

**NĀGĀRJUNA**  
**ON**  
**MINDFULNESS OF THE BUDDHA**

**Part 2: The Pratuyutpanna Samādhī**  
*Nāgārjuna's Treatise on the Ten Grounds, Chs. 20–25*

As Translated into Chinese by Tripiṭaka Master Kumārajīva  
English Translation by Bhikshu Dharmamitra



## PART TWO

### The Pratyutpanna Samādhi

#### Ch. 20: Mindfulness of the Buddhas

##### I. CHAPTER 20: MINDFULNESS OF THE BUDDHAS

###### A. ON FINISHING 1ST GROUND PRACTICES, THE BODHISATTVA SEES BUDDHAS

When the bodhisattva dwelling on the first ground has completed what is to be practiced, due to the power of his roots of goodness, he will naturally be able to see several hundred buddhas.<sup>1</sup>

When, in this [above-discussed] manner, the bodhisattva subdues his own mind, he develops a deep love for the path to buddhahood. He then completely fulfills the first-ground practices in accordance with the way he learned them. Then, due to the power of his roots of goodness and merit, he is naturally able to see the present-era buddhas of the ten directions right before his very eyes.

##### 1. Q: IS THERE ANY OTHER WAY TO BE ABLE TO SEE THE BUDDHAS?

**Question:** Is it solely through the power of roots of goodness and merit that one is then able to see buddhas or is there some other method by which one can do so?

##### 2. A: ON ENTERING THE PRATYUTPANNA SAMĀDHI, ONE SEES THE BUDDHAS

#### Response:

There is a deep samādhi that the Buddha explained for the sake of Bhadrāpāla. If one acquires this samādhi treasure, one becomes able to see the Buddhas.

Bhadrāpāla was a lay bodhisattva well able to practice the *dhūta* austerities. It was for the sake of this bodhisattva that the Buddha spoke the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra*.<sup>2</sup> The *pratyutpanna* samādhi is one in which one sees the Buddhas right before one's very eyes. When the bodhisattva accesses this magnificently precious samādhi, even though he might not yet have gained the heavenly eye and heavenly ear, he is nonetheless able to see the buddhas of the ten directions and he is also able to listen to the Dharma of the sutras being taught by those buddhas.

##### 3. Q: HOW CAN ONE ACQUIRE THIS SAMADHI?

**Question:** What means should one use to acquire this samādhi?

## 4. A: ENVISION THE BUDDHAS WITH THE 32 MARKS AND 80 CHARACTERISTICS

**Response:**

One should bring to mind the Buddhas,  
envisioning them as residing in a great assembly,  
replete with all thirty-two major marks  
and eighty secondary characteristics adorning their bodies.

## a. RECOLLECTION OF THE BUDDHAS' QUALITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In cultivating this samādhi, the practitioner brings to mind the Buddhas with the thirty-two major marks and eighty secondary characteristics gracing their bodies, with bhikshus close by, with devas making offerings, and with a grand and reverential assembly surrounding them. With focused mind, one envisions each of the major marks of those buddhas.

One also recollects the Buddhas as those who are possessed of great vows, recollects their perfection of the great compassion and the fact that it has not been cut off, recollects their perfection of the great kindness through which they bring profound peace to beings, recollects their practice of the great sympathetic joy and their fulfillment of beings' aspirations, and recollects their practice of equanimity through which they have abandoned aversion and craving and do not abandon beings.

One also recollects their practice of the truthfulness basis of meritorious qualities by which they are never deceptive, recollects their practice of the relinquishment basis of meritorious qualities by which they have rid themselves of the miserliness defilement, recollects their practice of the thorough [quiescence]<sup>3</sup> basis of meritorious qualities by which their minds maintain a state of thorough-going quiescence, and recollects their practice of the wisdom basis of meritorious qualities through which they have acquired great wisdom.<sup>4</sup>

One recollects too their perfect practice of *dāna pāramitā* by which they have become the lords of Dharma giving, their perfect practice of *śīla pāramitā* by which their observance of the moral precepts is pure, their perfect practice of *kṣānti pāramitā* by which their capacity for patient endurance is analogous to that of the earth, their perfect practice of *vīrya pāramitā* by which their vigor is preeminent, their perfect practice of *dhyāna pāramitā* by which they have destroyed all hindrances to meditative absorption, and their perfect practice of *prajñā pāramitā* by which they have destroyed all obstacles to wisdom.

## b. RECOLLECTION OF THE 32 MARKS OF THE BUDDHAS

One recollects too:

- Their mark of having the wheel insignia on the hands and feet, emblematic of their ability to turn the wheel of Dharma;
- Their mark of securely planted feet, emblematic of their standing securely in every dharma;
- Their mark of proximal webbing on fingers and toes, emblematic of the extinguishing of all afflictions;
- Their mark of seven places of fullness, emblematic of their complete fulfillment of merit;
- Their mark of soft and tender hands and feet, emblematic of their harmonious manner of proclaiming the Dharma;
- Their mark of slender and long fingers and toes, emblematic of their cultivation and accumulation of every sort of good and sublime dharma during the long night [of previous lifetimes];
- Their mark of having broad heels and wide eyes, emblematic of their vast learning;
- Their mark of having a large and erect body, emblematic of their proclamation of the great and upright Dharma;
- Their mark of having high arches, emblematic of their being lofty in all things;
- Their mark of having upwardly spiraling bodily hairs, emblematic of their ability to cause beings to abide in the supreme and sublime dharma;
- Their mark of having legs gradually growing in thickness like those of the *aiṇeya* antelope;
- Their mark of long arms reaching past the knees, their arms appearing like golden gate bars;<sup>5</sup>
- Their mark of the stallion-like retracted male organ, emblematic of their possession of the treasury of Dharma jewels;
- Their mark of the golden-hued body emanating light of countless colors;
- Their mark of fine and thin skin, emblematic of their proclamation of subtle and sublime Dharma;
- Their mark of one hair per hair pore, emblematic of their revealing of the single-mark Dharma;
- Their mark of the [mid-brow] white-down tuft adorning the countenance, due to which beings happily and tirelessly gaze at the Buddha's face;
- Their mark of a lion-like upper torso, emblematic of the Buddha, like the lion, being one who is fearless;
- Their mark of round and large shoulders, emblematic of their ability to make skillful distinctions regarding the nature of the five aggregates;

Their mark of fullness in the sub-axillary region, emblematic of their possession of a full measure of good roots;  
 Their mark of distinguishing every flavor, emblematic of their having perfectly tasted the flavor of quiescence;  
 Their mark of having a square-set body, emblematic of having crushed the fear of births and deaths;  
 Their mark of the fleshy prominence atop the crown, emblematic of their heads never having to be lowered in reverence [to someone superior];  
 Their mark of the large tongue the color of real coral that is even able to cover the face;  
 Their mark of the Brahmā-like voice and the physical mark that reaches even to the Brahma Heaven;  
 Their mark of the lion-like jaw;  
 Their mark of the broad shoulders, these being emblematic of their ability to demolish [the views held by] non-Buddhist traditions;  
 Their mark of even teeth, emblematic of their practice of pure *dhyāna* meditation;  
 Their mark of their teeth being of even height, emblematic of their minds' equal regard for all beings;  
 Their mark of closely set teeth, emblematic of their abandonment of the desires;  
 Their mark of having forty teeth, emblematic of their perfection of the forty dharmas exclusive to buddhas;  
 Their mark of blue eyes, emblematic of their looking on beings with minds imbued with kindness;  
 Their mark of having eyelashes like those of the royal bull, with the lashes long and in no way disarrayed;  
 Their obtaining of a rare physical form that beings look on without ever tiring of holding it in their gaze;  
 Their having bodies adorned with these thirty-two marks;

c. RECOLLECTION OF OTHER QUALITIES OF THE BUDDHAS

Their having the eighty minor characteristics like inlaid adornments on their bodies, emanating brilliant radiance;  
 Their complete fulfillment of merit;  
 Their transcendentally supreme and awesome powers;  
 Their wide-spread illustrious esteem;  
 Their bodies' incense-like fragrance produced by purity in observing the moral precepts;  
 Their invulnerability to being moved by worldly dharmas;  
 Their ability to remain undefiled by any arising of afflictions;

- Their ability to remain unsullied by others' verbal abuse;  
 Their ability to roam and sport through use of their spiritual powers;  
 The ability of the Buddhas to be so intensely magnificent in the manifestation of their awe-inspiring powers that no one would dare obstruct them;  
 Their freely exercised sovereign mastery in using wisdom to proclaim the Dharma that is like the roaring of a lion;  
 Their ability to dispel the darkness of delusion by marshaling the power of vigor;  
 Their use of magnificent brilliance to everywhere illuminate the heavens and the earth;  
 Their utter invincibility in debate;  
 Their being such that everyone looks up to them and no one can look down on them;  
 Their constancy in regarding all beings with kindness;  
 Their possession of mindfulness as vast as the great oceans;  
 Their meditative absorption that is like Mount Sumeru [in its unshakability];  
 Their possession of patience comparable to the earth's [ability to endure anything];  
 Their ability to bring about growth in the merit planted by beings that is analogous [to the growth-enhancing capacity of] water's moisture;<sup>6</sup>  
 Their ability to bring forth roots of goodness in beings that, in its power, is like the rising of the wind;  
 Their ability to ripen beings that is like fire's ability to cook things;  
 Their possession of wisdom as boundless as empty space;  
 Their universal raining down of the great Dharma [rain] that is like [the rain that pours down from] immense dense clouds;  
 Their ability to remain unstained by worldly dharmas that is like lotus blossoms' [ability to rise from mud and yet remain unsullied by it];  
 Their ability, like lions pouncing on deer, to decisively refute [the doctrines of] non-Buddhist masters;  
 Their ability to bear a heavy burden that is like that of the great king of the elephants;  
 Their ability to lead a great congregation of followers that is like that of the great king of bulls;  
 Their possession of a retinue of pure followers that is like [the retinue of] a wheel-turning king;  
 Their utter supremacy in the world that is like that of the lord of the Mahābrahma Heaven;

Their ability to inspire fondness and delight that is like that of a bright moon in the clear night sky;  
 Their universal illumination that is able to burn as brightly as the brilliantly shining sun;  
 Their bestowal on beings of the causes and conditions for peace and happiness that is like [the generosity of] a humane father;  
 Their acting out of pity toward beings, protecting them in whatever way is appropriate, that is like the actions of a lovingly kind mother;  
 Their purity of conduct that is like [the purity of ] the real gold in the heavens;  
 Their possession of the power of great strength that is like that of Indra in the heavens;  
 Their diligence in benefiting those in the world that is like that of a world-protecting lord;  
 Their ability to cure the disease of the afflictions that is like [the curative power of] a king of physicians;  
 Their ability to rescue one from disastrous circumstances that is like that of close relatives;  
 Their ability to accumulate a store of meritorious qualities that is like an immense treasury;  
 Their possession of immeasurably vast moral virtue;  
 Their possession of boundless meditative absorptions;  
 Their ineffable wisdom;  
 Their unequaled liberation;  
 Their knowledge and vision of liberation that is the equal of the unequaled;  
 Their incomparability in all things;  
 Their supremacy over everyone in the world due to which they are recognized as foremost among men;  
 And their perfection of great dharmas by which they are recognized as great men.

It is in this way that the bodhisattva engages in recollective contemplation of all buddhas in accordance with their possession of the qualities characteristic of the great men. [So, too, he recollects]:

d. RECOLLECTION OF MORE SPECIAL QUALITIES & ABILITIES OF BUDDHAS

That these buddhas have cultivated these meritorious qualities for a countless, boundless, inconceivable, and incalculable number of hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of kalpas during which they have been well able to guard their physical, verbal, and mental karma;



- That they are well able to completely sever all doubts with respect to the five categorical repositories of dharmas: past dharmas, future dharmas, present dharmas, unconditioned dharmas, and ineffable dharmas;
- That, without falling into any error, they employ the four modes of reply: the definitive reply, the distinguishing reply, the counter-questioning reply, and the reply that sets aside the question;<sup>7</sup>
- That they skillfully explain the dharmas of the thirty-seven enlightenment factors, namely: the faculties, the powers, the limbs of enlightenment, the path, the stations of mindfulness, the right efforts, and the foundations of psychic power;<sup>8</sup>
- That they are well able to distinguish [each link comprising the chain of] cause-and-effect, namely: ignorance, actions, consciousness, name-and-form, the six sense faculties, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, becoming, birth, and aging-and-death;
- That they are free of any attachment to the eye or visual forms, to the ear or sounds, to the nose or fragrances, to the tongue or flavors, to the body or touch, or to the mind or dharmas [as objects of mind];
- That they skillfully expound the nine types of passages contained in the Dharma of the sutras, namely: sutras; *geyas*; prophetic teachings or expositions; *gāthās*; *udānas*; *nidānas*; [short] discourses beginning with “Thus [spoke the Buddha]...”; *vaipulyas*; and unprecedented events;
- That they are not influenced by any of the negative influences such as: greed, hatred, delusion, arrogance, the view that conceives of the existence of true personhood, extreme views, wrong views, seizing upon views; seizing on rules and regulations, or doubts;
- That they are not assailed by such afflictions as absence of faith, absence of a sense of shame, absence of a dread of blame, flattery, deviousness, frivolousness, neglectfulness, indolence, somnolence, animosity, miserliness, or jealousy;
- That they have known and seen the truth of suffering, have cut off its origination, have realized cessation, have cultivated the path, have abandoned what is to be abandoned, have seen what is to be seen, have done what is to be done, have utterly destroyed the foes,<sup>9</sup> and have perfectly fulfilled their vows;
- That they are venerated in the world, are as fathers to the world, and are lords of the world, are well come, are well gone, are possessed of the well-cultivated mind, are consummately skilled in meditative stillness, are well-realized in the realization of cessation, and are well liberated;
- That, as they abide in countless and boundless worlds throughout the ten directions in worlds as numerous as the sands in the

Ganges, [one envisions them] as if they were appearing directly before one's very eyes.

e. CONTEMPLATIVE RECOLLECTION OF THE 80 SECONDARY CHARACTERISTICS

The bodhisattva should also envision in contemplation all of the buddhas as graced with their eighty secondary characteristics,<sup>10</sup> recollecting:

That their nails are copper-colored is emblematic of their practice of pure dharmas;

That their nails are prominent and large is emblematic of birth into the great clan;

That their nails are glossy and smooth is emblematic of a deep affection for beings;

That their fingers are round, tapered, and long is emblematic of the depth and duration of their practice;

That their fingers are fully fleshed is emblematic of fully developed roots of goodness;

That their fingers are tapered and long is emblematic of sequential accumulation of all dharmas of a buddha;

That their veins are hidden and invisible, but they do not hide the lineage of [the quality of their conduct in] body, mouth, and mind;

That there are no thick knots in their veins is emblematic of their having broken up the knots of afflictions;

That their ankle bones are flat and inconspicuous is emblematic of their not hiding away the Dharma;

That their feet are not misaligned in their track is emblematic of their liberation of the multitudes who have fallen into deviant conduct;

That their gait is like that of the lion is emblematic of their being the lions among men;

That their gait is also like that of the king of elephants is emblematic of their being the elephant kings among men;

That their gait is also like the king of geese is emblematic of their flying high, like the wild goose;

That their gait is also like the king of bulls is emblematic of their being the most revered of all men;

That, when walking, they turn around to the right, is emblematic of their skillful proclamation of the right path;

That their posture is not hunched or crooked is emblematic of the fact that their minds are never crooked;

That their bodies stand solid and erect in their posture is emblematic of their praise of solidity and durability in upholding the moral precepts;

- That their bodies gradually grew large is emblematic of their sequential exposition of Dharma;
- That all parts of their bodies are large and majestic is emblematic of their ability to skillfully explain the great and sublime meritorious qualities;
- That their bodies are perfectly developed is emblematic of their perfection in the Dharma;
- That their strides are of equal length is emblematic of their equal-minded regard for all beings;
- That their bodies are pristine in their cleanliness is emblematic of the purity of their three types of karma;
- That their skin is fine and soft is emblematic of the naturally pliant character of their minds;
- That their bodies remain free of all dust and dirt is emblematic of their good views that have abandoned all defilement;
- That their bodies do not shrink through wasting [even in old age] is emblematic of their minds' always remaining unsinkable;
- That their bodies are boundless and immeasurable is emblematic of the immeasurability of their roots of goodness;
- That the flesh of their bodies is taut and finely textured is emblematic of their eternal severance of [karmically-compulsory] later incarnations;
- That all of their joints are smooth in their articulations is emblematic of their skillful explication of the twelve causes and conditions and their perfectly clear distinguishing of each of them;
- That the hue of their bodies is not dark is emblematic of their knowledge and vision being free of any darkness;
- That their waists are full all around is emblematic of their disciples' possession of fully developed conduct;
- That their bellies are clear [of blemishes] and of fresh and immaculate appearance is emblematic of their being well able to completely know the serious faults of *saṃsāra*;
- That their bellies do not protrude is emblematic of their having crushed the mountain of arrogance;
- That their bellies are flat and do not show is emblematic of the fact that their proclamation of Dharma is directed equally toward everyone;
- That their umbilici are round and deep is emblematic of their penetrating comprehension of extremely deep dharmas;
- That their umbilici have a rightward swirl is emblematic of their disciples' compliance with instruction;

