas, there is one buddha;

To know the equality of measurable kalpas with immeasurable kalpas and to know the equality of immeasurable kalpas with measurable kalpas;

To know the equality of an exhaustible number of kalpas with an inexhaustible number of kalpas and to know the equality of an inexhaustible number of kalpas with an exhaustible number of kalpas;

To know the equality of an ineffable number of kalpas and but a single mind-moment and to know the equality of but a single mind-moment and an ineffable number of kalpas;

To know all kalpas may enter into a non-kalpa<sup>260</sup> and to know a non-kalpa enters all kalpas; and

Wishing to completely know in but a single mind-moment all the kalpas involved in the creation and destruction of all worlds of the past, the future, and the present periods of time.

This is what is referred to as the adornment of the great vow of those who make the initial resolve, the knowledge of the spiritual superknowledges by which one completely knows all kalpas.

Son of the Buddha, again, setting aside this analogy, suppose instead that there was a person who, in but a single mind-moment, was able to know all the various different kinds of understandings possessed by all beings in an *asaṃkhyeya* of worlds to the east and then continued in this way in each succeeding mind-moment for an entire *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa. And then suppose that there was then a second person who, in but a single mind-moment, was able to know all the various different kinds of understandings possessed by all beings that the previous person took an entire *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa to know. Suppose, too, that he continued in this way for an entire *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa and that then, in progressive succession, there came to be ten such persons [each of whom knew in a single mind-moment what the previous person had taken an *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa to know], and suppose that, in this same way, this same circumstance occurred in the south, the west, the north, the four midpoints, the zenith, and the nadir.

Son of the Buddha, the bounds of the number of various different understandings possessed by all these beings in the ten directions might be knowable. Even so, there still could never be anyone who could know the bounds of the merit and roots of goodness acquired by the bodhisattva when making his initial resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

And why is this so? Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva is not limited to making the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* only to know the understandings possessed by just such a particular number of beings. Rather, it is in order to completely know the various different kinds of understandings possessed by all beings in all worlds that he resolves to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*. That is to say, he makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*:

Because he wishes to know all the boundlessly many different kinds of understandings and because he wishes to know the equality of a single being's understanding with the understandings of innumerable many beings;

Because he wishes to acquire the light of the knowledge which knows the skillful means appropriate to an ineffable number of different understandings;



- Because he wishes to completely know each and every one of the different kinds of understandings possessed by everyone in the ocean of all beings without exception;
- Because he wishes to completely know all the countless many different kinds of wholesome and unwholesome understandings throughout the past, the present, and the future;
- Because he wishes to completely know all the forms of semblance understandings and non-semblance understandings;
- Because he wishes to completely know all forms of understanding as identical to a single form of understanding and know a single form of understanding as identical to all forms of understanding;
- Because he wishes to acquire the Tathāgata's power of understanding;
- Because he wishes to completely know the differences in those understandings that are excelled by others, those understandings that are unexcelled, those understandings that still have matters they do not include, those understandings that have nothing they do not include, those understandings that are equaled by others, and those understandings that are unequaled by any others;
- Because he wishes to completely know the differences in dependent understandings and independent understandings, shared understandings and exclusive understandings, bounded understandings and boundless understandings, differentiated understandings and non-differentiated understandings, wholesome understandings and unwholesome understandings, worldly understandings and world-transcending understandings;
- Because he wishes to acquire the unimpeded knowledge of the Tathāgata's liberations with respect to all forms of marvelous understanding, great understanding, measureless understanding, and the understanding of the right and fixed position;<sup>261</sup>
- Because he wishes to use countless skillful means to completely know with regard to each and every being without exception in all realms of beings throughout the ten directions all their pure understandings and defiled understandings, their extensive understandings and general understandings, and their subtle understandings and coarse understandings; and
- Because he wishes to completely know their extremely esoteric understandings and provisional understandings, their discriminating understandings and spontaneous understandings, their understandings arising in accordance with causes, their

understandings arising in accordance with conditions, and the entire web of all their understandings without exception.

Son of the Buddha, again, setting aside this analogy, suppose instead that there was a person who, in the instant of but a single mind-moment, was able to know all the different faculties possessed by all beings in innumerable worlds to the east and that he continued in this way in each succeeding mind-moment for an entire *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa. Now suppose that there was then a second person who, in the instant of but a single mind-moment was able to know all the different faculties possessed by all beings that the previous person took each succeeding mind-moment of an entire *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa to know. And then suppose that, when extensively described, there came to be ten such persons [each of whom knew in a single mind-moment what the previous person had taken an *asaṃkhyeya* of kalpas to know] and suppose that, in this same way, this same circumstance occurred in the south, the west, the north, the four midpoints, the zenith, and the nadir.

Son of the Buddha, the bounds of the different faculties of all these beings in the worlds throughout the ten directions might be knowable. Even so, there still could never be anyone who could know the bounds of the merit and roots of goodness acquired by the bodhisattva when making his initial resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

And why is this so? Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva is not limited to making the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* only in order to know the faculties possessed by the beings in just such a particular number of worlds. Rather, it is in order to completely know all the various faculties of all beings in all worlds, and, when extensively described, it is for the sake of all those other matters up to and including his wish to completely know the entire net of all those beings' faculties that he makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

Son of the Buddha, again, setting aside this analogy, suppose instead that there was a person who, in the instant of but a single mind-moment, was able to know the various inclinations<sup>262</sup> of all beings in countless worlds to the east and suppose that he continued in this way in each succeeding mind-moment for an entire *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa. And then suppose that, when extensively described, there came to be ten such persons [each of whom knew in a single mind-moment what the previous person had taken an *asaṃkhyeya* of kalpas to know] and suppose that, in this same way,

this same circumstance occurred in the south, the west, the north, the four midpoints, the zenith, and the nadir.

The bounds of all these inclinations of the beings throughout the ten directions might be knowable. Even so, there still could never be anyone who could know the bounds of the merit and roots of goodness acquired by the bodhisattva when making his initial resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

And why is this so? Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva is not limited to making the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* only in order to completely know the inclinations of just such a particular number of beings. Rather, it is in order to completely know all of the various inclinations of all beings in all worlds and, when extensively described, it is for the sake of all those other matters up to and including his wish to completely know the entire net of all those beings' inclinations that he makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

Son of the Buddha, again, setting aside this analogy, suppose instead that there was a person who, in the instant of but a single mind-moment, was able to know the many different kinds of skillful means appropriate to all beings in innumerable worlds to the east. And then suppose that, when extensively described, there came to be ten such persons [each of whom knew in a single mind-moment what the previous person had taken an *asaṃkhyeya* of kalpas to know] and suppose that, in this same way, this same circumstance occurred in the south, the west, the north, the four midpoints, the zenith, and the nadir.

The bounds of the many different kinds of skillful means appropriate to the beings throughout the ten directions might be knowable. Even so, there still could never be anyone who could know the bounds of the merit and roots of goodness acquired by the bodhisattva when making his initial resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

And why is this so? Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva is not limited to making the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* only in order to know the skillful means appropriate to the beings in just such a particular number of worlds. Rather, it is in order to completely know the many different kinds of skillful means appropriate to all beings in all worlds, and, when extensively described, it is for the sake of all those other matters up to and including his wish to completely know the entire net of skillful means that he makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

Son of the Buddha, again, setting aside this analogy, suppose instead that there was a person who, in the instant of but a single mind-moment, was able to know the many different kinds of thoughts<sup>263</sup> of all beings in innumerable worlds to the east. Then, in accordance with the extensive description, we come to: the bounds of these many different kinds of thoughts of all beings in the worlds of the ten directions might be knowable. Even so, there still could never be anyone who could know the bounds of the merit and roots of goodness acquired by the bodhisattva when making the initial resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

And why is this so? Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva is not limited to making the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* only in order to know the thoughts of just such a particular number of beings. Rather, it is in order to completely know all the many different thoughts of all the boundlessly many beings throughout the entire Dharma realm and the realms of empty space, and so forth, up to and including its being because he wishes to completely know the entire net of all their thoughts that he makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

Son of the Buddha, again, setting aside this analogy, suppose instead that there was a person who, in the instant of but a single mind-moment, was able to know all the many different kinds of karmic actions of all beings in innumerable worlds to the east. Then, in accordance with the extensive description, we come to: the bounds of these many different kinds of karmic actions of all beings in the worlds of the ten directions might be knowable. Even so, the bounds of the roots of goodness acquired by the bodhisattva when making the initial resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* could never be known.

And why is this so? Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva is not limited to making the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* only in order to know the karmic actions of just such a particular number of beings. Rather, it is because of his wish to completely know the karmic actions of all beings throughout the three periods of time, and so forth, up to and including its being because he wishes to completely know the entire net of all their karmic actions that he makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

Son of the Buddha, again, setting aside this analogy, suppose instead that there was a person who, in the instant of but a single mind-moment, was able to know all the various kinds of afflictions of all beings in innumerable worlds to the east and suppose that he continued in this way in each succeeding mind-moment for an

entire *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa. There is no one who would be able to know the bounds of the many different kinds of differences in all these afflictions.

Now suppose that there was then a second person who, in the instant of but a single mind-moment was able to know all the differences in all of the afflictions of all those beings that the former person came to know only in an *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa. Suppose also that he too continued in this way for an entire *asaṃkhyeya* kalpa. And then suppose that, when extensively described, there came to be ten such persons [each of whom knew in a single mind-moment what the previous person had taken an *asaṃkhyeya* of kalpas to know] and suppose that, in this same way, this same circumstance occurred in the south, the west, the north, the four midpoints, the zenith, and the nadir.

Son of the Buddha, the bounds of the differences in the afflictions of these beings throughout the ten directions might be knowable. Even so, the bounds of the roots of goodness acquired by the bodhisattva when making the initial resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* could never be known.

And why is this so? Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva is not limited to making the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* only in order to know the afflictions of the beings in just such a particular number of worlds. Rather, it is in order to completely know the differences in the afflictions of all beings in all worlds that he makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*. That is to say, he makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*:

Because he wishes to exhaustively know the mild afflictions, the severe afflictions, the latent afflictions, and the manifest afflictions, the various differences in the measureless afflictions of each and every being, and the many different kinds of associated ideation and discursion, this in order to bring about the purification of all defilements;

Because he wishes to exhaustively know the afflictions dependent on ignorance and the afflictions characterized by craving, this in order to bring about the severance of all affliction-based fetters involved in all the destinies of existence;

Because he wishes to exhaustively know all the greed-based afflictions, the hatred-based afflictions, the delusion-based afflictions, and the afflictions involving an equal share [of greed, hatred, and delusion], this in order to bring about the severance of the roots of all afflictions;

Because he wishes to completely know the afflictions associated with a self, the afflictions associated with the possessions of a self, and the afflictions associated with arrogance, this in order to bring about the awakening to all afflictions without exception;

Because he wishes to completely know the root afflictions and subsidiary afflictions arising from inverted views and discriminations and arising from the sixty-two views associated with a body-based personality view, this in order to bring about the subduing of all afflictions; and

Because he wishes to completely know the afflictions related to the hindrances<sup>264</sup> and the afflictions related to the obstacles,<sup>265</sup> this in order to produce a greatly compassionate resolve to rescue beings, sever the net of all afflictions, and enable the purification of the nature of omniscience.

Son of the Buddha, again, setting aside this analogy, suppose instead that there was a person who, in the instant of but a single mind-moment, was able to make offerings to the innumerable many buddhas in the east as well as to all the beings in those innumerable worlds, making offerings of all different kinds of supremely fine-flavored drinks and foods, incense, flowers, robes, banners, pennants, parasols, and canopies, as well as *saṃghāramas*,<sup>266</sup> supremely marvelous palaces, jeweled tents, net curtains, lion thrones adorned in many different ways, and the many kinds of marvelous jewels, offering these with respect, reverence, full ceremonial bows, praises, respectfully stooped bodies, and upwardly admiring gazes, continuing do so without interruption for innumerable many kalpas while also encouraging those beings, thus enabling them all to make offerings to those buddhas in these same ways, continuing to do so until, after those buddhas passed into nirvāṇa, they then raised up stupas for each of them, stupas that were tall and broad, present in countless worlds, made of the many kinds of jewels, and graced with all kinds of different adornments, stupas in each of which there were countless images of the Tathāgata, the light from which everywhere illuminated those countless many worlds. Suppose too that this person continued to do this in the same way for innumerable many kalpas, doing so in the same way in the south, the west, the north, the four midpoints, the zenith, and the nadir.

Son of the Buddha, what do you think? Would that person's merit be abundant, or not?

Śakra Devānām Indra replied, “This person’s merit would be such that only a buddha could know it. No one else would be able to fathom it.”

[Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva then continued, saying]:

Son of the Buddha, even so, if one were to compare this person’s merit to the merit acquired by the bodhisattva when making the initial resolve, it would not amount to a hundredth part, would not amount to a thousandth part, would not amount to a hundred-thousandth part, and so forth on up to its not amounting to even a single part in an *upaniṣad*<sup>267</sup> of parts.

Son of the Buddha, again, setting aside this analogy, suppose that there was then a second person who, in but a single mind-moment, was able to accomplish that same number of offerings as jointly accomplished by that previous person and all those beings in those innumerable many worlds during those innumerable many kalpas. Suppose as well that he continued in this same way in each succeeding mind-moment, continuing throughout countless kalpas to make offerings of countless kinds of offering gifts, offering them to all those countless many buddhas, those *tathāgatas*, as well as to all the beings in those countless many worlds.