- That their bodies are in every way graceful in their refinements is emblematic of the thoroughgoing purity of their disciples;
- That their awesomeness in deportment is utterly immaculate is emblematic of the incomparable purity of their minds;
- That their bodies are free of blemishes is emblematic of their being completely free of any black dharmas;
- That the softness of their hands is superior even to that of *tūla*-cotton silk is emblematic of the experience of those receiving their instruction who feel as if their bodies have become as light as a wisp of down;
- That the lines on their palms form a deep pattern is emblematic of the profoundly dignified nature of their awesome deportment;
- That the lines on their palms are long is emblematic of their contemplative regard for the long-term future of those receiving their Dharma teaching;
- That the pattern on their palms is lustrous and smooth is emblematic of their relinquishing of the affection of relatives and of their acquisition of the fruits of the great path;
- That their countenances remain free of any long-faced expression is emblematic of the presence of exceptional circumstances in the moral precepts they establish;
- That their lips are as red as *bimba* fruit is emblematic of their looking on the entire world as merely like an image reflected in a mirror;
- That their tongues are soft and pliant is emblematic of their initial use of gentle speech in liberating beings;
- That their tongues are thin and wide is emblematic of the purity and abundance of their meritorious qualities;
- That their tongues are crimson red is emblematic of their Dharma's ability to cause common people to understand what they find difficult to understand;
- That their voices are like thunder is emblematic of their not fearing the boom of a thunderclap;
- That their voices are harmonious and gentle is emblematic of their proclamation of soft and gentle Dharma;
- That their four central incisors are rounded [in their visible profile] and straight is emblematic of their proclamation of the Dharma of the straight path;
- That their four central incisors are all sharp is emblematic of their liberation of those beings who are possessed of sharp faculties;
- That their four central incisors are immaculately white is emblematic of their being foremost in purity;

- That their four central incisors are evenly and equally set is emblematic of their standing on the level ground of the moral precepts;
- That the profile of their rows of teeth gradually taper to those that are smaller [in height] is emblematic of the graduated sequence in their explanation of the dharma of the four truths;
- That they have noses that are high and straight-ridged is emblematic of their standing atop the high mountain of wisdom;
- That their nasal apertures are clear and clean is emblematic of the purity of their disciples;
- That their eyes are wide and laterally long is emblematic of their wisdom's qualities of being vast and far-reaching;
- That their eyelashes are not sparse or in disarray is emblematic of their skill in their differential assessment of beings;
- That the whites and pupils of their eyes are as fresh and pristine as the petals of a blue lotus blossom is emblematic of their being such that even devas and heavenly maidens are moved to gaze upon them fondly and bow down in reverence before them;
- That their eyebrows are high and long is emblematic of the far-reaching spread of their fame;
- That the hair of their eyebrows is smooth and glossy is emblematic of their thoroughgoing knowledge of the dharmas of mental pliancy;
- That their ears are equal in their appearance is emblematic of the equality of all who listen to the Dharma;
- That their faculty of hearing is undamaged is emblematic of their ability to liberate any being possessed of an undamaged mind;
- That their foreheads are flat and of fine appearance is emblematic of their having skillfully abandoned all views;
- That their foreheads are unrestricted in their wide breadth is emblematic of their having broadly refuted [the claims of] non-Buddhist traditions;
- That their heads are in all respects perfectly developed is emblematic of their having thoroughly perfected [the goals of] their great vows;
- That their hair is the color of the black bee is emblematic of their having transformed the pleasures associated with the five types of desire;
- That their hair is dense and fine is emblematic of their having already put an end to the fetters;
- That their hair, so pleasing in its appearance, is soft in texture is emblematic of their pliant and sharp wisdom's ability to know well the flavor of dharmas;

That their hair is not in disarray is emblematic of their words never being disordered;  
 That their hair is smooth and glossy is emblematic of their always being free of any sort of coarse speech;  
 That their hair has a marvelous fragrance is emblematic of their use of the fragrant blossoms of the seven branches of bodhi to teach and guide beings in whatever way is appropriate.  
 That their mark of virtue, peace, and joy appears in their hair.  
 And that their mark of virtue, peace, and joy also appears on the palms of their hands and on the soles of their feet.

f. ENVISIONING THE BUDDHAS IN AN ASSEMBLY, TEACHING, ON THE LION SEAT

1) ENVISIONING THE BUDDHAS AS THEY SIT ON THE LION'S SEAT

It is in this manner that a bodhisattva should envision the Buddhas residing in the midst of a great assembly, speaking on right Dharma, and sitting on the lion seat. The lion seat has feet made from *vaiḍūrya* inset with various jewels, a headrest made from real coral with marvelous red pearls, and a canopy made of hammered gold. It is draped with all sorts of soft, silky, and lustrous heavenly robes and is supported by bejeweled lions whose bodies are made of purple gold. Their eyes are amber and their tails are mother-of-pearl. They have carnelian tongues, four white-diamond tusk-teeth, hair made of real white silver, and long, full manes. That seat rests upon these four lions. They form [the base of] the throne that has armrests made from royal elephant tusks and a footrest made of the many sorts of jewels.

The Buddhas receive there the reverential obeisance of the devas, dragons, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras*, and *mahoragas*. The Buddhas appear in this way on this throne. They wear the *saṃkakṣikā*<sup>11</sup> and the *nivāsana*,<sup>12</sup> neither too high nor too low, so that they cover the three regions of the body and are neatly arranged and straight all around. They wear a light-colored *saṃghāṭī* robe,<sup>13</sup> with the strips composing it clearly visible, neither too high nor too low, and not misaligned.

2) ENVISIONING THE AUDIENCE AS THE BUDDHAS TEACH DHARMA

They abide in the midst of an audience adorned by the presence of the eight kinds of great *āryas*,<sup>14</sup> surrounded by a great assembly of humans and devas. When in attendance there, the dragons and golden-winged *garuḍa* birds all listen together to the teaching of Dharma, remaining free of any thoughts of mutual hostility.<sup>15</sup>

Everyone in the entire assembly is imbued with a deeply sincere sense of shame and dread of blame as, with reverential affection for the Buddha, they all listen single-mindedly to the discourse of the

Buddha, accept and uphold it, reflect upon it, and practice in accordance with what is taught. Because their minds are focused as they listen and because their thoughts are pure, they are able to block any interference by the hindrances. Everyone in the great assembly gazes insatiably up at the Tathāgata, with all the hairs raised on their bodies, with their eyes filled with tears, with their minds afire with intensity, or with hearts filled with great joy.

Wherever people have become like this, one knows that their minds have become purified. They remain there motionless and silent, serenely still, and as if having entered *dhyāna* absorption. Their minds are free of either love or hatred and remain undistracted by any extraneous matters. They have thoughts of great compassion<sup>16</sup> by which they feel kindness and pity for beings, wishing to rescue them all. Their minds do not descend into flattery or deviousness, but rather have become utterly quiescent and pure as they distinguish what is good from what is bad. They have an immensely strong determination from which they neither fall away or shrink back and they do not regard themselves as superior or others as inferior.

### 3) ENVISIONING THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY TEACH DHARMA

The Buddhas are all observed abiding in such great assemblies, teaching Dharma that is easy to understand and easy to completely fathom. [Their audiences] listen with insatiable delight. Their voices are deep, are not subject to fading [even at a distance], are gentle, and are pleasing to the ear. Originating in the belly, through the interaction of the throat, tongue, nasopharynx, dental palate, teeth, and lips, the air is caused to become sounds and sentences that may be soft and pleasing to the ear, may be as powerfully strong as the earth-quaking thunder emanating from huge, dense rain clouds, may be like those fierce winds off the great ocean that drive up the surf, or may be like the voice of the devas in the Mahābrahma Heaven. With voices such as these, they lead forth and guide those beings that are capable of being liberated.

They have abandoned any modes of expression associated with scolding that may involve contortion of the brow, the countenance, or the lips. Their speech is neither deficient in any way nor unnecessarily long and redundant. There is no doubt in what they proclaim and their words will certainly be beneficial. Their speech is entirely free of any deceptive statements, any statements vulnerable to refutation, or any other such statements. It is entirely free of these faults and it is heard equally well by those far and near.

The Buddhas are freely able to answer the four types of challenging questions. They explain the four truths, thereby causing beings to gain

the four fruits of the path. They establish points of meaning and make statements supported by reasons. They are completely equipped with all of the methods used in speaking. In the many different sorts of matters that they discuss, their meaning is easy to completely comprehend. Whatever they proclaim is entirely clear and never intentionally cryptic or convoluted. Their speech is neither too fast nor too slow. The beginnings and conclusions of each discourse are mutually compatible and invulnerable to anyone's challenges.

4) ENVISIONING THE EFFECTS OF THE BUDDHAS' TEACHING OF DHARMA

With speech such as this, they spread forth and proclaim the Dharma which is good in the beginning, middle, and end, imbued with meaning, beneficial, devoted solely to Dharma, and, in all respects, perfect.<sup>17</sup> It is able to cause beings to gain karmic rewards in in this very lifetime. Their discourse is not meaningful only for a time, is such that one can test it for oneself, and is such that will lead to the fulfillment of one's aspirations. Those possessed of profound and sublime wisdom realize it within themselves. It can extinguish in beings the raging fire set ablaze by the three poisons. It is able to rid one of all karmic offenses committed by body, speech, and mind, and it is also well able to open up and reveal the essence of moral virtue, the meditative absorptions, and wisdom.

It begins with mere naming that in turn provokes realization of meaning that then in its own turn causes one to be filled with joy. From this joy, there then arises bliss, and from this bliss, there then arises meditative concentration. From this meditative concentration, there arises a wise knowing in accordance with reality, and from this wise knowing in accordance with reality, one then develops renunciation. Due to having developed this renunciation, one becomes able to destroy the fetters, and due to having destroyed those fetters, one then gains liberation.

In this very manner, this Dharma is caused to unfold in a sequence whereby:

It is well able to open forth and reveal the four bases [of meritorious qualities]: truth, relinquishment, quiescence, and wisdom;

It is able to reveal for beings the means by which they are caused to perfectly fulfill the *pāramitās* of giving, moral virtue, patience, vigor, meditative concentration, and wisdom;

It is able to cause beings to sequentially enter and proceed through the Ground of Joyfulness, the Ground of Stainlessness, the ground of Shining Light, the Ground of Blazing Brilliance, the Difficult-to-Conquer Ground, the Ground of Direct Presence, the Far-Reaching



Ground, the Ground of Immovability, the Ground of Excellent Intelligence, and the Ground of the Dharma Cloud;  
 It is able to make clear distinctions with regard to the Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle, the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and the Great Vehicle;  
 It is able to provoke realization of the fruits of the path gained by the stream enterer, once returner, non-returner and arhat,<sup>18</sup>  
 And it is able too to cause complete success in gaining wealth and happiness in the realms of humans and devas.

This is what constitutes the treasury of meritorious qualities that provides all of the foremost forms of benefit.

5) INSTRUCTION ON THIS TYPE OF CONTEMPLATIVE MINDFULNESS

It is in this manner that one uses right thought in the recollective mindfulness of all buddhas. One abides in a peaceful and quiet place, rids oneself of sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, doubtfulness, regret and agitation, and single-mindedly carries on focused mindfulness in which one refrains from generating thoughts that obstruct or cause one to lose meditative absorption. One employs this sort of mind in one's focused mindfulness of the Buddhas. If one's mind sinks, one should raise it up again. If one's mind becomes scattered, one should draw it back into a focused state. One then sees the entire great assembly as if it were always right before one's very eyes.

6) THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAISING THE MAJOR MARKS AND SECONDARY SIGNS

When one has not yet managed to enter concentrated meditative absorption, one should always praise the two types of phenomena that consist of the Buddha's major marks and secondary characteristics, using verses to celebrate the qualities of the Buddhas and to cause one's mind to become well trained in this.

a) VERSES IN PRAISE OF THE BUDDHAS' 32 MARKS

Accordingly, there are these lines of verse as follows:

Referring to the marks and characteristics of the Bhagavats and the karmic causes and conditions by which they acquired them, I shall use these marks and their corresponding karmic actions to set forth the praises of these great *āryas*:

The thousand-spoked wheel mark on the feet  
 is associated with a pure retinue and with giving.  
 It is because of these causes and conditions  
 that the many worthies and *āryas* surround them.

The mark of the stable stance of the feet  
 arises from upholding without fail all goodness one has taken on.  
 It is because of this that the legions of Māra's armies  
 are unable to succeed in destroying them.

Their fingers and toes join with proximal webs  
and their bodies have the mark of purple golden coloration.  
Because of their skillful practice of the means of attraction,  
the great assembly naturally bows in deferential reverence.

Their hands and feet are extremely soft  
and the body has the mark of fullness in the seven places.  
It is due to giving food that accords with others' wishes  
that they are naturally given many offerings.

They have long fingers, broad heels,  
and the body has the mark of being large and upright.  
This results from abandoning the causes and conditions of killing  
and may lead to a lifespan lasting even up to a kalpa in length.

The hairs of the body grow in an upward and rightward spiral  
and the feet have the mark of high arches.  
By always advancing in good endeavors,  
they thereby acquired the dharma of irreversibility.

They have the gradually tapering legs of the *aiṇeya* antelope  
due to always delighting in study and recitation of scriptures.  
It is through speaking the Dharma for others  
that they rapidly realized the unsurpassable path.

As for having long arms that reach below the knees,  
this is due to never being miserly in giving  
anything one possesses to whoever seeks to acquire them.  
Thus they can teach and guide others in ways suited to their wishes.

Genital ensheathment reflects a treasury of meritorious qualities  
associated with skillfully reconciling those who are estranged.<sup>19</sup>  
As a result, they acquire a great congregation of humans and devas  
and use the pure wisdom eye to create their sons.<sup>20</sup>

Their thin skin that radiates golden light  
is associated with giving marvelous apparel and halls.  
As a consequence, they acquire an abundance of fine robes  
as well as pristine quarters, buildings, and viewing terraces.

The single hair in each pore  
and the white hair tuft between the eyes  
are associated with serving as a supreme protector.  
Hence they are revered throughout the three realms of existence.

They have an upper body like that of a lion  
with the two shoulders rounded and full.  
These result from always using speech that is pleasing to others.  
As a consequence, there is no one who opposes them.

The marks of sub-axillary fullness and cognition of all tastes stem from providing medical care and medicines for the sick. As a consequence, devas and men all revere and love them and their bodies remain ever free of disease.

The roundness of the mid-body and the crown's fleshy *uṣṇīṣa* sign reflect the merit of giving with a harmonious and delighted mind. As a consequence of exhorting and teaching even the stubborn, they reign as sovereignly masterful kings of Dharma.

As for the voice like that of a *kalavinka* bird, the broad tongue, and the voice like a Great Brahma Heaven deva, they are from the speaking of words that are both gentle and true. They therefore acquire the Great Ārya's eight voice qualities.<sup>21</sup>

Having first brought contemplative thought to bear and then afterward spoken words of definite truthfulness, they acquired the lion-like mark. Hence all who see them trust them and defer to them.

That their teeth are white, straight, and close-set is because they have always refrained from slighting those who have previously given offerings. Hence the minds of those in their retinue are agreeable and unified.

Above and below, they have a total of forty teeth that, being close-set, have no gaps. These result from never slandering and not lying. Hence their disciples' [loyalty] cannot be destroyed.

The pupils and whites of their eyes are clearly delineated and they have the mark of eyelashes like those of a royal bull. These are caused by kindly thought and an amicable view of others. Consequently all observers look on them with a tireless gaze.

Even though a wheel-turning king who rules over four continents possesses these major marks and secondary characteristics, their radiance still cannot compare with that of a buddha.

I pray that the power of the merit from my setting forth praises of the major marks and the secondary characteristics may be able to cause everyone to have purified minds as well as everlasting peace and happiness.

a) VERSES IN PRAISE OF THE BUDDHAS SECONDARY CHARACTERISTICS

The bodhisattva should also engage in contemplative mindfulness of the buddhas by way of their eighty secondary characteristics. Accordingly, there are these lines of verse, as follows:

All buddhas possess the marvelous secondary characteristics,  
eighty in number, with which their bodies are adorned.

You should all delight in them  
and listen intently as I describe them.

The Bhagavats have round and slender fingers,  
nails that are purplish red in hue,  
convex in profile, smooth, and glossy,  
characteristics of having everything in measureless abundance.

Their veins lie flat, their ankle bones are invisible,  
their feet are not skewed in their track,  
their gait is like that of the king of lions,  
and they are incomparably awe-inspiring to all observers.

When walking, the entire body turns to the right.  
They are serene in manner and refined in their deportment.  
The parts of their squarely set bodies are orderly in their posture  
and their dignified grace inspires fondness and happiness.

Their bodies are firm in tone, but extremely soft.  
The articulations of their joints are quite visibly distinct.  
When walking, they do not travel in a meandering manner.  
All of their sense faculties are fully and perfectly developed.

The flesh on their bodies is extremely taut, finely textured,  
freshly radiant, and especially immaculate.  
Their physical posture is especially upright, refined,  
and devoid of any feature subject to dispraise.

The belly is round, but does not visibly bulge.  
The navel, though deep, does not appear to be an orifice.  
Its creases manifest as a rightward spiraling swirl.  
Their deportment is extremely pure.

The body is free of any blemishes  
and the hands and feet are extremely soft.  
The lines in the palms are deep and long,  
continuous, straight, and lustrous.

The tongue is slender, the face is not too long.  
The central incisors are white, rounded, slender, and sharp.  
The hue of the lips is like that of the *bimba* fruit.  
Their voice is as deep as the king of the wild geese.

The nose is prominent in profile and the eyes are bright and clear.  
The eyelashes are close-set and fine, but not in disarray.  
The brow is elevated, has eyebrow hair that is soft,  
and it is straight and not crooked.