Suppose as well that this circumstance continued to unfold in the same way with a third person and then in sequential progression on through to a tenth person, all of whom were able in the same way to accomplish in but a single mind-moment all the offerings accomplished by each of the former persons, offering in this same way in each successive mind-moment a boundless number, an incomparable number, an innumerable number, an indescribable number, an inconceivable number, an immeasurable number, an ineffable number, and an ineffable-ineffable number of offering gifts, offering them to all the boundlessly many, and so forth on up to the ineffable-ineffable number of buddhas as well as to all the beings in all those many worlds, doing so for a boundless number, and so forth on up to an ineffable-ineffable number of kalpas, continuing to do so until, after those buddhas passed into nirvāṇa, they then each raised up stupas, stupas that were tall and broad, continuing to do so in the same way throughout the kalpas of existence.<sup>268</sup>

Son of the Buddha, if one were to compare this above-described merit to the merit acquired by the bodhisattva when making the initial resolve, it would not amount to a hundredth part, would not amount to a thousandth part, would not amount to a

hundred-thousandth part, and so forth on up to its not equaling even a single part in an *upaniṣad* of parts.

And why is this so? Son of the Buddha, the bodhisattva is not limited to making the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* only in order to make offerings to just such a particular number of buddhas. Rather, it is in order to make offerings to all the ineffably-ineffably many countless buddhas of the ten directions throughout the past, future, and present and throughout the entire Dharma realm and the realms of empty space that he therefore makes the resolve to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

Having made this resolve, he then becomes able to know all buddhas of the past, from the time of their first achieving realization of right enlightenment on through to their entry into *parinirvāṇa*, becomes able to believe in all the roots of goodness of all buddhas of the future, and becomes able to know all the wisdom of all buddhas of the present. This bodhisattva becomes able to believe in and take on all the meritorious qualities of all of those buddhas, becomes able to cultivate them, able to acquire them, able to know them, able to realize them, and able to perfect them, and he becomes able to become of the same single nature as all buddhas.

And why is this so? As for this bodhisattva:

It is to prevent the severance of the lineage of all the *tathāgatas* that he makes the resolve;

To [enable the Dharma] to pervade all worlds that he makes the resolve;

It is to liberate the beings in all worlds that he makes the resolve;

It is to completely know the creation and destruction of all worlds that he makes the resolve;

It is to fully know the defilement and purity of all beings that he makes the resolve;

It is to fully know the purity of the three realms of existence in all worlds that he makes the resolve;

It is to fully know all beings' inclinations, afflictions, and habitual karmic propensities that he makes the resolve;

It is to fully know all beings' dying in this place and being born in that place that he makes the resolve;

It is to fully know all beings' faculties and appropriate skillful means that he makes the resolve;

It is to fully know the mental actions of all beings that he makes the resolve; and

It is to fully know the knowledge of all beings throughout the three periods of time that he makes the resolve.



Due to making the resolve:

He is always remembered by all buddhas of the three periods of time;

He becomes bound to realize the unsurpassed bodhi of all buddhas of the three periods of time;

He immediately becomes the recipient of the sublime Dharma bestowed on him by all buddhas of the three periods of time;

He immediately becomes of the same essential nature as all buddhas of the three periods of time;

Having already cultivated the dharmas of the provisions for the path of all buddhas of the three periods of time, he perfects the powers and fearlessnesses of all buddhas of the three periods of time;

He adorns the dharmas exclusive to the buddhas of all buddhas of the three periods of time; and

He acquires all the wisdom in speaking the Dharma possessed by all buddhas throughout the Dharma realm.

And why is this the case? It is because, by this arousing of the resolve, he becomes bound to attain buddhahood. One should realize that this person then becomes the same as all buddhas of the three periods of time, then attains the same sphere of cognition of all buddhas, the *tathāgatas*, of the three periods of time, then achieves the same meritorious qualities as those of all buddhas, the *tathāgatas*, of the three periods of time, and then acquires the genuine wisdom that fathoms the ultimate identity of the Tathāgata's one body and his countless bodies.

Right at that time when he makes the resolve:

He is then praised in unison by all buddhas of the ten directions;

He is then able to speak Dharma and teach and train all beings in all worlds;

He is then able to cause quaking and movement in all worlds;

He is then able to illuminate all worlds;

He is then able to extinguish the sufferings in the wretched destinies in all worlds;

He is then able to purify all lands;

He is then able to manifest the realization of buddhahood in all worlds;

He is then able to cause all beings to be filled with joyous delight;

He is then able to penetrate the nature of the entire Dharma realm;

He is then able to sustain the lineage of all buddhas; and

He is then able to acquire the light of all buddhas' wisdom.

This bodhisattva who has made the initial resolve does not have even the slightest thing within the three periods of time that he obtains. That is to say, whether it be in relation to the buddhas, the Dharma of the buddhas, the bodhisattvas, the Dharma of the bodhisattvas, the *pratyekabuddhas*, the Dharma of the *pratyekabuddhas*, the *śrāvaka* disciples, the Dharma of the *śrāvaka* disciples, the world, the dharmas of the world, the transcendence of the world, the dharmas of world transcendence, beings, or the dharmas of beings, he only seeks all-knowledge. His mind is free of any attachment to any of the dharma realms.<sup>269</sup>

At that time, due to the Buddha's spiritual powers, worlds in each of the ten directions as numerous as the atoms in a myriad buddha *kṣetras* all moved and shook in six ways. That is to say, they experienced: movement, universal movement, equal-and-universal movement; rising, universal rising, equal-and-universal rising; upward thrusting, universal upward thrusting, equal-and-universal upward thrusting; shaking, universal shaking, equal-and-universal shaking; roaring, universal roaring, equal-and-universal roaring; striking, universal striking, and equal-and-universal striking.

It rained down marvelous celestial flowers, celestial incense, powdered celestial incense, celestial floral chaplets, celestial robes, celestial jewels, and celestial adornments. This was accompanied by the playing of celestial music, and by the emanation of celestial radiance and celestial sounds.

At that time, from beyond a number of worlds off in each of the ten directions as numerous as the atoms in ten buddha *kṣetras*, buddhas as numerous as the atoms in a myriad buddha *kṣetras*, all of them named "Dharma Wisdom," all manifested their bodies directly before Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva and spoke these words:

It is good indeed, good indeed, Dharma Wisdom, that you have now been able to proclaim this Dharma. We buddhas from each of the ten directions who are each as numerous as the atoms in a myriad buddha *kṣetras* all also proclaim this Dharma. All other buddhas also proclaim it in this way. When you proclaimed this Dharma, bodhisattvas as numerous as the atoms in a myriad buddha *kṣetras* all resolved to attain bodhi. We all now bestow a prediction on them that in a future age, beyond a thousand ineffable numbers of boundless kalpas, they will all succeed in attaining buddhahood during the same single kalpa and, when they appear in the world, they will all be called "Pure Mind Tathāgata." All the worlds in which they

dwell will each be different. We shall all protect and support this Dharma and enable all bodhisattvas of the future who have not yet heard it to succeed in hearing it.