The hair of the brows, being even and straight,  
is emblematic of being well aware of the faults in any dharma.  
The hair of the brows is smooth and glossy,  
a feature emblematic of skillfully liberating and aiding beings.

The ears are full, long, even in shape,  
undamaged, and especially pleasing to the eye.  
The forehead is broad and straight.  
All of the head's features are perfectly formed.

The hair is fine, dense, never in disarray,  
the color of the king of the black bees,  
clean, pleasantly fragrant, immaculate,  
and possessed of three of the marks.

b) SUMMATION ON IMPORTANCE OF SUCH RECOLLECTIVE CONTEMPLATION

This has been the description of the eighty secondary characteristics. Because these eighty secondary characteristics are interspersed with and serve to adorn the thirty-two major marks, if one fails to take up contemplative mindfulness of both the thirty-two marks and the eighty secondary characteristics in one's praises of the Buddha's body, then one may lose forever the causal factors conducing to well-being and happiness in the present and future lives.

### The End of Chapter Twenty



## Ch. 21: Forty Dharmas Exclusive to Buddhas (Part 1)

### II. CHAPTER 21: FORTY DHARMAS EXCLUSIVE TO BUDDHAS (PART 1)

#### A. INTRODUCTION TO THE FORTY DHARMAS EXCLUSIVE TO BUDDHAS

It is in the above-discussed manner that the bodhisattva uses the thirty-two major marks and eighty secondary characteristics in his contemplative mindfulness of the Buddha's physical body. Now one should proceed to mindfulness of the dharmas exemplifying the Buddha's meritorious qualities, namely:

One should also use the forty exclusive dharmas  
in one's contemplation of the Buddhas,  
for the Buddhas are their Dharma body  
and are not merely associated with their physical bodies.

Although the Buddhas possess countless dharmas not held in common with any other persons, there are forty dharmas that, if borne in mind, will cause one to experience joyful happiness. And why [should one bear them in mind]? It is not the case that the Buddhas are their form bodies, for they are rather to be identified with the Dharma body. This accords with this scriptural testimony: "You should not contemplate the Buddha merely in terms of his form body, for it is on the basis of Dharma that one should carry on such contemplation."

As for the forty dharmas exclusive to the Buddhas, they are as follows:<sup>22</sup>

- 1) Sovereign mastery of the ability to fly;
- 2) [The ability to manifest] countless transformations;
- 3) Boundless psychic powers of the sort possessed by *āryas*;
- 4) Sovereign mastery of the ability to hear sounds;
- 5) Immeasurable power of knowledge to know others' thoughts;
- 6) Sovereign mastery in [training and subduing] the mind;
- 7) Constant abiding in stable wisdom;
- 8) Never forgetting;
- 9) Possession of the powers of the vajra samādhi;
- 10) Thorough knowing of matters that are unfixed
- 11) Thorough knowing of matters pertaining to the formless realm's meditative absorptions;
- 12) The completely penetrating knowledge of all matters associated with eternal cessation;

- 13) Thorough knowing of the non-form dharmas unassociated with the mind;<sup>23</sup>
- 14) The great powers *pāramitā*;
- 15) The [four] unimpeded [knowledges] *pāramitā*;
- 16) The *pāramitā* of perfectly complete replies and predictions in response to questions;
- 17) Invulnerability to harm by anyone;
- 18) Their words are never spoken without a purpose;<sup>24</sup>
- 19) Their speech is free of errors and mistakes;
- 20) Complete implementation of the three turnings [of the Dharma wheel] in speaking Dharma;
- 21) They are the great generals among all *āryas*;
- 22–25) They are able to remain unguarded in four ways;<sup>25</sup>
- 26–29) They possess the four types of fearlessness;
- 30–39) They possess the ten powers;
- 40) They have achieved unimpeded liberation.

These are the forty dharmas exclusive to the Buddhas. We shall now discuss them more extensively, as below:

B. 1) SOVEREIGN MASTERY OF THE ABILITY TO FLY

As for “sovereign mastery of the ability to fly” all buddhas fly with sovereign mastery, entirely as they wish, and with a manner and speed that are limitless and unimpeded. How is this so? If the Buddha wishes to raise one foot and then the other, walking through space in just such a fashion, then he is immediately able to do so. If he wishes to simply step into space and depart in this manner or if he wishes to simply stand motionlessly in space and depart in this way, he is immediately able to do so.

If he prefers to just sit there peacefully in the full lotus posture and depart like that, then he is also able to leave that way. If he wishes instead to lie down peacefully and then depart, he is able to leave in that way as well.

If he decides to stand upon a precious lotus blossom extending to the very boundaries of empty space, one with a blue *vaiḍūrya* stem, real coral petals, pistils of yellow gold, wish-fulfilling pearls for its pedestal, and countless sorts of surrounding phenomena, one that appears like the sun on first rising—departing in just such a fashion—then he does just that.

Or if, alternatively, he wishes to create through spontaneous psychic transformation a palace like the palaces of the sun or moon, like the supremely marvelous palace of Indra, or like those of the Yāma Heaven devas, the Tuṣita Heaven devas, the Nirmāṇarati Heaven



devas, the Paranirmita Vaśavartin Heaven devas, the Brahma Heaven kings, or like the palaces of any of the other devas, and if he then wishes to create any such palaces, sit down within them, and then depart in that fashion [in one of those flying palaces], then he is immediately able to do precisely that.

Then again, if he prefers to use any of the many other means [for flying from one place to another], then he is freely able to depart however he chooses. Hence it is said, “He is able to completely fulfill whatever wishes he makes.” Consequently, with but a single step, the Buddhas can pass beyond great trichiliocosms as numerous as the sands of the Ganges.

There are those who claim that the Buddha is able to move beyond some particular number of hundreds of thousands of lands in but a single mind-moment, whereas there are yet others who claim that, if anyone [supposed he could] know that the Buddha could depart such a distance with but a single step and in but a single mind-moment, then that would be [to infer that the Buddha’s abilities] could be limited. But the sutras declare that the powers of the Buddhas surpass all limits. One should therefore realize that the sovereign power of the Buddhas to freely fly through empty space is limitless and boundless.

So how is this the case? Given that one of the great *śrāvaka* disciples using his sovereign mastery of the psychic powers is able in a single mind-moment to pass beyond a hundred *koṭis* of Jambudvīpas, Avāra-godānīyas, Pūrva-videhas, Uttara-kurus, Four Heavenly Kings Heavens, Trāyastriṃśa Heavens, Yāma Heavens, Tuṣita Heavens, Nirmāṇarati Heavens, Paranirmita Vaśavartin Heavens, and Brahma Heavens—and given that there are a particular number of mind-moments in the wink of an eye and given that one might aggregate enough of these mind-moments to comprise a whole day, seven whole days, a whole month, a whole year, and so forth, on up to a full hundred years, and if in only a single day, such a *śrāvaka* disciple might pass through fifty-three *koṭis* plus two million, nine hundred and sixty-six thousand, that large a number of great trichiliosms, any Buddha would still be able in a mere mind-moment to exceed that number of great trichiliocosms passed through by such a *śrāvaka* disciple in the course of a full hundred years.

Then again, if one were to allow the passage of a single kalpa for each and every grain of sand in the Ganges—and if there was a great *śrāvaka* disciple foremost in psychic powers who, across the course of a lifespan of kalpas as numerous as the Ganges’ sands, passed through in each successive mind-moment just such a number of world systems [as described above]—and if he were to do this for a number of

mind-moments equivalent to a day, month, or year, doing so with the free exercise of all of his powers even to the exhaustion of such a number of great kalpas—all of those lands passed through by that great *śrāvaka* disciple during that entire time could still be passed through by a buddha in but a single mind-moment. The Buddhas may freely fly from one place to another with just such a speed as this.

In this, they cannot be obstructed by the iron-ring mountains, the ten jeweled mountains, the stations of the Four Heavenly Kings, the stations of the Trāyastrimśa Heavens, the stations of the Yāma Heavens, Tuṣita Heavens, Nirmānarati Heavens, Paranirmita Vaśavartin Heavens, Brahma World Heavens, Brahma Assembly Heavens, Great Brahma Heavens, Lesser Light Heavens, Limitless Light Heavens, Light-and-Sound Heavens, Lesser Purity Heavens, Measureless Purity Heavens, Universal Purity Heavens, Vast Fruition Heavens, Non-Perception Heavens, Not Vast Heavens, No Heat Heavens, Delightful Vision Heavens, Sublime Vision Heavens, or the Akaniṣṭha Heaven.

[Nor can their flight be obstructed by] the great winds, by the great floods, or by the fires that occur at the end of the kalpa. Nor can it be obstructed by any heavenly dragon, *yakṣa*, *gandharva*, *asura*, *kinnara*, *mahoraga*, *deva*, Māra, Brahmā, *śramaṇa*, brahmin, or anyone possessed of all the psychic powers. It is therefore said of the Buddhas that they are unimpeded in their ability to fly.

Additionally, by virtue of the sovereign mastery of their flight, they are able to exercise that ability in any manner they wish, by sinking into or emerging from the earth, or by passing through the obstructions presented by stone cliffs, mountains, and such. The Buddha is superior in this ability to any of the other *āryas*. Also, the Buddha is able to make his normal standing body reach in its height on up to the Brahma Heavens. *Śrāvaka* disciples are unable to match this. There are all manner of differences of this sort.

#### C. 2) [THE ABILITY TO MANIFEST] COUNTLESS TRANSFORMATIONS

As for the Buddhas' sovereign mastery in "the ability to manifest transformations," in the matter of manifesting phenomena, they have immeasurable power to do this. The capacity to manifest transformations as possessed by the other classes of *āryas* is both measurable and bounded whereas the Buddhas' capacity to manifest transformations is measureless and unbounded.

The other *āryas* are able, in but a single mind-moment, to manifest a single transformation body whereas the Buddhas are able, in but a single mind-moment, to manifest countless phenomena in whatever way they wish.

This is as described in the *Sutra on the Great Spiritual Powers*: “The Buddha may send forth from his navel a lotus blossom with transformation buddhas sitting atop it that then, in an orderly fashion, fill up all of space on up to the Akaniṣṭha Heaven. The many sorts of transformations created by the Buddhas take all sorts of different forms and all sorts of different shapes and are all created in but a single mind-moment.”

Also, *śrāvaka* disciples are able to perform transformations within a thousand lands whereas the Buddhas are able to freely perform transformations within a countless and boundless number of lands and are additionally able to do much more than this, for the Buddhas have gained the solid transformation samādhi. Also, the transformations performed by but one of the Buddhas’ bodies are able to occur in worlds as numerous as the sands of the Ganges.

Additionally, a buddha is able in a countless and boundless number of worlds of the ten directions to manifest a buddha being born, taking on a body, dropping to the earth, taking seven steps, leaving the home life, studying the path, defeating Māra’s armies, achieving enlightenment, and turning the Dharma wheel. All of these phenomena are created in but a single mind-moment. All of these transformation buddhas are themselves also able to carry out the work of the Buddhas. And the transformation-generated phenomena created by all of those buddhas are themselves countless and boundless.

#### D. 3) BOUNDLESS PSYCHIC POWERS OF THE SORT POSSESSED BY ĀRYAS

Also, the Buddhas have “boundless psychic powers of the sort possessed by *āryas*.” As for “the psychic powers possessed by *āryas*,” this refers to phenomena such as: radiating light from their bodies that may manifest as raging fire and also pouring forth rains; transforming their length of life however they wish, either lengthening it or shortening it; being able in a single thought to go to the Brahma Heaven; being able to perform transformations of various phenomena, being able to shake the great earth whenever they wish; or being able to ceaselessly radiate light capable of illuminating countless worlds.

Also, “psychic powers possessed by *āryas*,” are referred to as such because they are incomparably different from those possessed by common people, because of their being boundless, and because of their going beyond all limits. Although common people may possess some ability to perform transformations of various phenomena, their power to do so is so minor as to be beneath mention here.

A *śrāvaka* disciple may be able to split a thousand lands and then cause them to join back together again, may be able to lengthen his

lifespan to a kalpa or somewhat less than a kalpa in duration and then be able to shorten it, but after having shortened it, he will be unable to make it long again. He may be able in a single mind-moment to go to the brahma worlds associated with a thousand lands, may be able to freely perform transformations in a thousand lands, may be able to shake the earth in a thousand lands, may be able to ceaselessly radiate light from his body that can illuminate a thousand lands, and, even if his body is destroyed, he may retain the presence of his spiritual powers and their ability to perform transformations just as before, doing so in a thousand lands.

The lesser *pratyekabuddha* is able to perform a myriad transformations in a myriad lands. The middling *pratyekabuddha* is able to perform a million transformations in a million lands. A great *pratyekabuddha* is able to perform the sorts of transformations cited above, doing so throughout all lands in a great trichiliocosm.

The Buddhas, the Bhagavats, are able to perform transformations in worlds more numerous than the Ganges' sands wherein they send forth fire and water from their bodies. They are even able to grind to fine dust worlds as numerous as the Ganges' sands and then cause them to be restored. They are able to abide for a lifespan of countless kalpas, are able to shorten that lifespan, and having shortened it, they are then able to lengthen it again. They are able to abide for an immeasurably long period of time. They are able to freely perform transformations such that, in the space of but a single mind-moment, they are able to go to countless and boundless worlds as numerous as the sands in the River Ganges.

They are able to cause their usual body, when standing, to reach all the way up to the Brahma Worlds. They are also able to perform a transformation whereby countless and boundless *asamkhyeyas* of worlds are all caused to be transformed into gold, or into silver, or into *vaiḍūrya*, coral, mother-of-pearl, or carnelian. To sum up the essential point, they are freely able in accordance with their wishes to cause them to be transformed into a countless number of precious things.

They are also able in accordance with their wishes to transform the waters of the great oceans in worlds as numerous as the Ganges' sands into milk, ghee, yogurt, or honey. They are also able in but a single mind-moment to transform incalculably many mountains into real gold.

They are also able to shake the heavenly palaces of the desire realm and form realm heavens of countless and boundless worlds. They are also able in but a single mind-moment to cause gold-colored radiance to so universally illuminate an immeasurably great number of worlds

that the light from all those suns and moons and heavenly palaces of the desire-realm and the form-realm no longer appear at all.

Although a buddha may have already passed into *nirvāṇa*, afterward, he is still freely ever able in all those worlds to remain for however long he wishes, ceaselessly implementing his spiritual powers.

#### E. 4) SOVEREIGN MASTERY OF THE ABILITY TO HEAR SOUNDS

As for “sovereign mastery in the ability to hear sounds,” the Buddhas have sovereign mastery in their ability to hear sounds however they please. Even if there were countless hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of musical sounds being simultaneously played and hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of beings simultaneously speaking—whether those sounds are far or near, the Buddhas are freely able to hear whichever sounds they please.<sup>26</sup>

If one were to cause all beings in great trichiliocosms as numerous as a Ganges’ sands to simultaneously create any given number of hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of kinds of music that filled up all those worlds, and if at the same time all beings in worlds as numerous as a Ganges’ sands were to fill up all those worlds with the voice of *Brahmā*, if any buddha wished to hear only one single sound from among all those sounds, then that buddha would be freely able to hear that single sound while not hearing any other sound.

In the case of the sounds heard by *śrāvaka* disciples, if someone possessed of great spiritual powers were to block any given sound, then they would not be able to hear it. In the case of sounds heard by buddhas, even though there might be someone possessed of great spiritual powers seeking to block their hearing some sound, the Buddhas are nonetheless able to hear it.

A *śrāvaka* disciple may be able to hear any sound within a thousand lands. The Buddhas, the *Bhagavats*, are able to hear even the most subtle sounds even from a distance spanning countless and boundlessly many world systems.

A *śrāvaka* disciple possessed of great spiritual powers and abiding in the *Brahma World Heavens* is able to issue such a great sound that it is capable of pervasively filling a thousand lands. As for the Buddhas, the *Bhagavats*, it matters not whether they are abiding here or in the *Brahma World Heaven*, or are instead in yet some other place—their voices are still able to fill up countless and boundlessly many world systems. If they wish to cause a particular being to hear the most subtle sound across a distance of countless and boundlessly many worlds, they can cause him to hear it and if they wish to prevent someone from hearing a sound, then that person will indeed be unable to hear it at

all. Consequently, it is only the Buddhas who have gained sovereign mastery with regard to the hearing of sounds.

F. 5) IMMEASURABLE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE TO KNOW OTHERS' THOUGHTS

As for "measureless power of sovereign mastery in the ability to know others' thoughts," the Buddhas, the Bhagavats, are completely aware of all the thoughts of all beings of the present existing throughout countless and boundlessly many worlds. Others may develop the ability to know someone else's thoughts, but only as represented by the words [contained in others' thoughts]. The Buddhas, however, know others' thoughts in terms of the associated meanings of the words [contained in others' thoughts].

Moreover, others remain unable to know the thoughts of beings in the formless realm, but the Buddhas are able to know them. Although others may possess the ability to know someone else's thoughts, if anyone possessed of great powers wishes to block that ability, then they will no longer be able to know others' thoughts.

Supposing that all beings had developed psychic powers to the same degree as Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, or a *pratyekabuddha*. Now suppose that they used all of their collective spiritual powers to block anyone from knowing someone's thoughts. In such a case, a buddha would still be able to break their spiritual powers and would still succeed in knowing that person's thoughts.