Just as, on the summit of Mount Sumeru, above the four continents of this Sahā world, you have proclaimed such Dharma and enabled the beings who have heard it to receive its transformative teaching, so too, in this same way, they proclaim this Dharma and teach beings throughout the ten directions in all the hundreds of thousands of *koṭīs* of *nayutas* of countless many, measurelessly many, boundlessly many, incomparably many, innumerable many, indescribably many, inconceivably many, immeasurably many, and ineffably many numbers of worlds throughout the Dharma realm and the realms of empty space. Those proclaiming this Dharma are all identically named “Dharma Wisdom.” They all proclaim Dharma such as this:

Due to the Buddha’s spiritual powers;  
 Due to the power of the Bhagavat’s original vows;  
 Due to a wish to reveal the Dharma of the Buddha;  
 To use the light of wisdom to produce universal illumination;  
 Due to a wish to explain the genuine meaning;  
 To enable beings to realize the nature of dharmas;  
 To enable the congregations to be filled with joyous delight;  
 Due to a wish to reveal the Buddha Dharma’s causality;  
 To realize the equality of all buddhas; and  
 To comprehend the non-duality of the Dharma realm.

At that time, Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva surveyed all the congregations in the lands of the ten directions throughout the realms of space, and:

Because he wished to fully perfect all beings;  
 Because he wished to fully purify all actions, results, and consequences;  
 Because he wished to fully reveal the pure Dharma realm;  
 Because he wished to fully extirpate all roots of defilement;  
 Because he wished to fully enable the growth of vast resolute faith;  
 Because he wished to fully enable the knowledge of the faculties of countless beings;  
 Because he wished to fully enable the knowledge of the identity of the dharmas of the three periods of time;  
 Because he wished to fully enable the contemplation of the realm of nirvāṇa; and  
 Because he wished to enable the growth in all their own roots of goodness—

With the assistance of the Buddha's awesome powers, he then spoke these verses:

To serve the benefit of the world, he makes the great resolve.  
His resolve extends everywhere throughout the ten directions  
to all beings and all lands, to all dharmas of the three periods of time,  
and to the ocean of the supreme ones, the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

To all the worlds to the very ends of empty space  
equal in vastness to the entire Dharma realm,  
in accordance with all buddhas' Dharma, he goes and visits them all,  
and in this way arouses the irreversible resolve.

Kindly mindful of beings, never forsaking them for even a moment,  
abandoning all harming, and benefiting them all,  
his radiance illuminates the world and he serves as their refuge,  
held in inconceivable guarding mindfulness of the One of Ten Powers.

He enters all lands throughout the ten directions,  
manifests appearances in every form, and,  
according with the Buddha's vast and boundless merit and wisdom,  
he pursues the cultivation of their causes and stays free of attachment.

Some *kṣētras* face upward, some laterally, and some are inverted.  
In their coarseness, sublimity, and vastness, there are countless kinds.  
By a single instance of arousing the supreme resolve, the bodhisattva  
becomes unimpeded in his ability to travel to them all.

The bodhisattva's supreme practices are ineffably numerous.  
He diligently cultivates them all, yet has nowhere in which he abides.  
When he sees all buddhas, he is always pleased and happy,  
and everywhere enters their deep ocean of Dharma.

He feels deep sympathy for the many beings within the five destinies<sup>270</sup>  
and enables them to become rid of defilements and thoroughly pure.  
He carries on the buddhas' lineage, prevents it from being cut off,  
and demolishes all of Māra's palaces, leaving none remaining.

He already dwells in the *tathāgatas'* uniformly equal nature  
and skillfully cultivates the path of subtle skillful means.  
He arouses a mind of faith in the Buddha's sphere of action,  
receives the Buddha's consecration, and has a mind free of attachment.

He remembers to repay the kindness of the Most Revered of Beings<sup>271</sup>  
and develops a resolve like vajra which cannot be obstructed.  
He is able to completely illuminate the Buddha's practices  
and naturally cultivates those practices leading to bodhi.

The different kinds of thinking of those in the destinies are countless.  
Their karma, retributions, and mental deeds are also not of one type.

So too it is with the many differences in the nature of their faculties. Once he makes the great resolve, he clearly perceives them all.

His mind is so vast as to be commensurate with the Dharma realm. It depends on nothing, does not change, and is like empty space. Going toward the Buddha's wisdom, he does not seize on anything, truly knows the apex of reality, and has abandoned discriminations.

He knows beings' minds, yet generates no conception of any being, completely comprehends dharmas, yet has no concept of any dharma. Though he everywhere discriminates, he is free of all discriminations, and thus travels to a *nayuta* of *kṣetras* to pay his respects.

He accords with, contemplates, and is able to completely enter the treasury of wondrous Dharma of all the countless buddhas. Of all beings' faculties and practices, there are none he does not know. In reaching such a station, he becomes like the *bhagavats* themselves.

He forever accords with his pure and great vows and never retreats from his delight in making offerings to *tathāgatas*. When humans or devas see him, they never get enough of seeing him, and he is always recalled with protective mindfulness by all buddhas.

His mind is pure and it has nothing it depends on. Though he contemplates deep dharmas, he still does not cling to them. Even if he were to reflect on them in this manner for countless kalpas, he would still be free of attachment to any of them in the three times.

With his steadfast resolve that is impossible to restrain or obstruct, he is unimpeded in proceeding toward the Buddha's bodhi. Resolutely seeking the wondrous path, he does away with delusions. Even traveling the entire Dharma realm, he never pleads weariness.

Realizing that the dharmas of language are all quiescent, only by entering true suchness, he dispels all deviant understandings. He pursues the contemplation of all buddhas' spheres of cognition and his mind is unimpeded in comprehending all in the three times.

From when he first makes his great resolve, the bodhisattva is then able to travel everywhere to the *kṣetras* of the ten directions. Though the Dharma gateways are measurelessly and ineffably many, with the light of wisdom's universal illumination, he knows them all.

His great compassion is peerless in its extensive liberation of beings, the pervasiveness of his mind of kindness is equal to that of space, and thus he does not discriminate among beings.

It is with purity such as this that he roams throughout the worlds.

He comforts and brings peace to all beings of the ten directions. Everything that he does is always genuine.

He constantly uses a pure mind that does not differ from his words and is always jointly assisted and protected by all buddhas.

He recalls everything throughout the past, clearly discerns everything in the future, and everywhere enters the worlds of the ten directions in order to liberate beings and thus enable their emancipation.

The bodhisattva fully possesses the light of marvelous wisdom and thoroughly fathoms causes and conditions, free of all doubts. He has entirely cut off all delusions and thus roams in this way throughout the Dharma realm.

He completely destroys the palaces of the king of the *māras*, does away with the cataracts obscuring the vision of beings, abandons all discriminations, maintains an unmoving mind, and thoroughly comprehends the Tathāgata's spheres of action.