Additionally, a buddha is able to use his spiritual powers to completely know any being's superior, middling, and inferior thoughts, his defiled thoughts, and his pure thoughts. Moreover, he is able to know with regard to each thought, the condition taken as the object of that thought, is able to know also the sequential progression of each thought as it moves from one objective condition to another, and is able to comprehensively know all of the conditions associated with any given thought. Also, he is able to know any being's thoughts in accordance with their true character.

It is on these bases that the Buddhas are acknowledged to have immeasurable powers to completely know the thoughts of others.

G. 6) SOVEREIGN MASTERY IN [TRAINING AND SUBDUING] THE MIND

As for the Buddhas' "*pāramitā* of being foremost in training and subduing the mind," they well know all of the *dhyānas*, *samādhis*, and liberations and well understand entry into them, abiding in them, and emerging from them. Whether a buddha is immersed in meditative absorption or not, should he wish to focus his mind on a single object, then he is freely able to focus upon it for however long he wishes and

then is able to change from this object to focusing on some other condition, freely abiding in that focus for however long he wishes.

If the Buddha, abiding in his normal thoughts, wishes to cause others to remain unaware of his thoughts, then they would be unable to know them. Even if all beings had perfected the ability to know others' minds to a degree comparable to the ability to know others' thoughts as possessed by a king of the Great Brahma Heaven, a great *śrāvaka* disciple, or a *pratyekabuddha*, and they all then caused a single person to acquire their collective abilities in this, and this person then wished to know the normal thought of a buddha, so long as that buddha did not permit it, that person would still be unable to acquire that knowledge.

This is as described in the *Sutra on the Seven Expedients*: "The practitioner:

Well knows the signs of meditative absorption;  
 Well knows the signs of abiding in meditative absorption;  
 Well knows the signs of emerging from meditative absorption;  
 Well knows the signs of stable and secure meditative absorption;  
 Well knows the signs of the stations of practice in meditative absorption;  
 Well knows the signs of the development of meditative absorption;  
 And well knows what is and is not appropriate to the dharmas of meditative absorption."<sup>27</sup>

This is what is meant by the Buddhas' "*pāramitā* of being foremost in training and subduing the mind."

#### H. 7) CONSTANT ABIDING IN STABLE WISDOM

As for the Buddhas' "constant abiding in stable wisdom," the Buddhas' stable wisdom is constant and unshakeable and their mindfulness is always maintained in their minds. And why is this the case? It is because they first know and then act, because they freely dwell on whichever object they choose while having no doubt in their actions, because they have cut off all afflictions, and because they have gone utterly beyond the realm<sup>28</sup> of movement itself.

This is as the Buddha told Ānanda:

The Buddha, in this one evening, gains *anuttarasamyaksambodhi* and proceeds then to teach the path to the ending of suffering to everyone in the world, whether they be a deva, Māra, Brahmā, a *śramaṇa*, or a brahmin, and then, in the end, finally enters the nirvāṇa without residue.

During the interim, the Buddha, with respect to every feeling, is aware of its arising, is aware of its abiding, is aware of its birth and

is aware of its cessation. With respect to all perceptions,<sup>29</sup> all tactile contact, all ideation, and all mental discursion, he is aware of their arising, aware of their abiding, aware of their birth, and aware of their cessation.

Māra the Evil One,<sup>30</sup> constantly and without resting, followed along after the Buddha both day and night for seven years yet was never in all that time able to come upon any shortcomings of the Buddha and was never able to observe an instance of the Buddha's mindfulness not abiding in a state of stable wisdom. This is what is meant by the Buddha's constant abiding in the practice of stable wisdom.

#### I. 8) NEVER FORGETTING

As for the dharma of "never forgetting," because the Buddhas have gained the dharma of irreversibility, have reached a penetrating understanding of the five categorical repositories of dharmas,<sup>31</sup> and have acquired the unsurpassable Dharma, the Buddhas never forget.

With respect to all that the Buddhas have realized beneath the bodhi tree and have then subsequently acquired up to the time when they enter the nirvāṇa without residue, no matter whether it be a deva, Māra, Brahmā, a śramaṇa, a brahmin, or some other *ārya*, there is no one who is able to cause the Buddhas to forget anything at all.

This is as described in the *Sutra on the Seal of Dharma*: "As for that which is realized at the *bodhimaṇḍa*, this is known as the genuine realization and there is no dharma superior to it."

This is also as described in the *Horripilation Sutra*: "Śāriputra. If anyone could claim truthfully that they do not have any aspect of Dharma that they forget, I would be the one who could make that claim. How is this so? I alone do not forget anything whatsoever."

This is what is intended when it is said that the Buddhas never forget Dharma.

#### J. 9) POSSESSION OF THE POWERS OF THE VAJRA SAMĀDHI

As for "the vajra samādhi," the vajra samādhi of all the Buddhas, the Bhagavats, is one of the exclusive dharmas, [so named]:

- Because it cannot be destroyed by anything;
- Because there is no place where it can be obstructed;
- Because it is associated with right and universal knowledge;
- Because it destroys all hindrances to Dharma;
- Because it is able to equally penetrate [all dharmas];
- Because it brings about the power to acquire the benefit of all meritorious qualities;
- And because it is the most supreme of all *dhyāna* samādhis.



As for its being called “the vajra samādhi” because there is nothing that can destroy it, it is like the precious vajra gem that cannot be crushed by anything at all. This samādhi is just like this. There is no dharma capable of destroying it. It is therefore known as “the vajra samādhi.”

**Question:** Why is it that it cannot be destroyed?

**Response:** This is because there is nothing anywhere that obstructs it. It is just as with Indra’s vajra that meets no obstruction anywhere. This samādhi is just like that.

**Question:** Why is this samādhi said to have nothing anywhere that obstructs it?

**Response:** Because it possesses a right and utterly penetrating comprehension of all dharmas. All buddhas, abiding in this samādhi, are able to utterly penetrate all of the dharmas subsumed within the five categorical repositories of dharmas: all dharmas of the past, of the present, of the future, those that transcend the three periods of time, and those that are ineffable dharmas. It is for this reason that it is said to meet with no obstruction anywhere.

If it were the case that, while abiding in this samādhi, all buddhas still did not have an utterly penetrating comprehension of all dharmas, then that would be a case of still having obstructions. But, in truth, this is not the case. It is therefore said to not be obstructed by anything whatsoever.

**Question:** How is it that this samādhi brings about a penetrating comprehension of all dharmas?

**Response:** It is because this samādhi is able to open up all obstructive dharmas, namely the obstacle of the afflictions, the obstacles to meditative absorption, and the obstacles to knowledge. Because it is able to open up all obstructions, it is therefore said to bring about an utterly penetrating comprehension of all dharmas.

**Question:** How is it that this samādhi is able to open up all obstructions whereas other samādhis remain unable to do so?

**Response:** This samādhi is well able to penetrate three<sup>32</sup> dharmas:

Because it is able to destroy the mountain of afflictions so that nothing remains of them;

Because it brings about the right and universal comprehension of all dharmas;

And because it brings about the thorough-going attainment of the liberation of the indestructible resolve.

It is for these reasons that this samādhi is said to be able to open up all obstructions.

**Question:** How is it that this samādhi is able to equally penetrate these three dharmas?<sup>33</sup>

**Response:** This is because, when one abides in this samādhi, one gains the power by which one is then able to acquire every sort of meritorious quality. None of the other samādhis possess this sort of power. It is for this reason that this samādhi is able to “equally penetrate” [all dharmas].

**Question:** How is it that, abiding in this samādhi, one gains the power by which one is then able to acquire every sort of meritorious quality?

**Response:** This samādhi is the foremost among all meditative absorptions. It is because of this that, abiding in this samādhi, one is able to gain every sort of meritorious quality.

**Question:** How is it that this samādhi is foremost among all samādhis?

**Response:** This samādhi is foremost among all meditative absorptions because it is produced through the possession of measurelessly and boundlessly many roots of goodness.

**Question:** How is it that this samādhi is produced through the possession of measurelessly and boundlessly many roots of goodness?

**Response:** This samādhi is possessed only by those who are equipped with all-knowledge. It has not been acquired by anyone else. Hence it is known as “the vajra samādhi.”

### The End of Chapter Twenty-One

## Ch. 22: Forty Dharmas Exclusive to Buddhas (Part 2)

### Challenges to the Reality of Omniscience

#### III. CHAPTER 22: FORTY DHARMAS EXCLUSIVE TO BUDDHAS (PART 2)

##### A. Q: YOUR CLAIM THAT OMNISCIENCE EXISTS IS FALSE FOR THESE REASONS

**Question:** You claim that only those possessed of all-knowledge possess the vajra samādhi and no one else has it. If this samādhi was only possessed by someone who has all-knowledge and no one else possessed it, then this samādhi does not even exist. Why? Because there is no one who possesses all-knowledge.

And why is this? It is because the dharmas that might be known are measureless and boundless whereas the knowledge that might know them is measurable and bounded. It should not be the case that this measurable and bounded knowledge could know measurelessly many phenomena.

For instance, on the present-day continent of Jambudvīpa, the number of beings dwelling in its waters and on its lands are beyond count. Also, consider the three categories of beings, whether male, female, or neither male nor female, those still in the womb, the children, the young and strong, the frail and old, and also the dharmas associated with their suffering, happiness, and so forth. Also, consider all of the mind and mental dharmas of the past, future, and present, as well as all good and bad karmic actions accumulated in the past, present, and future, all the karmic retributions undergone in the past, present, and future, all the births and deaths of the myriad creatures, and also all of Jambudvīpa's mountains, rivers, springs, ponds, grasses, trees, dense forests, roots, stems, branches, leaves, blossoms, and fruit. The things that can be known are limitlessly many.

The same is true for the other three continents. And just as this is the case with these four continents, it is also the case throughout all of the worlds of the great trichiliocosm. And just as this is the case with all of the worlds of the great trichiliocosm, so too is it also the case for all things that can be known in all other worlds.

As for the number of the worlds, that matter alone is measureless, boundless, and difficult to know. How much the more so is this the case for all of the sentient and insentient beings and all other categories of things on the Jambudvīpa continents in all those worlds.

For these reasons, one should realize that the things that can be known are countless and limitless and, because of that, it cannot be that there is anyone at all who is possessed of all-knowledge.

Suppose that one were to claim that the knowledge [of someone who is omniscient] is possessed of such great power that, because it is unimpeded with respect to those dharmas it cognizes, it is able to pervasively know all those dharmas in just the same manner as empty space is able to reach everywhere in its universal pervasion of all things. Suppose too that one were to claim that, because of this, it ought to be the case that there truly is such a thing as an omniscient person. If one were to make such a claim, this still could not be so, for even if knowledge could possess such a great power as this, even such great knowledge as this would still remain unable to know itself in just the same way that one's fingertip remains unable to touch itself. Therefore, there is no such thing as all-knowledge.

If, [in response to this], one were to claim that there is yet some other knowledge possessed of the capacity to know this knowledge, this could not be the case, either. And why not? That is because this proposition would then fall into the fallacy of infinite regression. Knowledge either knows itself or is known by something other. They cannot both be true.

If, as you say, this knowledge is somehow possessed of measureless power, because of the fact that it still remains unable to know itself, one really cannot claim that it is possessed of measureless power. Therefore there is no such thing as some knowledge possessed of the ability to know all dharmas.

If there is no such thing as some knowledge possessed of the ability to know all dharmas, then there could not be anyone possessed of all-knowledge. And why is this the case? It is because anyone possessed of all-knowledge [could only be so by] availing himself of just such a [non-existent] knowledge that knows all dharmas.

Furthermore, the dharmas that can be known are measureless and boundless. Even if one were to employ the combined knowing capacity of a hundred thousand myriads of *koṭis* of wise men, they would still be unable to exhaustively know them all. How much the less could a single person do so. Therefore there is no such thing as any single person who is able to know all dharmas and there is no such thing as "all-knowledge."

If one were to claim that it is not on the basis of comprehensively knowing every mountain, river, being, or non-being that we speak of someone possessed of all-knowledge, but rather it is simply on the basis of exhaustively knowing all scriptures that one speaks of

someone possessed of all-knowledge, this is also wrong. How so? It is because, within the sphere of the Buddha's Dharma, one does not speak of the concepts treated in the Vedas and other such scriptures. If the Buddha really were, [in this sense of the term], a man possessed of all-knowledge, then he should make use of the Vedas and other such scriptures, but in truth, he does not use these, and so, because of this, the Buddha is not an all-knowing man.

Moreover, the scriptures comprising the four Vedas are themselves measurable and limited in their scope and, even so, there is not even anyone capable of exhaustively knowing those scriptures, how much the less could there be anyone who exhaustively knows all the scriptures in existence. Therefore there is no such thing as a person possessed of "all-knowledge" [even in this limited sense of the term].

Moreover, there are scriptures that are able to cause the proliferation of desire and that devote themselves to such things as dance and music and such. If a person possessed of all-knowledge were to become knowledgeable with respect to these matters, then he would be subjected to the arising of desire. Scriptures of these sorts constitute the causes and conditions for the arising of desire. Where there is a given cause, there must necessarily be the corresponding result [ensuing from it]. If a person possessed of all-knowledge does not know these matters, then he could not be validly referred to as someone possessed of all-knowledge.

Furthermore, there are scriptures that are able to influence a person to become full of hate and to take delight in deceiving others, specifically such works as those classics concerned with ruling the world. Were one to become knowledgeable about such matters, then one would come to be possessed of hatred. How is the case? It is because, where there is such a given cause, then there must necessarily be the corresponding result ensuing from it. And were one to not know such matters, then one could not be validly referred to as possessed of all-knowledge. One should therefore realize that there really is no such thing as a person who is possessed of all-knowledge.

Additionally, it is not necessarily the case that a buddha could exhaustively know matters pertaining to the future. Take for instance my present challenge to the plausibility of there being anyone who is omniscient. The Buddha has no scriptural record of having predicted that in the future there would be this particular man of this particular caste from this particular clan in this particular place who would on these particular grounds challenge the plausibility of there being anyone who might be omniscient. If one were to claim that the Buddha exhaustively knows such things, why did he not speak of this matter? If

he is the one who spoke these scriptures, then those scriptures should have a record of such matters, but he did not speak of these matters. Therefore one knows that he was not omniscient.

Moreover, if the Buddha exhaustively knew future matters, then he should have known in advance that, after Devadatta left home to become a monk, he would then create a schism in the Sangha. If he had knowledge of that, then he should not have allowed Devadatta to become a monk. Also, the Buddha did not know that Devadatta would use a stick to pry loose a boulder [that would roll down and draw blood from the Buddha's foot]. If the Buddha had known of this matter in advance, then he should not have been walking in that place.

Additionally, the Buddha failed to know in advance that Ciñca, the brahmin woman, would slander him by accusing him of having had sexual relations with her. If the Buddha had known of this in advance, then he should have told the bhikshus that, in the future, there would be just such an occurrence.

Also, there was the case of the *brahmacārin* who, because he was jealous of the Buddha, killed a *brahmacārin* woman named Sundarī in another place and then buried her in a trench in the vicinity of the Jeta Grove. The Buddha did not know of this matter. If he had known of this, then he should have sought among the brahmins to [find a way to] see that her life would be saved.

The Buddha went to that place beneath which Devadatta was about to set loose the falling boulder, failed to announce in advance the incidents having to do with the brahmin woman and the *brahmacārin* woman. Because he did not know of these matters, one should realize that the Buddha did not exhaustively know the future. Therefore he could not possibly have been omniscient.

Furthermore, the Buddha once entered a brahmin village seeking food on the alms round but then had to leave with an empty bowl. He was unable then to know in advance that Māra would so turn the minds of the villagers against him that he would be unable to obtain anything to eat. If the Buddha had known of this matter, then he should not have entered that brahmin village. Therefore one knows that the Buddha did not exhaustively know how matters would transpire in the future.

Moreover, because King Ajātaśatru wished to harm the Buddha, he released a drunken elephant used to guard the treasury.<sup>34</sup> Because the Buddha did not know of this matter, he entered the city of Rājagṛha on his alms round. If he had known of this matter in advance, then he should not have gone into the city. Therefore he did not have

knowledge of future matters. Because he did not have knowledge of future matters, he therefore could not have been omniscient.

Additionally, the Buddha did not know of the causal circumstances involved in Agnidatta's invitation to the Buddha. Consequently he immediately accepted that invitation and then led the bhikshus to the state of *Verañjā*. Because this brahmin had forgotten his prior issuance of that invitation, he caused the Buddha to eat only horse fodder. If the Buddha had known of this matter in advance, then he should not have accepted that invitation on account of which he spent the entire three months [of the rains retreat] surviving only on horse fodder. We know therefore that the Buddha did not have knowledge of future matters. Because he did not have knowledge of future matters, he therefore could not have been omniscient.

Also, because the Buddha accepted Sunakṣatra as a disciple, he could not have had knowledge of future matters. This man possessed an obdurately evil mind, made himself difficult to teach, and did not believe the words of the Buddha. If the Buddha had known of this, how could he have accepted him as a disciple? Because he accepted him as a disciple, then he could not have known future matters. Because he did not have knowledge of future matters, he therefore could not have been omniscient.

Furthermore, if the Buddha had been omniscient, then, in order to prevent inevitable future instances of moral transgressions, he would have formulated his moral precepts in advance. Because he had no prior knowledge of the causal circumstances that eventually led to the formulation of each particular moral precept, it was only after someone had committed such a transgression that he then subsequently laid down these moral regulations. This being the case, he could not have known of future matters. Because he did not have knowledge of future matters, he therefore could not have been omniscient.