He has gotten rid of the net of doubts regarding the three times and has aroused pure faith in the Tathāgata. Due to his faith, he has succeeded in developing unshakable wisdom, and because his wisdom is pure, he comprehends reality.

For the sake of enabling beings to succeed in attaining emancipation, he strives to the end of future time to benefit them all, and for a long time endures intense suffering with unwearied mind, even to the point of being willing to calmly endure the hells.

His measureless merit and wisdom are both completely fulfilled.<sup>272</sup> He completely knows beings' faculties and inclinations as well as all their karma and actions, having none he does not see. Thus he speaks Dharma for them adapted to their dispositions.

He completely realizes that everything is empty and devoid of self, yet bears beings in mind with kindness, never forsaking them, as, with a single greatly compassionate and sublime voice,<sup>273</sup> he everywhere enters the world and expounds the teachings.

He emanates great light in all kinds of different colors which everywhere illuminates beings, dispelling their darkness. Within the light, there are bodhisattvas seated on lotus blossoms, revealing and propagating the pure Dharma for the benefit of beings.

On the tip of but a single hair, he manifests the many *kṣētras* which are all filled with great bodhisattvas.

Though the wisdom of those in each congregation varies, they are all able to fully understand the minds of beings.

Though the worlds of the ten directions are ineffably numerous, in but a single mind-moment, he travels to them all without exception,

benefiting beings, making offerings to the buddhas,  
and inquiring of the buddhas about the profound meanings.

He conceives of all *tathāgatas* as like fathers and,  
to benefit beings, cultivates the practices leading to enlightenment.  
With wisdom that is skillful, he penetrates the treasury of Dharma  
and enters the station of deep wisdom, free of all attachments.

Expounding on the Dharma realm in accordance with his reflections,  
he could continue for countless kalpas and still never reach the end.  
Though his wisdom thoroughly penetrates, it has no place it abides.  
He is ever free of weariness and is entirely free of all attachments.

Born into the clan of all buddhas of the three periods of time,  
he attains by realization the Tathāgata's marvelous Dharma body.  
He everywhere manifests many forms for the many kinds of beings,  
and, in this, he is like a conjurer who has nothing he cannot create.

He may appear as beginning to cultivate especially supreme practices,  
may appear as having just taken birth, or as leaving the home life,  
may appear beneath the bodhi tree, achieving the realization of bodhi,  
or may, for beings' sake, display the appearance of entering nirvāṇa.

The rare Dharma in which the bodhisattva abides  
is a realm for buddhas only and is not a realm of the Two Vehicles.  
They have done away with all conceptions of body, speech, and mind,  
yet are able wherever fitting to manifest them in many different ways.

As for the dharmas of the buddhas the bodhisattva has acquired,  
were beings to contemplate them, they would thus be driven mad.  
In wisdom's penetration of ultimate reality, his mind is unimpeded,  
and he everywhere manifests a *tathāgata's* sovereign powers.

In this he has no peer anywhere in the world,  
how much the less as he further increases his extraordinary practices?  
Although he has not yet fully perfected all-knowledge,  
he has already acquired the Tathāgata's sovereign powers.

He already abides in the ultimate path of the One Vehicle,  
has already deeply entered the sublime and supreme Dharma,  
skillfully knows with regard to beings what is timely or not timely,  
and, in order to benefit them, manifests his spiritual superknowledges.

His division bodies fill up all *kṣetras*  
and emanate pure light which dispels the world's darkness.  
Like the dragon king who creates the great clouds,  
he everywhere rains the wondrous rain, totally drenching everything.

He contemplates beings as like mere conjurations or dreams  
who, by the power of karma, forever drift along in cyclic existence.

With great compassion and deep sympathy, he rescues them all  
and speaks for them about the unconditioned pure nature of dharmas.

Just as the Buddha's powers are incalculable, so too it is for these.

Like empty space, they are boundless.

In order to enable beings to attain liberation,

he diligently cultivates for a *koṭī* of kalpas, and yet he still is tireless.

With marvelous qualities arising from various meditative reflections,

he skillfully cultivates the unexcelled and foremost karmic works.

Never relinquishing any of the supreme practices,

he especially bears in mind the development of all-knowledge.

From a single body, he manifests countless bodies

with which he pervades all worlds everywhere.

His mind is pure and free of discriminations.

Just so are his inconceivable powers arising in a single mind-moment.

He does not engage in discriminations about anything in any world  
and stays free of any erroneous conceptions about any dharmas.

Although he contemplates dharmas, he still does not seize upon them.

He constantly rescues beings, even as there is no one who is liberated.

All worlds consist only of perceptions

in which there are many different kinds of individual distinctions.

Knowing perceptions' spheres of experience are dangerous and deep,  
he manifests spiritual powers for beings to save and liberate them.

Like a master conjurer possessed of sovereign powers—

the bodhisattva's spiritual transformations are also just like this.

His bodies pervade the Dharma realm as well as empty space

where, adapting to the minds of beings, none of them fail to see him.

He has abandoned discriminations of both the subjective and objective

and, whether defilement or purity, he has nothing on which he seizes.

Whether it be bondage or liberation, his wisdom forgets them both.

He wishes only to bestow happiness on all beings.

All worlds are created by the power of perceptions.

Using wisdom he enters them with a mind that is fearless.

Reflecting on all dharmas, he finds they are all of this same sort.

Thus even the three times, when investigated, cannot be apprehended.

He is able to enter the past and exhaust its prior boundaries,

is able to enter the future and exhaust its latter boundaries,

and is able to enter everywhere in the present time.

By always diligently contemplating, he finds that nothing at all exists.

By according with nirvāṇa's dharma of quiescence,

he abides in noncontention and has nothing on which he depends.



His mind accords with ultimate reality, is utterly without peer,  
and is forever irreversible in progressing solely toward bodhi.

In cultivating all supreme practices, he never retreats in fear,  
but rather is securely established in bodhi, remaining unwavering.  
The buddhas, the bodhisattvas, and the world—  
throughout the Dharma realm, he fully comprehends them all.

One aspiring to realize the most supreme and foremost of paths  
and become a king of all-knowledge and liberation  
should swiftly arouse the resolve to attain bodhi,  
forever put an end to the contaminants, and benefit the many beings.

The resolve which is pure in progressing toward bodhi  
produces such vast merit that it is indescribable.  
Even so, to benefit beings, it is here described.  
All of you worthies should listen closely to this.

Even if one reduced all the countless worlds to atoms,  
countless *kṣētras* would still be found in each and every atom,  
and in each of them the buddhas would still all be countless.  
He is able to clearly see them all, yet has nothing on which he seizes.

He is skillful in knowing beings, yet has no conception of any being,  
and is skillful in knowing speech, yet has no conception of any speech.  
His mind is unimpeded in all worlds.  
He thoroughly knows them all, yet has nothing to which he attaches.