Moreover, in the Dharma set forth by the Buddha, it is solely on the basis of seniority in years of monastic ordination that, within the community, one sits more toward the front and is accorded reverence and obeisance [by those of fewer years of seniority]. One is not acknowledged as of greater eminence merely on the basis of one's venerable age, one's noble birth, the stature of one's clan, one's meritorious qualities, the level of wisdom one has developed, the degree of learning one has achieved, the particular *dhyāna* absorptions one has entered, the fruits of the path one has gained, the fetters one has cut off, or the spiritual powers one has acquired.

If the Buddha had really been someone possessed of all-knowledge, then he would have accorded eminence, higher priority in the receipt

of offerings, and stature in receipt of reverential obeisance on the basis of one's venerable age, one's noble birth, the stature of one's clan, one's meritorious qualities, the level of wisdom one has developed, the degree of learning one has achieved, the particular *dhyāna* absorptions one has entered, the fruits of the path one has gained, the fetters one has cut off, and the spiritual powers one has acquired. If the Buddha had made stipulations of this sort, then that would qualify as having established a well-regulated community.

Regarding the matter of years of monastic ordination seniority, this is the principle by which a practitioner of the path ordained for only five years is enjoined to accord reverential obeisance to a monk ordained for six years.

As for the issue of nobility of birth caste, the world has four classes of beings: *brahmans*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras*. *Śūdras* are enjoined to revere *vaiśyas*, *kṣatriyas*, and *brahmans*. *Vaiśyas* ought to pay obeisance to *kṣatriyas* and *brahmans*. *Kṣatriyas* are supposed to pay reverential obeisance to *brahmans*.

As for the status of clans, there are the artisan clans, the business-and-trade clans, the merchant clans, the clans led by those of senior status, the clans of great officials, royal clans, and so forth. Among them, the members of lesser-status clans are supposed to revere members of the eminent clans. This being the case, when those from poor and base clans leave the home life to become monks, they should be enjoined to pay reverence to monks from wealthy and noble clans.

With respect to meritorious qualities, whoever has broken moral precepts should be enjoined to revere and bow in formal obeisance to those who uphold the moral precepts. Those who strictly observe the moral precepts should not be bowing in reverence to anyone who has broken the moral precepts.

Those who do not practice the twelve *dhūta* austerities<sup>35</sup> should bow in reverence to those who are practitioners of the twelve *dhūta* austerities. Those who are not perfectly complete in their practice of the *dhūta* practices should bow in reverence to those who are perfect in their practice of the *dhūta* austerities.

As for the matter of wisdom, people devoid of wisdom should bow in reverence to those possessed of wisdom. With regard to learning, those of shallow learning should bow in reverence to those who have achieved a high level of learning. Those who do not recite many scriptures should bow in reverence to those who are able to recite many sutras from memory.

As for the fruits of the path, the stream enterer should bow in reverence to the *sakṛdāgāmin* and it should proceed in this fashion on up to



[the circumstance where realizers of the first three fruits of the path are enjoined to] bow in reverence to the arhat. As for all of the common people, they should bow in reverence to anyone who has gained any of the fruits of the path.

Those who have severed fewer of the fetters as well as those who have not yet severed any of the fetters should all bow in reverence to those who have severed many of the fetters.

Regarding the matter of spiritual powers, if one has not yet acquired any of the spiritual powers, he should then be bowing in obeisance to whomever has already acquired spiritual powers.

If the Buddha had skillfully set forth such sequentially ranked protocols regarding the making of offerings and the according of reverence, then his proclamations on these matters would be of a superior order. But, in truth, he did not do so. One can therefore know that the Buddha was not omniscient.

Furthermore, the Buddha was not even able to know all matters having to do with the present. If you were to ask me how I know that the Buddha did not have knowledge of present-era matters, then I would now inform you as follows:

There were beings whose fetters were but slight, who had no karmic obstacles, who were free of the eight difficulties, who were capable of practicing deep dharmas, and who were able to be successful in the cultivation of right Dharma, and yet the Buddha did not realize this. After the Buddha had attained enlightenment and was first on the verge of proclaiming the Dharma, he gave rise to the following doubt:

The Dharma that I have gained is extremely profound, recondite, far-reaching, sublime, quiescent, difficult to know, difficult to comprehend, and such as only the wise might be able to realize inwardly. The beings in this world are attached by their desires to worldly matters. That there might be any among them who might be able to cut off their afflictions, extinguish craving, and develop renunciation—this would be the rarest of possibilities. If I were to expound the Dharma, beings would fail to comprehend it. Such an endeavor would be but a useless experiencing of wearisome hardship.

And so the Buddha generated just such a doubt even though there were in fact beings whose fetters were but slight, who had no karmic obstacles, who were free of the eight difficulties, who were capable of practicing deep dharmas, and who were able to be successful in the cultivation of right Dharma. Because the Buddha was unable to know of the existence of such beings, one should therefore know that the Buddha failed to know matters having to do with the present time.

The Buddha also thought as follows: “Previously, when I was practicing ascetic austerities, the five bhikshus made offerings to me and supported me. It is only appropriate that I first benefit them. Where are they now?”

After he had this thought, a deva informed him: “They are now in Benares, in the place known as ‘Deer Park.’”

On account of this, one knows that the Buddha did not even know of matters having to do with the present. If he failed to know of matters having to do with the present, then we can know from this that the Buddha could not have been omniscient.

Furthermore, after he had attained enlightenment, the Buddha accepted the invitation to expound on Dharma and then had this thought, “As I now proceed to proclaim the Dharma, who is it that ought to be the first to hear it?” He then had another thought: “Udraka Rāmaputra—this is a man of sharp wisdom, one who might easily become enlightened.”

By this time, that man had already died and yet the Buddha nonetheless went in search of him. A deva then informed him: “His life came to an end just last night.” The Buddha thought again and, having reflected, he decided he wanted to liberate Ārāḍa Kālāma. A deva then told him, “This man died seven days ago.”

If the Buddha had been omniscient, he should have known beforehand that these men had already died, but in truth he did not know these events had happened. Because the Buddha did not know about past matters, he could not have been omniscient.

The methods employed by an omniscient man would be such that he should strive to bring about the liberation of those capable of achieving liberation while setting aside those incapable of success in this.

Moreover, in place after place, the Buddha spoke in terms revealing the presence of doubts on his part. Take for example the city of Pāṭaliputra that he said was bound to be destroyed by one of three causes: by flood, by fire, or by a conspiracy between insiders and outsiders. If the Buddha had really been omniscient, then he should not have had instances where his speech was marked by the presence of doubts. One knows therefore that he could not have been omniscient.

Additionally, the Buddha inquired of the bhikshus, “What matter have you all come together to discuss?” He asked questions of this sort. If he were omniscient, then he should not have asked about matters of this sort. Because he was compelled to ask others [in order to know of these matters], then he could not have been omniscient.

Also, the Buddha engaged in self-praise while deprecating others. This is as described in the sutras, “The Buddha told Ānanda, ‘I alone am foremost, without a peer, unequaled by anyone.’”<sup>36</sup>

He told the bhikshus, “The Nirgranthas and others of that sort are base and evil people who have perfected the five types of deviant dharmas. The Nirgranthas and such have no faith, have no sense of shame, have no dread of blame, and are men of but little learning who are indolent, possessed of only scant mindfulness and shallow wisdom.”

He also discussed all manner of impermissible endeavors engaged in by *brahmacārins*, by Nirgranthas, and by the disciples and other followers of the non-Buddhist traditions.

Self-praise and deprecation of others is a behavior of which even common people of the world are ashamed. How much the more so should this be the case for someone who is omniscient. Because the Buddha engaged in behaviors of this sort, he could not have been omniscient.

Furthermore, comparing beginnings and endings, one finds that the Buddhist scriptures are self-contradictory. Take for instance the statements in the sutras wherein, on the one hand, the Buddha claims, “Bhikshus, I am one who has newly discovered the path.” Then, on the other hand, he claims: “I have attained that path which has previously been attained by all buddhas of antiquity.”

Even wise worldly people abandon any tendency to contradict themselves through chronological inconsistencies. How much the less should it be that a monastic possessed of all-knowledge could stumble into such chronological self-contradictions. Because the Buddha fell into chronological inconsistencies, one should realize that he could not possibly have been omniscient. Therefore your claim that the vajra samādhi is only acquired by omniscient men is wrong, this because there is no such thing as an omniscient person. Nor can one establish any case for the existence of some sort of omniscience samādhi.

B. A: WRONG. AS I SHALL NOW EXPLAIN, THE BUDDHA TRULY IS OMNISCIENT

**Response:** You should not speak this way. The Buddha truly is omniscient. And how is this so? In general, all dharmas are comprised of five categorical repositories of dharmas, namely: past dharmas, future dharmas, present dharmas, dharmas that transcend the three periods of time, and ineffable dharmas. It is only a buddha who completely knows all these dharmas in accordance with reality.

I shall now respond to your earlier challenge that asserts, because knowable dharmas are measureless and boundless, there are no

omniscient people. Insofar as knowable dharmas might be measureless and boundless, the corresponding knowledge is also measureless and boundless. There is no fault in claiming that it is by means of measureless and boundless knowledge that one may know measureless and boundless dharmas.

As for your earlier assertion that knowing should somehow also involve a knowledge that knows [itself] and that this would entail the fallacy of infinite regress, I shall now respond, as follows:

It should be the case that dharmas are known by one's cognition. This cognition is similar to what is referenced when the world's common people describe themselves in this way: "I am a knowledgeable person," "I am someone with no knowledge," "I am someone possessed of only a coarse type of knowledge," or "I am someone who possesses subtle knowledge."

One should realize from these circumstances that it is with one's own cognitive ability that one knows [the character of one's own] knowledge. This being the case, there is no fallacy of infinite regress involved here. This is just a case of using one's own present cognitive ability to know one's past knowledge. It is in this way that one can exhaustively know all dharmas without any omissions.

Also, this is just like when someone counts others [in addition to oneself], thus reaching [for instance a total of] ten [people in all]. The capacity to know is just like that. For knowing to thereby know both itself and others is thus a concept free of any fault. This is also analogous to when a lamp is able to illuminate both itself and other things as well.

As for your contention that even the aggregated knowing capacity of a hundred thousand myriads of *koṭis* of wise people could not exhaustively know all dharmas, how much the less might a single person be able to know them—this is wrong. How is this so? An omniscient person is able to know the many things. Although there may be some additional multitude of people, if they have no cognitive ability, they won't know much of anything.

This is comparable to a situation in which there was a group of a hundred thousand blind men. [Even together], they still could not get hired as guides, but just one single person with good eyes might well be able to serve as a guide. Consequently, as regards your challenge to [the plausibility of omniscience on the part of] a single person, even in a situation where many knowers might be involved, they would still have no knowledge at all compared to the Buddha's capacities in this regard. Therefore your position as stated is erroneous.

As for your contention that, because the Buddha does not discuss the Vedas and other such non-Buddhist scriptures, he must therefore not be omniscient—I shall now respond to that as follows:

The Vedas are entirely lacking in the dharma of [liberation achieved through] skillful realization of nirvāṇa.<sup>37</sup> They contain only all manner of conceptual elaboration. Since what the Buddhas proclaim is all entirely devoted to the skillful realization of nirvāṇa, even though the Buddha is already well aware of the contents of the Vedas and other such scriptures, the Buddha does not discuss such things because those [Vedic] teachings have no capacity to lead anyone to the skillful realization of nirvāṇa.

**Question:** The Vedas *do* contain discussions of the skillful realization of nirvāṇa. Before the arising of this world, all was darkness and nothing whatsoever existed. In the beginning there existed a great man who appeared like the rising of the sun. If one was able to see him, then one could be liberated from the difficulty of being subject to dying.

[The Vedas] contain yet more guidance on these matters. They state that, because one’s person is but small, then one’s spiritual soul is correspondingly small. However, if one’s person is great, then one’s spiritual soul will be correspondingly great in scope, for the body is the home of the spiritual soul that always abides within it. If one uses wisdom to untie the bonds restraining one’s spiritual soul, one will then gain liberation. Therefore one should realize from this that the Vedas *do* contain teachings leading to liberation through attainment of nirvāṇa.

**Response:** This is simply not so. Why not? The Vedic scriptures are tied up with the four inverted views. The world is impermanent and yet they posit the existence of a separate and permanent world. They claim that only one or two sacrifices to their deva [is insufficient and] conduces to falling away from it, but with a third sacrifice, one will not be subject to falling away from it. This scenario involves the inverted view that falsely ascribes permanence to what is itself impermanent.

The world is a place of suffering and yet the Vedas claim the existence of a sphere of eternal bliss. This is just an instance of the inverted view that falsely ascribes bliss to what is inherently bound up with suffering.

The Vedas also claim that one’s soul may transform into one’s son and be subject through prayer to an extended lifetime of a hundred years. But a “son” is another person, so how could it constitute a self? This is just an instance of the inverted view that falsely ascribes selfhood to what is not actually a self.

They also claim that one's body is possessed of the foremost level of purity and so incomparable in this respect that not even the purity of gold, silver, or precious gems can approach the purity of the body. This is just an instance of the inverted view that falsely ascribes purity to what is devoid of purity.

If one holds inverted views, then [one's views] are devoid of reality. [If such teachings] are devoid of reality, how could they possess [a path to] nirvāṇa? Therefore the Vedas are devoid of any good methods for attaining nirvāṇa.

**Question:** The Vedas assert that whoever is able to know the Vedas becomes purified and possessed of peace and security. How then can you state that they have no good methods for attaining nirvāṇa?

**Response:** Although the Vedas assert that whoever knows the Vedas will gain peace and security, this is not ultimate liberation. Rather, this is but an envisioning of liberation projected onto another body. This claim bases itself on the idea that existence in the long-life heavens constitutes liberation. Therefore the Vedas truly contain no means to achieve liberation.

Furthermore, the teachings in the Vedas generally embody three types of concepts: The first involves chants and prayers. The second involves the utterance of praises. The third involves the principles of their dharma.

"Chants and prayers" refers to praying, "May I be caused to obtain a wife and sons, cows, horses, gold, silver, and precious jewels."

"Utterance of praises" refers to statements such as, "Oh, you, the spirit of fire with your black head, your red neck, and your yellow body—you abide eternally in the five great elements of living beings."

"Principles of their dharma" refers to teachings stating that one should do this and abstain from doing that.

Just as with their [erroneous teaching that] fire was first received from the Pleiades, so too, in truth, their methods of using chants and prayers and utterances of praises are all devoid of [any means to achieve] nirvāṇa's liberation. How is this so? Covetous attachment to worldly pleasures, [offerings of] burning ghee, spells, and incantations—these are all devoid of genuine wisdom. Since these do not cut off the afflictions, how could [the Vedas] have [the means to achieve] liberation?

**Question:** The dharmas in the Vedas have come forth from antiquity and are deserving of the foremost degree of faith. As for your contention that they have no good methods by which one might reach nirvāṇa, they are therefore not fit to be believed, this is wrong. Why?

Whereas the Buddha's Dharma has only recently emerged into the world, the Vedas have come down from long distant antiquity and have always prevailed in the world. Therefore, given that ancient dharmas are deserving of belief and newly arisen dharmas are not deserving of belief, your claim that the Vedas are devoid of any good methods by which one might realize nirvāṇa—this is wrong.

**Response:** Their relative antiquity is no justification for faith. Ignorance tends to come first whereas right knowledge comes only later. Erroneous views emerge first whereas right views emerge later. One cannot have faith in ignorance and erroneous views simply because they happened to emerge first nor can one deem right knowledge and right views to be unbelievable simply because they emerged later. This is analogous to there first being mud and only later lotuses, first being disease and only later a cure. Matters of these sorts are not worthy of being valued simply because they happened to appear first. Therefore, as for your contention that, because the Vedas came first and the Buddha's Dharma came later, the latter is unworthy of belief, this is a fallacy.

Furthermore, Dīpaṅkara Buddha and the other buddhas of the past all came into the world earlier. Their Dharma principles emerged in antiquity whereas the Vedas actually came forth only later. If you insist on relying on chronological primacy and long history as your bases for according esteem, then the Buddhas and their Dharma should be most highly valued.

**Question:** You claim it is because the Vedas have no good methods for reaching nirvāṇa that they are therefore not discussed in the Buddha's Dharma. But if the Buddha had really already known they are unable to lead to nirvāṇa, why did he bother to become knowledgeable about them? If in fact he was not *already* knowledgeable about them, he could not have been omniscient. Both stances are faulty.

**Response:** Your claim is wrong. The Buddha knew from early on that the Vedas have no good methods for reaching nirvāṇa. It is for this reason that he neither discussed them nor practiced what they teach.

**Question:** If it really was because the Buddha already knew there is no benefit to be had through the Vedas that he therefore instructed others not to cultivate their teaching, what was the point in his acquiring knowledge about them?

**Response:** People possessed of great knowledge should thoroughly distinguish between the correct path and the erroneous path. It is because one wishes to cause countless beings to go beyond dangerous and bad paths that one takes up the practice of the right path. This

is analogous to a guide who skillfully distinguishes between errant paths and the right path.

The Buddha is just the same in this respect. Since he himself had already succeeded in escaping the dangerous path of birth, aging, and death and also wished to cause other beings to escape from it as well, he knew well the genuine eightfold path of the Āryas and also knew the dangerous and bad paths of the Vedas and other such teachings. It was in order to facilitate others' abandonment of deviant and bad paths and in order to encourage their practice of the correct path that, [with regard to the Vedas], he merely became knowledgeable about them, but did not discuss them.