His mind which is as vast as empty space  
clearly comprehends all phenomena of the three periods of time.  
It has completely extinguished all doubts  
and rightly contemplates the Buddha's Dharma, free of any grasping.

In a single mind-moment, he visits the ten directions' countless lands  
even as his mind remains free of any attachment.  
He fully comprehends the dharmas of the world's many sufferings  
as all abiding in the unproduced, in ultimate reality.

To all the countless and inconceivably many abodes of all buddhas—  
he travels to all their assemblies and then pays his respects to them,  
always serving as a supreme leader who inquires of the *tathāgatas*  
about the vows and conduct cultivated by bodhisattvas.

His mind always recalls the buddhas of the ten directions,  
yet it has nothing on which it relies and nothing on which it seizes.  
He constantly encourages beings to plant roots of goodness,  
to adorn their lands, and to enable their purification.

He uses his unimpeded vision to contemplate  
all beings in all the stations of the three realms of existence

and thus clearly sees all their countless and boundlessly many habitual propensities, natures, faculties, and understandings.

He completely knows all the mental dispositions of beings and thus accords with what is fitting in speaking Dharma for them. He has a penetrating understanding of all defilement and purity, and thus enables them to cultivate and rectify them and enter the path.

The bodhisattva is able to enter in but a single mind-moment all of the countless and innumerable samādhis and achieve sovereign mastery in the skillful and complete knowing of all their perceptions, knowledge, and objects of attention.

The bodhisattva acquires this vast wisdom, swiftly proceeds, unimpeded, toward bodhi, and, wishing to benefit the many kinds of beings, propagates the Dharma of the great man in place after place.

He well knows the worlds and both long and short kalpas lasting so little as a month, half-month, or a mere day and night, knows the differences in each land as well as their identical nature, and, in always diligently contemplating them, he is never neglectful.

He goes forth everywhere to visit all the worlds of the ten directions and yet remains free of any seizing on any region or place. He purifies all lands without exception, yet still has never made any discriminations regarding their purity.

What is and is not possible with regard to beings as well as the differences in retributions their karmic deeds elicit—Pursuing such reflections, he penetrates the powers of the buddhas and thus completely knows all of these matters.<sup>274</sup>

All the various kinds of natures in all worlds, all the various kinds of practices of those abiding within the three realms of existence, and their sharp faculties as well as their middling and inferior faculties—he deeply contemplates all such matters as these.

All their different kinds of pure and impure understandings, whether supreme, inferior, or middling—he sees them all clearly. The endpoints of practices pursued by all beings and their continuity within the three realms of existence—he is able to explain them all.

The *dhyāna* absorptions, liberations, and samādhis, the differences occurring in the arising of defiled or pure causes, and the differences in sufferings and happiness due to earlier lives—By purely cultivating the Buddha's powers, he is able to see them all.

The continuity in beings' karma and afflictions in all the destinies, severance of this [continuity] in the destinies, attainment of cessation,

the perpetual non-arising of the many dharmas of the contaminants or their seeds of the habitual propensities—he knows them all entirely.

The Tathāgata has completely done away with all the afflictions.

The light of his great wisdom illuminates the world.

Although the bodhisattva has not yet attained the realization of the Buddha's ten powers, still, he is free of all doubts about them.

Within but a single hair pore, the bodhisattva is able to reveal the countless *kṣetras* of the ten directions.

Some have defilements and some are pure.

He is able to fully understand how they are created by various actions.

In but a single atom, there are countless *kṣetras*, countless buddhas, and sons of the Buddha.

All the *kṣetras* are each distinct and free of any disorder or mixing.

Just as with but a single one, so too, he clearly sees them all.

In but a single hair pore, he sees in the ten directions,

all of the worlds throughout realm of empty space

in which there is not a single place that is without a buddha.

All buddha *kṣetras* such as these are all entirely pure.

Within a single hair pore, he sees the buddha *kṣetras* and also sees all of their beings.

In the six destinies and three times, each of them is different, for, in a day-and-night or a month, they may be in bondage or liberated.

Such greatly wise bodhisattvas as these

proceeding with focused mind toward the station of the Dharma King pursue reflections about the station in which the buddhas dwell and thus thereby acquire boundlessly great joyous delight.

The bodhisattva's countless *koṭīs* of division bodies make offerings to all *tathāgatas*.

His manifestations of superknowledges are incomparably supreme.

Thus is he able to abide in the Buddha's sphere of action.

In the presence of all the countless buddhas, he ever strives for truth,

immerses himself in the flavors of all their treasuries of Dharma,

sees the buddhas, hears the Dharma, and is diligent in cultivation.

Thus his mind's joyous delight is as if sipping the elixir of immortality.

He has already acquired the Tathāgata's supreme samādhis,

has skillfully penetrated dharmas and developed increased wisdom,

has established a mind of faith as unshakable as Mount Sumeru,

and everywhere serves beings as a treasury of meritorious qualities.

As his mind of kindness is vast, it extends to all beings

so that he wishes that they all will swiftly realize all-knowledge.

Still, he is always free of attachments, has nothing he depends on, and has gained sovereign mastery in abandoning all the afflictions.

With deep sympathy for beings and vast wisdom, he gathers them all in, regarding them as the same as himself. He realizes they are all empty, signless, and devoid of reality, yet still carries forth his resolve, not allowing it to diminish or retreat.

The measure of the bodhisattva's merit in arousing the resolve could not be exhaustively proclaimed even in a *koṭī* of kalpas because it is what brings forth all the *tathāgatas* and all happiness experienced by *pratyekabuddhas* or *śrāvaka* disciples.

If, for countless kalpas, he bestowed peace on all beings throughout the lands of the ten directions, encouraging them to uphold the five precepts, the ten courses of good karmic action, the four *dhyānas*, four equal minds,<sup>275</sup> and the stations of absorption,<sup>276</sup>

and if, for many kalpas, he also bestowed happiness [on all beings] by enabling them to cut off all delusions and realize arhatship, although his resulting accumulation of merit would be immeasurable, it could not even compare with his merit from making the resolve.

If he also taught *koṭīs* of congregations to become *pratyekabuddhas* and gain the sublime path of the practice of noncontentiousness, and one compared that with [the merit of] resolving to attain bodhi, still, no calculation or analogy could succeed [in comparing them].

If, in but a mind-moment, one could go beyond *kṣetras* as many as the atoms in a *kṣetra*, continuing in this way for countless kalpas, the number of these *kṣetras* one had passed might still be calculated. However, one still could never know the merit of making the resolve.

The number of all kalpas in the past, future, and present is boundless and measureless,

but the number of those kalpas might still be known.

Still, no one could ever fathom the merit of arousing the resolve.

This is because the bodhi mind<sup>277</sup> pervades the ten directions, has none of the distinctions within them it does not know, clearly comprehends all three periods of time in but a single instant, and benefits countless beings.

Though one might be able to fathom the desires, understandings, suitable expedients, and mental actions of all beings throughout the worlds of the ten directions, the merit of making the resolve would still be difficult to measure.

The bodhisattva's vows are commensurate with the ten directions and his mind of kindness extends everywhere to all the many beings,

all of whom he enables to cultivate and realize the Buddha's qualities.  
For these reasons his powers are utterly boundless.

Beings' desires, understandings, mental dispositions,  
faculties, suitable expedients, and practices all differ.  
He is able to completely know them all in but a single mind-moment  
with a mind equal to one possessed of the wisdom of all-knowledge.

The deluded actions of all beings  
continue without interruption in the three realms of existence.  
Though the bounds of these might still be known,  
the merit of making the resolve is inconceivable.

By making the resolve, one is able to abandon karma and afflictions  
and then make offerings to all *tathāgatas*.  
Having abandoned karma and delusions, their continuity is severed,  
whereupon one gains liberation throughout the three periods of time.

One might in one mind-moment make offerings to countless buddhas  
and also make offerings to numberless beings,  
presenting them all with incense, flowers, and marvelous chaplets,  
jewel banners, pennants, canopies, supremely fine robes,

exquisite foods, jeweled thrones, places for walking meditation,  
various kinds of palaces, all graced with fine adornments,  
marvelous and precious *vairocana* jewels,  
and *maṇi* wishing pearls radiating dazzling light,

sustaining such offerings in every succeeding mind-moment  
throughout a countless number of inconceivably long kalpas.  
Though this person's accumulated merit would grow ever greater,  
it still could never rival the immense merit of making the resolve.

Among all the many different kinds of analogies one might utter,  
there are none which could compare to the resolve to attain bodhi,  
for all those most revered among all humans of the three times  
were all born from producing this very resolve.

[The merit of] making the resolve is unimpeded and limitless.  
If one sought to know its full measure, it could never be found,  
for, having vowed to certainly attain the wisdom of all-knowledge,  
he is bound to forever liberate all beings.

The vastness of the resolve is commensurate with all of space  
and it produces all meritorious qualities equal to the Dharma realm.  
The pervasive presence of his practices are the same, no different.  
He forever leaves the many attachments, becoming equal to a buddha.

Of all the gateways to the Dharma, there are none he does not enter.  
He becomes able to travel to all lands,

gains penetrating comprehension of the sphere of all-knowledge,  
and brings about the perfection of all the meritorious qualities.

He is constantly continuous in his ability to relinquish everything,  
purifies all classes of moral precepts, becomes free of all attachments,  
completely fulfills the unexcelled great meritorious qualities,  
and, ever diligent and vigorous, he never retreats.

He enters deep *dhyāna* absorptions and always carries on reflections  
which all correspond to the sphere of vast wisdom.  
This is the most supreme of the bodhisattva's grounds  
which gives birth to all the paths of Samantabhadra.

Of all the *tathāgatas* throughout the three periods of time,  
none are not protectively mindful of he who makes the initial resolve.  
All join in assisting him with the adornments of samādhis, *dhāraṇīs*,  
and transformations produced by the spiritual superknowledges.

The beings throughout the ten directions are measureless.  
So too is this so of all worlds and the realm of empty space.  
The measurelessness of making the resolve surpasses even those.  
It is therefore able to give birth to all buddhas.

The resolve to attain bodhi is the very root of the ten powers  
and is also the root of the four types of eloquence and fearlessnesses.  
So too it is with the eighteen exclusive dharmas.  
None of them are not acquired through making the resolve.

The bodies of the buddhas adorned with the physical marks  
as well as their identical marvelous Dharma body  
and the wisdom and nonattachment of those worthy of offerings—  
These are all acquired due to having made the resolve.

All the bliss associated with the form realm *dhyāna* samādhis  
of the *pratyekabuddha* and *śrāvaka* vehicles  
as well as that associated with the formless realm samādhis—  
These are all acquired due to having made the resolve.

Of all the freely-acquired pleasures of humans and devas,  
the various pleasures in all the destinies, and the many other pleasures  
arising from the vigor and concentration of the roots and powers,<sup>278</sup>  
there are none that do not arise from having made the initial resolve.

It is due to bringing forth the vast resolve  
that one is then able to cultivate the six perfections  
and encourage other beings to practice right actions  
whereby they acquire happiness within the three realms of existence.

He dwells in the Buddha's unimpeded genuine wisdom,  
reveals and explains all the wondrous karmic works,

and is able to thus cause countless beings  
to cut off all deluded karma and proceed toward nirvāṇa.

The light of his wisdom is like that of the clearly shining sun,  
his complete fulfillment of the manifold practices is like the full moon,  
his constant abundance of meritorious qualities is like a vast ocean,  
and his unimpeded immaculate purity is like that of empty space.

He everywhere makes vows with boundless meritorious qualities  
and bestows happiness on all beings.

To the very ends of the future, he practices in accordance with vows  
and is always diligent in cultivating the practice of liberating beings.

With his countless inconceivable great vows,  
he vows to enable all beings to attain purity.

By emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness, he depends on nothing,  
yet, by the power of vows, these all become clearly revealed.<sup>279</sup>

He fully knows that dharmas by nature are like space  
and that they are all quiescent and hence all the same.

The countless and ineffably many gateways into the Dharma—  
he teaches them for beings without any attachment.

All *tathāgatas* throughout the worlds of the ten directions  
join in praising those who make the initial resolve.

This resolve<sup>280</sup> is adorned with measureless meritorious qualities  
by which it enables one to reach the far shore, the same as the Buddha.

Even if one described its meritorious qualities for kalpas  
as numerous as all beings, one could still never reach the end of them.  
Because [it leads to] dwelling in the vast clan of the *tathāgatas*,  
there is no dharma in the three realms that is able to compare to it.

If one wishes to know the Dharma of all buddhas,  
one should swiftly arouse the resolve to attain bodhi.

This resolve is the most excellent of meritorious qualities, for,  
because of it, one will certainly gain a *tathāgata's* unimpeded wisdom.

One might be able to count up the thoughts and actions of all beings.  
So too might one do so with the atoms in all lands.

Or perhaps one could measure the boundaries of empty space.  
Still, no one could fathom the merit of making this resolve.

It gives birth to all buddhas of the three periods of time,  
establishes all forms of happiness throughout the worlds,  
increases all the supreme meritorious qualities,  
and forever severs all doubts.

It reveals all the marvelous spheres of experience,  
entirely rids one of all kinds of obstacles,

brings about the complete development of all the pure *kṣetras*,  
and gives birth to the wisdom of all the *tathāgatas*.

If one wishes to see all buddhas throughout the ten directions,  
wishes to bestow the endless treasury of meritorious qualities,  
and wishes to extinguish all the sufferings and anguish of beings,  
One should swiftly arouse the resolve to realize bodhi.