This is analogous to the situation with farmers who plant their fields and then, with the arrival of autumn, reap a harvest that may also happen to include a few useless weeds. The Buddha is like this as well. For the sake of achieving success in the unsurpassable path, he cultivates assiduously and vigorously and consequently gains the path of bodhi while incidentally gaining knowledge of the Vedas and other such erroneous paths. Hence there is no fault on his part in any of this.

As for your previous statement claiming that no single person can completely know the four Vedas, this challenge of yours is false. People of the world each have the power of memory. There are those who, in a single day, can only recite five verses from memory, whereas others can recite one or two hundred verses from memory. If a particular person who cannot even recite ten verses from memory then holds the opinion that nobody could be able to recite from memory a hundred or more than a hundred verses, this would be an untruthful claim. It is because people such as yourself are unable to completely know the Vedas that you then claim nobody knows them.

If someone observes that some other person was unable to ford a particular river and then claims that nobody can cross that river, this person's statement on the matter does not qualify as correct speech. Why not? It is because there will naturally be some other person possessed of great strength who can indeed cross that river. This case is just like that. Even if one supposes that other [ordinary people] would be unable to entirely know [the Vedas], what fault is there in stipulating that someone possessed of all-knowledge would know them?

Furthermore, the *pisuo*<sup>38</sup> rishis all study the Vedas and ought themselves to be able to reach all-knowledge. Thus if there are these persons who have completely studied the Vedas, how can you say that nobody can have all-knowledge?



I shall now respond to your [above-stated] claim that there are scriptures which [by their explication of the causes and conditions conducive to desire] are capable of causing one to feel desire or hatred. If one wishes to have a long life, he should abandon causes and conditions conducive to death. The Buddha, too, in this same way, wished to influence beings to cut off their desires and hatreds. This required that he know the causes and conditions that initiate the arising of desire and hatred.

Additionally, as for your contention that, if one is able to know the classical texts concerned with generating desire or hatred, one will then become afflicted with desire and hatred—this is a baseless claim. Although the Buddha had knowledge of these texts, because he did not use them or implement their practices, he was without fault in this respect. So too, if a person merely knows the causes and conditions that precipitate death, this does not entail his dying [as a result]. Only if he were to implement the causes and conditions that precipitate death would he then die as a result. This case is just the same as that one.

I shall now address your contention that, if one does not know future matters, then one does not qualify as omniscient. This does not constitute as a valid challenge. We already know of instances involving challenges to the plausibility of omniscience. As stated in the sutras: “The Buddha told the bhikshus, ‘The common person bereft of wisdom has three characteristics: He contemplates what he should not contemplate, discusses what he should not discuss, and does what he should not do.’”<sup>39</sup>

Everything of relevance is already comprehensively mentioned in that statement. You common people of this future time are all included in it. As it would have no particular benefit, what would be the point in his having distinguished and mentioned names and such [related to future events]?

If one were to claim [that there is a contradiction] if the Buddha knew there would be these challenges, yet failed to reply to them in advance, there would really have been no need for this, for, in this presently existing fourfold assembly there are already those well able to cut off doubts in their responses to challenges [such as this]. We now already have those well able to refute challenging inquiries. What then would be the point in [the Buddha himself] responding in advance to such things? Right now, among the bhikshus you encounter in the present day, there are already those well able to refute the tenets posited by brahmins. Therefore there is no need [for the Buddha] to have responded in advance to such challenges.

Furthermore, there have already been prior responses to such challenges that are scattered in various places throughout the many sutras. Because people are unable to completely know the Dharma of the Buddha, they do not know where those passages are located.

I shall now address your challenge on the matter of the Buddha's having allowed Devadatta to leave the home life and become a monk. As for your opinion that, if the Buddha allowed Devadatta to leave the home life, he could not have been omniscient, this statement is wrong. When Devadatta left the home life to become a monk, it was not the Buddha who was involved in allowing him to become a monastic.

**Question:** Even if it was someone else who allowed him to become a monastic, why did the Buddha allow this to happen?

**Response:** The doing of good and the doing of evil each have the season in which they occur. It was not necessarily the case that, having left home, he would immediately embark on doing evil. After Devadatta left home to become a monk, he had all of the meritorious qualities that are associated with upholding the moral precepts. Therefore there was no fault in [permitting] his leaving the home life.

Additionally, for twelve years, Devadatta was pure in his observance of the moral precepts and also became able then to recite from memory sixty-thousand lines from the treasury of Dharma. The karmic reward from this is such that, in the future, [such cultivation] will not have been in vain. In fact, it will definitely benefit him later on.

I will now reply to your statement regarding Devadatta's prying loose of a boulder [in an attempt to murder the Buddha]. Because all buddhas have already perfected the dharma of not killing, nobody in any world can ever rob them of life.

**Question:** If the Buddha had actually perfected the dharma of not killing, why did the boulder shatter and [allow a piece of it] to come down [and strike him in the foot]?

**Response:** The Buddha had planted karmic causes associated with damage to the body for which he was bound to undergo this fixed retribution. He manifested the appearance of having to undergo it in order to demonstrate to beings that karmic retributions cannot be escaped. It was for this reason that he voluntarily came to that place.

I shall now respond to your contention that there was some problem in the Buddha's not having spoken in advance about the incident involving that woman, Ciñcā. There is nothing in that woman, Ciñcā's, disparaging of the Buddha that can serve as a causal basis for impugning his qualification as omniscient. If the Buddha had announced in advance: "In the future, that woman, Ciñcā, will come forth and

slander me,” then that woman, Ciñca, would not in fact have come forth as she did. Furthermore, it was due to the karmic causes and conditions associated with the Buddha’s having slandered others in a previous lifetime that he was now definitely bound to undergo [the corresponding retribution].<sup>40</sup>

I shall now address your challenge as to how it could have been that the Buddha failed to prevent the incident that occurred when Sundarī entered the Jeta Grove.<sup>41</sup> This incident does not constitute a reason for impugning the Buddha’s qualification as omniscient. The Buddha does not have some power by which he is able to cause every being’s life to be an entirely happy one. Also, the Buddhas have all left behind disputation, do not elevate themselves, and are not attached to [making others] uphold moral precepts, consequently he did not act to prevent this incident.

Additionally, it was because of the ripening of karma from a previous life that he was definitely bound to undergo that seven days of slander. Moreover, when beings observed that the Buddha was neither perturbed over hearing himself slandered nor joyful when his innocence was made clear, they brought forth the resolve to follow the unsurpassable path, uttering this vow, “We too shall acquire just such a pure mind as this.” Therefore there was no fault [in the Buddha’s having acted as he did].

I shall now respond to your contention that, because the Buddha entered a brahmin village and then left with an empty bowl, he was therefore not omniscient.<sup>42</sup> The Buddha [did not go to that village] for the sake of food and drink, [but rather because] he had contemplated the minds of the people there. It was only after he entered the village that Māra changed the villagers’ minds.

**Question:** This is a matter about which the Buddha should have become aware in advance, thinking, “If I go into this village, Māra will change these peoples’ minds.”

**Response:** The Buddha in fact *did* know about this matter in advance [and entered that village anyway] in order to bring great benefit to those beings. It is not solely on the basis of receiving alms food from them that the Buddhas benefit beings and facilitate their liberation. There were those who welcomed him there with pure minds, bowed in reverence to him, and looked up to him with congenial gazes. All of these things already served great benefit. Why should it be an essential requirement that he be given food and drink? There are many different sorts of methods by which he was able to be of benefit to beings. Thus it was not in vain that he entered that village.

I shall now respond to your statement about the Buddha's having gone up the road on which there was a drunken elephant.<sup>43</sup> Although the Buddha already knew of this matter, there was a reason he deliberately went there. It was because this drunken elephant was definitely at a point where he could be brought across to liberation. The Buddha was also intent on preventing his falling into the karmic offense of harming a buddha.

Additionally, this elephant's body had the appearance of a black mountain. When the population there saw this elephant bow down its head in reverence to the Buddha, they all brought forth thoughts of reverence. It was for these reasons that the Buddha deliberately went up that road. Also, there was no error involved in the Buddha's having entered that road to encounter that elephant. Only if some unfortunate incident had transpired would you have a basis for bringing up this challenge.

As for your challenge regarding the Buddha's having gone to Verañjā, that was simply a case of having to undergo retribution for karmic deeds committed in a previous life.<sup>44</sup>

I shall now address your statement on the issue of the Buddha's having accepted Sunakṣatra as a disciple.<sup>45</sup> The Buddha has no need to guard against errors in actions of body, speech, mind, or livelihood.<sup>46</sup> It was because he is utterly without fear that he permitted Sunakṣatra to become a disciple.

Also, because this man always dwelt in close proximity to the Buddha, he was thus able to observe the display of all manner of spiritual powers and also saw the arrival of devas, dragons, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, kings, and others, all coming to make offerings to the Buddha and to pose respectful questions to him on all manner of extremely profound and essential dharmas. Hence his mind was thereby able to become purified. Because he was able to achieve purification of mind, this was a causal basis for his [eventual] benefit. Therefore, even though he was an evil man, the Buddha nonetheless accepted him as a disciple.

**Question:** This man had many evil thoughts about the Buddha. Therefore the Buddha should not have permitted him to become a disciple.

**Response:** Even if the Buddha had not accepted him as a disciple, the man still would have had those evil thoughts. Therefore there was no fault in the Buddha's permitting him to become a disciple.

I shall now respond to your challenge as to why the Buddha did not formulate the moral precepts in advance of [his disciples'] commission

of the corresponding transgressions. The Buddha did in fact formulate moral precepts in advance. He set forth the eightfold path of the Āryas that consist of right views, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditative concentration. Because he did describe this path leading to the attainment of nirvāṇa, he in fact had already formulated all of the precepts.

Furthermore, the Buddha described the three trainings wherein one thoroughly trains in moral virtue, thoroughly trains in [focusing] the mind, and thoroughly trains in wisdom. One should then realize from this that he had in fact already set forth all of the moral precepts.

Additionally, the Buddha told the bhikshus that they should definitely not do any sort of evil. Does this not constitute prior formulation of moral precepts?

Also, the Buddha spoke of the path of the ten courses of good karmic action, namely abandoning killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, divisive speech, harsh speech, false speech, frivolous speech, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views. Does this not constitute prior formulation of moral precepts?

Twelve years earlier, the Buddha described in a single verse the *uposadha* dharma,<sup>47</sup> namely:

To refrain from doing any sort of evil deed,  
to respectfully engage in every sort of good deed,  
and to purify one's own mind—  
This is the teaching of all Buddhas.<sup>48</sup>

One should therefore realize that the Buddha in fact *did* formulate the moral precepts in advance.

Also, the Buddha stated that one should abandon even all of the most minor causes and conditions associated with evil, as stated in these lines:

Abandon all evil actions of the body.  
Also abandon all evil speech,  
abandon all evil actions of the mind,  
and utterly abandon all other forms of evil.

On the basis of statements such as these, one should realize that the Buddha had already formulated the moral precepts in advance. Additionally, the Buddha had already described in advance the dharmas through which one guards against transgressions, as stated in these lines:

To guard the body is good indeed.  
To be able to guard one's speech is also good.

To guard one's mind is good indeed,  
 and to guard against all errors is good as well.<sup>49</sup>  
 The bhikshu guards against all errors  
 and thereby succeeds in abandoning all evil.

One should realize on the basis of these statements that the Buddha in fact *did* formulate the moral precepts in advance. Moreover, the Buddha also described in advance the characteristics of goodness, as stated in these lines:

Do not allow hands or feet to carelessly commit transgressions.  
 Restrain your words and take care in actions done.  
 One should take pleasure in guarding and focusing the mind.  
 It is on these bases that one is rightfully called a bhikshu.<sup>50</sup>

One should realize on the basis of statements such as this that the Buddha in fact *did* formulate the moral precepts in advance.

Furthermore, because the Buddha described the dharmas by which one is a *śramaṇa*, one should realize he did in fact formulate the moral precepts in advance. There are four dharmas by which one is a *śramaṇa*: First, one does not respond in kind to hate-filled actions. Second, one remains silent in the face of scolding. Third, one is able to endure even being beaten with staves. And fourth, one maintains patience with those who have dealt one harm.

Moreover, the Buddha taught the four stations of mindfulness, namely the contemplation of the body, the contemplation of feelings, the contemplation of thoughts, and the contemplation of dharmas, doing so because they constitute the abode of the path to nirvāṇa. Hence one should realize that he *did* formulate the moral precepts in advance.

The Buddha would not even permit the most subtle form of evil, how much the less would he condone any sort of evil karma in one's physical actions or speech. For reasons such as these, one should realize that he did indeed formulate the moral precepts in advance.

This is analogous to a king's establishment of laws in which one is forbidden to do evil deeds. When, later on, there are transgressions against those laws, it is according to the relative gravity of the crime that corresponding punishments are imposed. The Buddha is just the same in this respect. He first made general statements describing the moral precepts. Later on, when offenses occurred, he described the specific characteristic factors by which the given action constituted an offense.

Where there were those who committed evil deeds, they were instructed and caused to repent. He instructed that, for a given offense,

a given corresponding form of penance was to be performed or that either temporary expulsion or complete expulsion was stipulated so that the miscreant could not dwell together with the community, and so forth. It was only with the establishment of these sorts of cases that we came to have the subsequent formulation of moral precepts.

I shall now address your contention that superior position in the monastic community should be accorded on the basis of age, nobility of birth caste, status of one's clan, and so forth. In the dharmas of the path, issues of age, nobility of birth caste, status of one's clan, and so forth afford no benefit. How is this so? It is on the basis of being born into the Dharma of the Buddha that one qualifies as being born into nobility and into a fine clan. Seniority is determined on the basis of the number of years one has received the higher ordination and this is the rationale for being referred to as an elder.

As for your opinion that those who are merely older in years should be given priority in the receipt of offerings, is it not the case that those who first left the home life and received the ordination precepts are better regarded as of greater eminence?

Furthermore, from the time one receives the ordination precepts onward, there are no longer any distinctions on the basis of one's caste and such. It is only when bhikshus receive the precepts of the higher ordination that they then qualify as having been born into the family of the Buddhas. It is at this point that one loses any name associated with prior birth into a greater or lesser clan and everyone then belongs to this one single family.

As for your statements on upholding the precepts—those who first left the home life to become monastics and who have observed the moral precepts for the longest time and then proceed to uphold those moral precepts for a long time—it is because of their years of seniority in this that they should be accorded a superior position within the monastic community. This is as set forth in the original formulation of the moral precept code.

I shall now address your contention that those who are most strictly observant in their upholding of the moral precepts should not bow in reverence to those who have broken the moral precepts. Those who truly have broken the moral precepts should not even be allowed to dwell together with the community, how much the less should they receive reverential obeisance or offerings.

It is on the basis of their claim to be a bhikshu that one pays reverence to them according to their order of seniority. This is similar to when one bows in reverence before a deity's image made of clay or wood, doing so as a means of bearing in mind that actual deity.

The Buddha decreed that those of fewer years seniority should revere those who are seated in a superior position within the monastic order. It is through according with the Buddha's instructions in this that one acquires karmic merit.

I shall now respond to your statement that the according of reverence should be based on one's practice of the *dhūta* austerities. In this matter of those who take up the *dhūta* practices, there are five general types of practitioners among which it is difficult to make clear distinctions:<sup>51</sup>

First, there are those who are deluded and who, due to an absence of right knowledge, are driven by desire to practice these difficult dharmas;

Second, there are those possessed of only dull faculties who wish to acquire benefits as a result;

Third, there are those with evil intentions focused on deceiving others;

Fourth, there are those who are mentally ill;

And fifth, there are those who [take them up], thinking, "The dharmas of the *dhūta* austerities are praised by all buddhas, worthies, and *āryas* because they accord with the path to nirvāṇa."

Among these five classes of practitioners of the *dhūta* austerities, it is difficult to distinguish which are genuine and which are false.

Now, as for this matter of one's level of learning, just as with the *dhūta* austerities, it is difficult to distinguish clearly among those who have acquired abundant learning. How is this so? It could be that it is on the basis of delighting in the path that one has accrued much learning. Or perhaps it is only for the sake of receiving offerings that one has accrued much learning. It is difficult to make clear distinctions in matters such as these.

Additionally, in the Dharma of the Buddha, it is practice in accordance with one's words that is accorded esteem. One does not accord esteem merely on the basis of having engaged in much study or having become able to recite many scriptures. Also, according to the statements of the Buddha himself, if one practices but a single sentence of Dharma and is thereby able to derive self-benefit from that, this itself qualifies as abundant learning.

So too it is with this matter of wisdom. If one remains unable to implement a level of practice consistent with one's level of discourse, of what use is this wisdom? Consequently, it is not on the basis of one's degree of wisdom that one determines who is accorded a superior position in the monastic order.



This is analogous to the current way of doing things in the world. Although a younger brother may indeed be more learned or more wise, the elder brother is still not enjoined to pay him reverence. Therefore, after this same fashion, it is not on the basis of one's level of wisdom that one gains priority in the receipt of offerings or reverence. So it is then that, even though one may indeed have accrued much learning or wisdom, one should still accord reverence on the basis of who first received the ordination precepts. Were one to accord priority in the receipt of offerings to those of greater learning or a higher level of wisdom, this would inevitably result in discord within the community.

As for the other [criteria you propose for priority in according reverence], namely realization of the *śramaṇa*'s fruits of the path, severance of fetters, and acquisition of spiritual powers, those are the most difficult matters to know. Whether or not this person has attained a fruit of the path, whether he has cut off more fetters or fewer fetters [than this other person], and whether or not he has acquired spiritual powers—one cannot use such matters as the basis for superior position in the monastic order. Consider for instance those who have realized the same fruits of the path, cut off the same fetters, and acquired the same spiritual powers. Who among them should be accorded superior position in the monastic order? Consequently, it is by far the best to simply accord with the Buddha's instructions on these matters.

I shall now address your contention that the Buddha himself was beset by doubt about whether he should expound the Dharma.<sup>52</sup> The Buddha had no doubts at all even with regard to the most profound sorts of dharmas, how much the less might he have had doubts with regard to whether or not he should expound the Dharma. The Buddha never said that he would entirely forego his teaching of the Dharma. He merely indicated a preference for continuing to abide in serenity, refraining from becoming involved in numerous endeavors. There was no fault in his having simply waited till later to begin expounding the Dharma.

Also, the non-Buddhist partisans would say, "If the Buddha is such a great *ārya* that he remains silent and declines to involve himself in conceptual elaboration, what use could he have for assembling a following and offering to give teachings?" Then again, once he started teaching, this would inevitably turn into an endless endeavor. It was as if he was weighing the utility of proceeding to teach the Dharma and assemble a group of disciples when this could appear outwardly as if it were a mark of covetous attachment.

Due to these factors, the Buddha reflected, "Though my Dharma is extremely deep, the wisdom and skillful means that might be

employed in teaching it would be measureless and boundless. Still, those who are actually amenable to gaining liberation are but few." Consequently, he thought to himself, "It would be better to remain silent." It was also to defend against the potential for mocking depreciation by non-Buddhist partisans that he instead influenced the Brahma Heaven King to [first] request the proclamation of Dharma. The Brahma Heaven King and others then immediately addressed the Buddha, saying, "Beings are surely worthy of pity. There are among them those of sharp faculties and but few fetters who would be easy to teach and bring across to liberation."

Because of this, the Buddha acceded to the request of the Brahma Heaven King and others. It was as if someone who had just found a great treasury of jewels felt he should reveal their presence to others. In this same way, when *āryas* themselves gain the benefits of the Dharma, they feel they should also use it to benefit others.

I shall now address your contention that, because the Buddha expressed a wish to speak the Dharma for Ārāḍa Kālāma and others, not realizing that they had in fact already died, [this contradicts the plausibility of his being omniscient]. The Buddha had not brought to mind the issue of whether or not they had already died, but rather was only considering the fact that, because these men's fetters were but scant, they would be capable of being instructed and brought across to liberation. It is in correspondence with the point upon which one's thought is focused that a corresponding knowledge arises. It was as a consequence of this that the Buddha first said this to himself and a deva then appropriately informed him.<sup>53</sup>

Also, since earlier on, when the Buddha had just abandoned the home life, he had gone to those men, [Arāḍa Kālāma and Udraka Rāmaputra], and had spent time with them, the devas and other people could have entertained doubts in which they thought the Buddha had perhaps received the sublime Dharma from them and had then become enlightened in another location. Because the Buddha wished to cut off any doubts that they might have had, he immediately exclaimed, "Oh, those men—they have for so long suffered such misfortune as this. How can it be that they have still not heard this sublime Dharma?"

By inferring the implications of this idea, one can deduce the nature of the matter of the five bhikshus. It was because the Buddha had only brought to mind the causes and conditions associated with their capacity to gain liberation that he had not yet considered precisely where they were currently dwelling. Afterward, once he had thought about where they were dwelling, he then knew where they were.

Therefore one should not look upon these issues as refuting the plausibility of there being an omniscient person.

I shall now address your stated doubt with regard to the causes for the destruction of the city of Pāṭaliputra. The precise causes and conditions by which this city would meet its destruction were still unfixed. To make a fixed pronouncement on the unfolding of unfixed causes and conditions would itself be a fault.

Also among the forty exclusive dharmas listed earlier, I stated that all buddhas are thoroughly cognizant of dharmas that are unfixed. In response then, I do not accept this challenge as valid.

I shall now address your contention about the Buddha's querying the bhikshus as to the contents of their conversation by asking, "So, what are you all gathered together to discuss?" It was because the Buddha was about to hold forth on some aspect of Dharma that he initiated the discussion by asking a question of this sort. It could have been that, because he wished to formulate another of the moral prohibitions, he directed them to talk about what they were discussing. Because he took all sorts of such instances as occasions for speaking Dharma, the Buddha's posing a question was free of any fault [in relation to the issue of his omniscience].

Furthermore it is a commonplace in the world, even when one is already well aware of what is happening, for one to go ahead and ask a question. For instance, on observing someone eating, one may ask, "Oh, so you're eating, are you?" Or, for instance, on a particularly cold day, one may ask, "Isn't it cold?"

In this same way, even though he already knew, the Buddha would nonetheless pose a question. Being but a means of conforming to convention, this is entirely free of fault.

I shall now address your judgment that anyone who praises himself and criticizes others could not possibly be an omniscient person. The Buddha entertained no desires with respect to himself and so was not the least bit covetous of receiving offerings. He did not hate other men and was not possessed of overweening pride. As for the reason for his having declared himself to be foremost among everyone in the world, it was because there were beings who were amenable to faith and possessed of acutely sharp faculties who, if they cast aside bad spiritual guides and took the Buddha as their teacher, they could then gain that peace and security that would see them through the long night [of subsequent rebirths]. It was for this reason that the Buddha did in fact praise his own personal qualities.

Additionally, there were those who, although they sought the path to the supreme bliss, were still indolent and unable to bring forth

vigorous effort. Consequently the Buddha declared, “In this matter of gaining the most supreme benefit, one must not be indolent. I am the supreme spiritual guide in this world, the one who well proclaims right Dharma. It is only fitting then that you become assiduous and vigorous, for it is only then that you may gain the fruits of the path.” And so it was that, for reasons such as these, the Buddha did indeed praise his own personal qualities. It was not out of a wish to be accorded esteem, nor was it out of a wish to slight and deprecate others.

In cases where the Buddha rebuked evil men, it was for the sake of inducing them to get rid of evil dharmas. It was not because he detested other beings. In some cases, there were those seeking to achieve benefit through Dharma, people whose minds were pure and of straightforward character, but who were locked in relationships with bad spiritual guides. In order to induce them to abandon these bad teachers, the Buddha would sometimes criticize and rebuke them. Even before he had achieved buddhahood, [in earlier lifetimes] he even sacrificed his own brain and the very marrow of his bones as gifts to others. How much the less could it be that, once he had already attained buddhahood, he would be inclined to berate and scold others?

I shall now respond to your contention that there were chronologically contradictory tenets in the Buddha’s Dharma. There are no contradictions present in the Dharma of the Buddha between what came at the beginning and what followed later on. It is only because you and your cohorts do not understand the concepts involved in the Buddha’s Dharma that you have the opinion that it is inherently contradictory.

This path leading to the realization of nirvāṇa had not been either proclaimed or realized by anyone during the entire time between Kāśyapa Buddha’s nirvāṇa on forward to the present. It was for this reason that the Buddha declared, “I am he who has newly attained the path.” In other places, he also said, “I have attained the ancient path.” The path is that which was previously realized by Dīpaṃkara Buddha and the other buddhas of the past, namely the eightfold path of the Āryas that is able to lead one to nirvāṇa. It is because, in all these cases, it is but a single path relying on but a single set of causes and conditions that it is referred to it as “the ancient path.” One should realize from this that the Buddha did obtain all-knowledge.

**Question:** As for the so-called “all-knowledge,” precisely what is it that constitutes all-knowledge? Is it really on the basis of knowing absolutely everything that it is referred to as “all-knowledge”?

**Response:** “All-knowledge” refers to knowing all that can be known. “What can be known” refers to the five categorical repositories of

dharmas, namely all past, future, and present dharmas, the dharmas that transcend the three periods of time, and the ineffable dharmas. That which is used in knowing these five categories of dharmas is cognition. Hence it is both cognition and those things that it knows that are referred to as the “all” [in the term “all-knowledge.”]

**Question:** As for this contention that it is both the faculty of cognition and those things it knows that together comprise the “all” [of all-knowledge], this is wrong. How so? This is but a singular dharma, this because that cognition that is capable of knowing is itself knowable as when people of the world speak of this person’s cognitive ability as sharp whereas that person’s cognitive ability is dull.

**Response:** Well, if as you state that “all” is itself just a singular entity, then it should be that those polar opposites such as “hot” and “cold” are but one thing. And so too it should be that “bright” and “dark,” “suffering” and “happiness,” and all polar opposites should in each case be but a single thing. But this is not the case. Therefore, one cannot claim that “all” is but a singular entity.

**Question:** That idea to which you are clinging is itself possessed of this same fault. If the faculty of cognition is one thing, then [that which it knows, namely] “suffering,” “happiness,” and so forth—those should all also be but singular entities, but in truth, they are not.

**Response:** I never claimed that everything that can be known is, [in aggregate], but one single thing. Now that idea to which *you* are clinging is indeed that everything [that can be known] *is* somehow, [in its collective aggregate], but a single thing. Therefore, [what I am saying] is not the same as that faulty concept you are proposing.

Furthermore, since you claim that [both of] these positions are equally at fault, that idea to which you are clinging is faulty. In a case where someone accepts that the idea he is proposing is faulty, his position is thereby refuted. Now, when you understand that the idea to which you have been clinging is faulty, you should not continue to claim that someone else is the party whose position is faulty. Hence, as for your contention that what I have set forth here is somehow possessed of the same fault that characterizes your position—this is wrong.

Moreover, if you claim that the two dharmas consisting of the faculty of cognition on the one hand and that which is known on the other are somehow but a single entity, then one should be able to use any particular knowable dharma to know phenomena like vases and robes and such, but in truth it is solely the faculty of cognition that can be used in the knowing of all things.

If you are going to claim that phenomena like vases and robes and such are no different from the faculty of cognition—this vase and robe and so forth—they are entirely unable to know any phenomenon at all. It immediately follows that it ought to be the case that they are different [from the faculty of cognition] and it is truly the case that one uses the faculty of cognition to know everything.

Because your position is faulty in these ways in place after place, you cannot thus claim that the constituent phenomena forming the “all” of all-knowledge are all collectively but a single thing.

So, again, the faculty of cognition and that which is known, these two things—they are what constitute the “all” of “all-knowledge,” this because they together constitute all dharmas. It is because of the Buddha’s knowing of all of these dharmas that he is known as the Tathāgata and is renowned as one who is possessed of all-knowledge. This omniscient man became possessed of all-knowledge because of the *vajra* samādhi. Therefore the *vajra* samādhi is indeed something that can be established. As for your initial contentions that the *vajra* samādhi cannot be established and that “all-knowledge” is also not something that can be established, these contentions are both wrong.

### The End of Chapter Twenty-Two

## Chapter 23:<sup>54</sup> Forty Dharmas Exclusive to Buddhas (Part 3)

### IV. CHAPTER 23: FORTY DHARMAS EXCLUSIVE TO BUDDHAS (PART 3)

#### A. 10) THOROUGH KNOWING OF MATTERS THAT ARE UNFIXED

As for knowing well the unfixed dharmas, the Tathāgata’s wisdom has achieved power within the sphere of all dharmas even at that point when they have not yet arisen, have not yet come forth, have not yet reached completion, have not become definitively fixed, and have not yet become clearly distinguishable. This is as stated in the *Sutra on the Buddha’s Distinguishing of Karma* wherein it states:

The Buddha told Ānanda, “There are people who practice good deeds with the body, who practice good deeds through speech, and who practice good deeds with the mind, and yet, when their lives come to an end, they then fall into the hells. There are yet other people who practice evil deeds with the body, who practice evil deeds through speech, and who practice evil deeds with the mind, and yet, when their lives come to an end, they are nonetheless reborn in the heavens.”

Ānanda addressed the Buddha and asked, “Why do events occur in this way?”

The Buddha replied, “It may have been that the causes and conditions associated with previous life karmic offenses or meritorious deeds had already ripened, whereas the karmic offenses or meritorious deeds of the present life had not yet ripened. Or, alternatively, when approaching the end of life, they gave rise to either right views or erroneous views that precipitated either wholesome or evil thoughts, this because the power of the thoughts produced as one approaches the moment of death—their power is immense.”<sup>55</sup>

Additionally, in the *Śuka Sutra*, it states:

Śuka, son of a brahmin, addressed the Buddha and asked, “Gotama, why is it that the brahmin laity are in some cases able to cultivate meritorious deeds and roots of goodness in a manner superior to that of some of those who have left the home life and become monastics?”

The Buddha replied, “For these sorts of matters, I do not present a fixed reply. There may be cases in which someone who has left behind the home life does not cultivate goodness and, as a consequence, in this endeavor, he does not equal the efforts of a given

householder. This is a case in which a householder is able to cultivate goodness in a manner superior to that of a particular monastic.”

Furthermore, the *Great Nirvāṇa Sutra* states that the city of Pāṭaliputra is bound to be destroyed by one of three circumstances: by flood, by fire, or by a conspiracy between insiders and outsiders.

Also, [another example of an unfixed statement] arose because of a *brahmacārin* named Patikaputra about which the Buddha said:

As for this naked ascetic, the *brahmacārin* named Patikaputra, if he fails to relinquish this statement, these thoughts, and these wrong views, then it will be impossible for him to come and appear before me. He will either be trapped by a broken rope or prevented from leaving by a broken body. In any case, he will never be able to arrive here in the presence of the Buddha.

Additionally, in the *Sutra on the Analogy of the Raft*, the Buddha said:

This Dharma of mine is extremely deep. It is by resort to expedients that I enable even those who are shallow to easily reach an understanding of it. If there be anyone possessed of a straightforward mind who is willing to practice in accordance with the teachings, he will gain one of two kinds of benefit from this, either the cessation of the contaminants in this present lifetime or, in the event that he doesn't achieve the cessation of the contaminants, he will still succeed in attaining the path of the non-returner (*anāgāmin*).<sup>56</sup>

Also, in the *Ekottara Āgama's Shejiali Sutra*,<sup>57</sup> the Buddha told Ānanda:

As for whosoever deliberately undertakes the requisite karmic actions, none among them will fail to gain the karmic rewards and thus achieve success in the path, whether that be through receiving the results of present-life karma in this present life, whether that be through receiving them in the next birth, or whether that be through receiving them in subsequent lives.<sup>58</sup>

In addition, we also have this statement in the *Ekottara Āgama's Afuluo Sutra*:<sup>59</sup> “The Buddha told the bhikshus, ‘When evil people die, they may become animals or they may fall into the hells. Good people will be reborn either in the heavens or among humans.’”

Also, in the *Prince Fearless Sutra*, it states:

Prince Fearless addressed the Buddha, saying, “Does the Buddha not have instances in which what he proclaims is able to cause others to become angry?”

The Buddha replied, “Prince, this is an unfixed matter. It may happen that the Buddha, motivated by pity, will influence someone to become angry with the intended result that they will there-



by plant the causes and conditions for goodness. This is analogous to a wet-nurse having to use a crooked finger to clear an infant's mouth of some dangerous object. Although it may inflict injury, it is done in order to prevent a calamity."<sup>60</sup>

There is also the statement recorded in the Abhidharma: "Beings fall into three groups. From the [karmically] indefinite group, they may fall into the definitely deviant group or the definitely righteous group."<sup>61</sup>

There are several thousand or even myriads of similar such types of unfixed phenomena that are cited within the four repositories of the Dharma.<sup>62</sup>

**Question:** If a person's wisdom is unfixed and characterized by indefinite thought that takes a given circumstance to perhaps be this way or perhaps not be this way, then this is not someone who is omniscient. One who is omniscient would not make two different statements [with regard to a single matter], but rather would instead be able to make definitive pronouncements, pronouncements that are utterly clear. Because of this, "thoroughly knowing unfixed matters" cannot be referred to as a dharma exclusive to the Buddha.

**Response:** Unfixed matters are such that they may either be this way or not this way. It is because they develop in accordance with a multiplicity of causes and conditions that one should not make definite pronouncements about them.

Moreover, were one to offer definite answers regarding indefinite phenomena, then that itself would indicate that one is *not* omniscient. Consequently, in assessing unfixed phenomena, it is essential to employ the knowledge of unfixed matters. Hence there is this exclusive dharma referred to as "the knowledge of unfixed matters."

Additionally, if one were to claim definitive knowledge with respect to all dharmas, then one would fall into the erroneous determinist fallacy. If all dharmas really were already definitely fixed, then all that one does would not require any human effort and skillful means to bring it about. This idea is as set forth here:

If good or bad experiences were already definitely determined, then the character of a person's efforts should be fixed as well.

There would be no need for any of the causal factors

involved in the skillful means that one uses in one's cultivation.

Moreover, it is already manifestly clear that if one fails to take care with regard to one's personal behavior, then one will bring about manifold sufferings, whereas, if one is guarded with respect to one's personal behavior, then one will enjoy peace and benefit as a result of doing so.

Also, this is just as in all sorts of endeavors involved in carrying on one's livelihood wherein, on the one hand, one is required to endure a good deal of weariness and suffering to later acquire a reward in the form of all manner of wealth and happiness, whereas, on the other hand, someone else is able to simply remain still and silent in this present life, doing nothing whatsoever, only to then reap karmic rewards. So it is that there are these unfixed circumstances. It is because they are cognizant of these unfixed circumstances that we can know that the Buddhas possess the knowledge of what is unfixed.