### **The End of Chapter Seventeen**



- 變。 / T10n0279\_p0088c12 – 13), and in fact that is how HH explained it in his HYQS. However, both QL and BB make it clear that this is referring instead to time. BB's translation is: "This period of time does not go to that period of time and that period of time does not go to this period of time." (此世不至彼世, 彼世不至此世。 / T09n0278\_p0449b23)
259. Although It is not immediately clear from the Chinese text of either the SA or BB translations precisely what is meant by "to pervade all worlds," I follow HH who explains that it is "to enable the Dharma of the Buddha to fill up all worlds." (為令佛法充滿所有一切世界的緣故。 HYQS)
260. QL equates this somewhat obscure "non-kalpa" with "the noumenon" (理) which in the Sino-philosophical terminology of the Huayan hermeneutic tradition is simply a reference to "emptiness." So, in effect this is saying that all kalpas are synonymous with emptiness and emptiness is synonymous with all kalpas. Perhaps the BB translation is at least slightly less refractory to easy understanding: "To know all kalpas enter the nonexistence of a kalpa and the nonexistence of a kalpa enters all kalpas." (知一切劫入無劫, 知無劫入一切劫。 / T09n0278\_p0451a21 – 22)
261. I use "right and fixed position" here to render *zhengwei* (正位), the usual Sanskrit antecedent for which is *samyaktoa-niyāma* which in turn correlates to a position of irreversibility in relation to eventually reaching the endpoint of the path.
262. "Inclinations" (欲樂) is one of SA's standard translations for the Sanskrit *āśaya* which has a range of meanings not so easily captured in a single English translation. In its various occurrences in this and related scriptures, it seems to best be rendered into English as "intentions," "aspirations," "dispositions," or "inclinations."
263. The intent of the Chinese (心) is ambiguous as to whether this is referring to beings' "minds" or beings' "thoughts." Here I translate this as "thoughts" following HH who, in his HYQS, twice specifies "thoughts in the minds" (心念) of beings." QL agrees, noting that this refers specifically to the power to have "the knowledge of others' thoughts." (知心義兼王所即他心智。 / L130n1557\_0028a13)
264. As explained by HH and as is standard in all primary Buddhist traditions, "the hindrances" refers to the five hindrances interfering with success in the practice of meditation which consist of sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, agitation and regretfulness, and afflicted doubtfulness.
265. As explained by HH, "the obstacles" refers to either two obstacles (affliction obstacles and obstacles to knowledge) or three obstacles (affliction obstacles, karmic obstacles, and retribution obstacles).

266. A *saṃghārama* is a monastic residence and/or monastery.
267. An *upaniṣad* is usually explained as the smallest particle of matter closest to being just empty space.
268. “Kalpas of existence” (住劫) is usually defined as a period of twenty small or middle-size kalpas in the life span of a world system during which beings exist, this occurring between the equally long periods of the formation of the kalpa and the destruction of the kalpa. Before and after each of these threefold phases of formation, existence, and destruction, there is an equally long twenty-kalpa period of complete nonexistence of anything at all.
269. As for “dharma realms” (法界 / *dharmā-dhātu*), in this context, it would refer to any objects of mind, that is to say, it refers to anything within the sphere of the eighteen dharma realms consisting of the six sense faculties, the six sense objects, and the six sense consciousnesses.
270. Although usually explained in most dictionaries as referring to the hells, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, and devas, for “the five destinies,” HH here explains them as referring to the rebirth destinies of the hells, hungry ghosts, animals, *asuras*, and humans, substituting “*asuras*” for “*devas*,” most likely because rebirth in the deva realms is not usually much associated with easily perceptible suffering.
271. “The Most Revered of Beings” is literally “the Most Revered of Two-Footed Beings” (兩足尊 / *doipadottama*, etc.), one of the honorific epithets of the Buddha which specifically refers to his superiority among all humans and devas. This is also sometimes explained (especially by HH) as representing the Buddha’s twofold repletion in merit and wisdom, hence it may sometimes also be translated as “Doubly Replete Honored One.”
272. Merit and wisdom (*puṇya* and *jñāna*) are the two “provisions for enlightenment” (*bodhisambhāra*) essential for attaining buddhahood.
273. This is a reference to the Buddha’s ability to speak with a single voice and have everyone hear him speaking directly to them, addressing their own specific causes and conditions.
274. This is the first of six stanzas having to do with this bodhisattva’s knowledge of the ten powers of the buddha.
275. Here, what looks like “the four equalities” (四等) is an abbreviation for “the four equal minds” (四等心) which is just an alternative Chinese rendering of “the four immeasurable minds” (四無量心 / *apramāṇa-citta*), namely: kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity, so-called because the bodhisattva strives to maintain them all in equal measure toward all beings.

276. “The stations of absorption” (諸定處) here is a reference to the four formless absorptions (limitless space, limitless consciousness, nothing whatsoever, and neither perception nor non-perception).
277. Here, clearly, the very same term, “bodhi mind” (菩提心 / *bodhicitta*) or “resolve to attain bodhi” is in effect a play on words, for it is referring to it in its already fully realized and fully enlightened state as “the enlightened mind.” That is to say, it is not referring to it when it is still merely aspirational when of course it would have no such powers of cognition as to know every detail throughout the ten directions, etc.
278. The text is referring here to the pleasures arising in association with particular components of the five roots and the five powers, specifically that arising from vigor and from concentration. The five roots and five powers both consist of: faith, vigor, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom.
279. Emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness are the bodhisattva’s “three gates to liberation.” They are also known as “the three samādhis.”
280. In accordance with four alternative editions (S, Y, M, G), Li Tong Xuan’s HYHL QL’s HYSC, HH’s HYQS, I emend the reading of the Taisho text here by replacing *shen* (身), “person,” with *xin* (心), “resolve.”
281. “Right and definite position” (正位 / *samyaktva-niyama*, *samyaktva-niyāma*, or just *niyāma*) refers to the position of irreversibility on the bodhisattva path from which one can never fall back or retreat. It also has a similar meaning of “stage of irreversibility” for those on the individual-liberation path to arhatship.
282. Although HH makes a passing reference to “difficulties” (諸難) here as referring to “disasters” (災難), especially in such close proximity to the three wretched destinies, this is also a fairly clear reference to the eight difficulties (八難) which refer to inopportune rebirths: in the hells; among hungry ghosts; as an animal; in the long-life heavens; in a border region (where the Dharma does not exist); as deaf, blind, or mute; rebirth as one possessed of oratorical skill tethered to merely worldly knowledge; and rebirth at a time before or after a buddha appears in the world.
283. An *upādhyāya* is a very senior member of a monastic community, usually one serving as a preceptor or instructor of other monks.
284. An *ācārya*, generally speaking, is a senior teacher of monastics. More specifically, he is the senior instructor of the precepts in the context of a formal monastic ordination.