**Question:** Whether or not you personally take care and whether or not you make a direct personal effort, these unfixed circumstances will still occur. On the one hand there are those who skillfully defend against untoward developments and yet still end up being subjected to intense anguish while on the other hand there are those who do not defend against such exigencies at all and yet do not encounter any intense anguish at all. Also, there are those who, in their diligence, undergo much weariness and pain, but still do not obtain the fruits of their efforts, whereas there are others who are not the least bit diligent and make no particular effort and, even so, they still manage to gain fruits [otherwise] associated with making an effort. These matters are all unfixed.

**Response:** Your statement simply serves to cooperate in the establishment of my position regarding unfixed matters. If these unfixed matters do indeed exist, then this wisdom that is cognizant of whatsoever is unfixed should exist. I never claimed that, if someone failed to guard against untoward events they would always be subjected to suffering. Nor did I ever claim that, without the expenditure of effortful action, one would necessarily be able to enjoy fruitful results. There are those people who, despite making an effort, are still blocked from the enjoyment of happiness by karmic obstacles originating in earlier lifetimes. I never claimed that all cases were necessarily this way. Therefore the challenges that you have posed on this topic are wrong.

This is what is meant [when it is said] with regard to unfixed circumstances that it is the Buddhas alone who possess complete knowledge of what is unfixed.

B. 11) THOROUGH KNOWING OF FORMLESS ABSORPTION PHENOMENA

As for knowing the formless realm stations, *śrāvaka* disciples and *pratyekabuddhas* know a lesser portion of the beings and dharmas associated with the formless realm stations of existence whereas the Buddhas, the Bhagavats, have a perfectly complete knowledge of the

beings and dharmas associated with the formless realm stations of existence.

Regarding these formless realm stations of existence, the Buddhas know:

- That a certain number of beings are born into this station;
- That a certain number of beings are born into that station;
- That a certain number of beings are born into the station associated with the first formless absorption;
- That a certain number of beings are born into the second station;
- That a certain number of beings are born into the third station;
- That a certain number of beings are born into the fourth station;
- That a certain number of beings have dwelt there for a particular amount of time since they were born there;
- That a certain number of beings, after a particular period of time, will fall away from that realm;
- That a certain number of beings will enjoy a maximum lifespan of a particular amount of time;
- That a certain number of beings will have a definitely fixed lifespan;
- That a certain number of beings will enjoy a lifespan the length of which is not definitely fixed;
- That a certain number of beings will be born here after their lifetimes in the desire realm have come to an end;
- That a certain number of beings will be born here after their lifetimes in the form realm have come to an end;
- That a certain number of beings will return to be reborn here after their lifetimes in this formless realm have come to an end;
- That a certain number of beings will be born here directly after their lives in the human realm come to an end;
- That a certain number of beings will be reborn here directly after their lives in the heavens have come to an end;
- That, when the lives of these particular beings end here, they will then take birth in the desire realm, that they will then take birth in the form realm, or that they will then take birth in the formless realm;
- That, when the lives of these particular beings end here, they will then take birth in the celestial realm rebirth destiny, that they will then take birth in the human realm rebirth destiny, that they will then take birth in the *asura* realm rebirth destiny, or that they will then take birth in the rebirth destinies of the hell realms, the animal realms, or the hungry ghost realms;
- That these particular beings will enter nirvāṇa in that particular place;

That a particular group of beings are all merely common people;  
 That a particular group of beings are *ārya* disciples of buddhas;  
 That a particular group of beings are [buddhas'] disciples who are  
 common people [that have not yet become *āryas*];  
 That a particular group of beings will achieve success in the Śrāvaka  
 Disciple Vehicle;  
 That a particular group of beings will achieve success in the  
 Pratyekabuddha Vehicle;  
 That a particular group of beings will all achieve success in the Great  
 Vehicle;  
 That a particular group of beings will fail to achieve success in the  
 Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle;  
 That a particular group of beings will fail to achieve success in the  
 Pratyekabuddha Vehicle and will also fail to achieve success in the  
 Great Vehicle;  
 That a particular group of beings will develop their practice to the  
 point of reaching nirvāṇa;  
 That a particular group of beings will fail to develop their practice to  
 the point where they reach nirvāṇa;  
 That a particular group of beings will pursue a superior level of prac-  
 tice;  
 And that a particular group of beings are all disciples of a particular  
 buddha.

The Buddhas also know:

That this particular meditative absorption is one in which one is  
 exposed to delectably blissful experiences;<sup>63</sup>  
 That in this particular meditative absorption there will be no expo-  
 sure to delectably blissful experiences;  
 [That this particular meditative absorption] is wholesome or is  
 merely neutral;  
 That in this particular meditative absorption one may successfully  
 sever a certain number of fetters;  
 And that this particular meditative absorption is superior, is mid-  
 dling, or is inferior.

To summarize, only the Buddhas, by employing their knowledge of all  
 modes are able to clearly distinguish which of these formless-realm  
 meditative absorptions are greater or lesser, which are deeper or shall-  
 lower, which involve mental dharmas, which involve dharmas not  
 associated with the mind, which are acquired as resultant effects [of  
 previous karma], which are not acquired as resultant effects [of previ-  
 ous karma], and so forth. This is what is meant when it is said that the

Buddhas thoroughly know the stations of existence corresponding to the formless meditative absorptions.

C. 12) THE KNOWLEDGE OF ALL MATTERS RELATED TO ETERNAL CESSATION

As for [the completely penetrating knowledge of all] dharmas pertaining to cessation, the Buddhas possess a penetrating knowledge of the *pratyekabuddhas* and arhats who have entered nirvāṇa either in the past or present eras. This is as recorded in the sutras where it states:

Bhikshus, ninety-one kalpas prior to this “Worthy Kalpa” (*bhadra-kalpa*), Vipaśyin Buddha appeared. After thirty-one kalpas, there followed two more buddhas, the first of whom was Sikhin and the second of whom was Viśvabhū. Then, in this Worthy Kalpa, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, and Kāśyapa Buddha emerged.<sup>64</sup>

Just such great knowledge and vision regarding all buddhas of the past should be discussed [more extensively] herein in relation to this sutra.<sup>65</sup> It also reaches to those *śrāvaka* disciples who have entered the nirvāṇa without residue and extends also to the *pratyekabuddha* named “Success,” to the one named “Floral Insignia,” to the one named “Seer of Dharma,” to the one named “Dharma Basket,” to the one named “Delightful Vision,” to the one named “Stainless,” to the one named “Free of Gain,” and to the other such *pratyekabuddhas* as well. So it is that the Buddhas possess a completely penetrating knowledge of those who have entered the nirvāṇa without residue.<sup>66</sup>

Additionally, in cases where they have not yet entered final nirvāṇa, but rather still abide in the nirvāṇa with residue, the Buddhas possess a penetratingly comprehensive knowledge with regard to the utter ending of all conditions associated with taking birth. [These matters] also pertain to their penetrating knowledge of [the phenomena associated with] cessation.

This is as recorded in the sutras wherein it states, “The Buddha told Ānanda, ‘I entirely know with respect to this person that he no longer has even the slightest darkness. This person has definitely put an end to these particular inward dharmas. When this person reaches the end of this life, he will enter nirvāṇa.’” This too is included in what is meant by “having knowledge of cessation.”<sup>67</sup>

Also, regarding other people’s penetrating comprehension of the four truths, he is able to know their circumstances. This too is included in what is meant by “having knowledge of cessation.”

As it is said in the sutras, “Why should I not simply resort to expedients to cause this person in this very place to gain the liberation associated with ending the contaminants?”

And as the Buddha told Ānanda, “You delight in *dhyāna* concentration and delight in cutting off the fetters.” These circumstances too are associated with what is meant by having a completely penetrating knowledge of cessation.

This is also as illustrated in the Buddha’s statement to Śāriputra, “I know *nirvāṇa*, know the path leading to the realization of *nirvāṇa*, and know those beings who will arrive at the realization of *nirvāṇa*.”<sup>68</sup>

Such sutras as we have cited herein should all be discussed at greater length. The ideas cited above are indicative of what is meant by all buddhas possessing the penetrating comprehension of all matters having to do with cessation.

#### D. 13) THOROUGH KNOWING OF NON-FORM DHARMAS UNRELATED TO MIND

As for thorough knowing of the non-form dharmas unassociated with the mind, roots of goodness associated with the moral precepts influence all of those non-form dharmas unassociated with the mind such as the moral regulations requiring wholesome actions and the moral regulations prohibiting bad actions. *Śrāvaka* disciples and *pratyekabuddhas* are unable to possess a completely penetrating comprehension of such matters. The Buddhas, however, are so well able to penetratingly comprehend them that these become as manifestly clear to them as if they were right before their very eyes. This is because they have perfected the foremost power of wisdom with respect to dharmas unassociated with the mind.

**Question:** Moral regulations requiring wholesome actions and moral regulations prohibiting bad actions are form dharmas. Why do you refer to them as “non-form” dharmas?

**Response:** Moral regulations requiring wholesome actions and moral regulations prohibiting bad actions are of two kinds, namely those involving actions and those not involving actions. Those involving actions are within the sphere of form dharmas whereas those not involving actions are “non-form” dharmas. As for those non-form dharmas not involving actions, employing his exclusive power of knowing, the Buddha is able to have a clear and present knowledge of them whereas others are compelled to rely upon inferential knowledge to understand them.

**Question:** Are the Buddhas only able to thoroughly know the non-form dharmas unassociated with the mind while not being able to thoroughly know the dharmas associated with the mind?

**Response:** If one already possesses a penetrating comprehension of the unassociated dharmas, then there is no need even to bring up the associated dharmas. It is as if we were speaking of an archer able to

pierce a single fine feather [floating through the air]. One would have no need in such a case to inquire if his arrow might be able to hit something large.

Furthermore, *śrāvaka* disciples and *pratyekabuddhas* are able to employ their sixth consciousness to know but seven among the seven hundred unassociated dharmas, namely: first, names; second, characteristic marks; third, meanings; fourth, impermanence; fifth, production; sixth, non-production; and seventh, crossing on beyond. The Buddhas, however, are able to employ their sixth consciousness to know every one of them. The Buddhas also know the marks of the four truths as well as the mundane dharmas. It is for these reasons that it is said that the Buddhas thoroughly know the non-form dharmas unassociated with the mind.

E. 14) THE GREAT POWERS PĀRAMITĀ

As for the powers *pāramitā*, [the Buddhas] gain the power of the knowledge of all modes with respect to all knowable dharmas without exception and are assisted in this by the ten powers, the four fearlessnesses, and the four bases of meritorious qualities. Also, it is due to having gained the ten powers that the Buddhas are therefore able to perfect the powers *pāramitā*. This power is increased in the sixteenth mind-moment [involved in achieving the direct seeing of the path]. All-knowledge is always present in the person of the Buddha until he attains the *nirvāṇa* without residue. It is because of this that he gains the unimpeded knowledge of all dharmas.

F. 15) THE FOUR UNIMPEDED KNOWLEDGES PĀRAMITĀ

As for the *pāramitā* of the [four] unimpeded knowledges (*pratisaṃvid*), they are unimpeded knowledge with respect to: dharmas (*dharmaprasaṃvid*), meaning (*artha-prasaṃvid*), language (*nirukti-prasaṃvid*), and eloquence (*pratibhāna-prasaṃvid*). [The Buddhas] possess an unlimited penetrating comprehension of these four dharmas that is unimpeded in its implementation. As described in the sutras:<sup>69</sup>

The Buddha told the bhikshus, “There are four of the Tathāgata’s disciples who have perfected the foremost power of mindfulness, power of wisdom, and power of endurance so consummately that they are like a skilled archer who can shoot any single tree leaf without difficulty. Even if these disciples were to all come forth and pose challenging questions on the four stations of mindfulness, setting aside the time required for drink, food, toilet and sleep, I could always and incessantly respond to their questions for a hundred years during which the Tathāgata would always reply with inexhaustible eloquence and wisdom.”

Here the Buddha, with his characteristically scant wish to do so, discussed his own implementation of these knowledges. Supposing that there were a number of great trichiliocosms as numerous as all the atoms in all four continents of all worlds in a great trichiliocosm, supposing also that all those world systems were filled with beings all of whom were the likes of Śāriputra and the *pratyekabuddhas*, and suppose too that all of these men employed their perfected knowledges and eloquence to pose difficult questions to the Tathāgata on the four stations of mindfulness, doing so to the exhaustion of lifetimes extending to a number of kalpas as numerous as all the aforementioned atoms—the Tathāgata would still be able to reply to their questions on the meanings involved in the four stations of mindfulness, expounding on their meaning without redundancy and with inexhaustible eloquence.<sup>70</sup>

Now, as for the unimpeded knowledge with respect to dharmas, [the Buddhas] are well able to distinguish all details involved in the designations of dharmas with an unimpededly penetrating comprehension.

As for the unimpeded knowledge with respect to meaning, they are able to bring to bear an unimpededly penetrating comprehension of the meanings associated with those dharmas.

In the case of their unimpeded knowledge with respect to language, the Buddhas are able to accord with the languages and phrases through which the various sorts of beings are caused to understand those meanings, doing so with an unimpededly penetrating comprehension.

Regarding their unimpeded knowledge as it applies to eloquence, during that entire time in which they are answering questions, they are skillful and clever in speaking on Dharma and they are able to carry on in this fashion endlessly. Whatever topic all other worthies and *āryas* are unable to treat exhaustively, it is only the Buddhas who can reach the limits of that topic.

It is on these bases that we speak of the *pāramitā* of the unimpeded knowledges.

#### G. 16) THE PĀRAMITĀ OF PERFECTLY COMPLETE REPLIES AND PREDICTIONS

Regarding the *pāramitā* of perfection in the answering of questions, the Buddha is well able to answer in all situations involving the posing of difficult questions. And why is this so? It is because, in the four types of responses, he remains utterly free of erroneous or disordered presentations, because he well knows the conceptual meanings, because he has perfected the *pāramitā* of preserving the undamaged meaning, and because he delights in a profound knowing of the natures of



all beings, what they themselves practice, and what they themselves find pleasing. This is illustrated by the instance in which Śāriputra addressed the Buddha, saying:

Bhagavat, when the Buddha discourses on the good Dharma, many are the beings who, upon hearing this, then gain realizations. Having gained such realizations, their minds become free of all craving. And because they become free of all craving, they no longer have anything in the world that they indulge. And once they no longer have anything at all that they indulge, their minds achieve a state of inward cessation.

The Buddha exhaustively knows, without exceptions, the unsurpassable aspects of the good Dharma. There is no one who is superior to him in this regard.

**Question:** You spoke of the four types of replies. What are those four?

**Response:**

First, the definitive reply.

Second, the distinguishing reply.

Third, the counter-questioning reply.

And, fourth, the reply that sets aside the question.

In the case of the definitive reply, this is illustrated by the instance where a bhikshu asked the Buddha, “Bhagavat, is it or is it not the case that there could be some form that is eternal and unchanging? Bhagavat, is it or is it not the case that there could be any feelings, perceptions, formative factors, or consciousnesses that are permanent and unchanging?”

The Buddha replied, saying, “Bhikshu, there is no form that is permanent and unchanging. There are no feelings, perceptions, formative factors, or consciousnesses that are permanent and unchanging.”

Cases such as these illustrate the “definitive reply.”

The distinguishing reply is illustrated by the instance where Potaliputta,<sup>71</sup> the Brahmācārin, inquired of Samiddhi,<sup>72</sup> asking: <sup>73</sup> “In instances where a person deliberately performs actions of body, speech, or mind, what sorts of karmic retributions ensue therefrom?”

Samiddhi responded with a definitive reply, saying, “In instances where persons deliberately perform actions of body, speech, or mind, they are bound to undergo retributions involving suffering and anguish.”

But this should have involved a distinguishing reply. This *brahmācārin* later came and asked the Buddha about this matter, to which the Buddha replied, saying, “Potaliputta, in instances where

someone deliberately performs actions of body, speech, or mind, this karma may result in undergoing painful retributions, in undergoing pleasurable retributions, or in undergoing retributions that are neither painful nor pleasurable. Pain-inducing actions result in undergoing painful retributions. Pleasure-inducing actions result in undergoing pleasurable retributions. Actions that are neither pain-inducing nor pleasure-inducing result in undergoing karmic retributions that are neither painful nor pleasurable.”

Scriptural passages such as these illustrate instances of the distinguishing reply.

The counter-questioning reply is illustrated by that instance in which the *brahmacārin* named Śreṇika inquired of the Buddha and the Buddha replied, “I shall now return the question to you whereupon you may reply in accordance with your own idea on this matter. Śreṇika, what do you think? Do physical forms constitute the Tathāgata, or not? Or is it that feelings, perceptions, formative factors, or consciousnesses constitute the Tathāgata?”

He replied, “No, Bhagavat. They do not.”

[The Buddha then asked him], “Is the Tathāgata apart from form, feelings, perceptions, formative factors, or consciousnesses, or not?”

He replied, “No, Bhagavat. He is not.”

These types of passages from scripture should be more extensively discussed. They illustrate what is meant by the counter-questioning reply.

As for the reply that sets aside the question, this applies to the response to questions regarding the fourteen classic erroneous views, namely:

Is the world eternal?

Is the world non-eternal?

Is the world both eternal and non-eternal?

Is the world neither eternal nor non-eternal?

Is the world bounded?

Is the world unbounded?

Is the world both bounded and unbounded?

Is the world neither bounded nor unbounded?

Does the Tathāgata exist after his nirvāṇa?

Does the Tathāgata not exist after his nirvāṇa?

Does the Tathāgata both exist and not exist after his nirvāṇa?

Does the Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist after his nirvāṇa?

Is the body identical with a spiritual soul (*jīva*)?

Is the body different from a spiritual soul?

As stated above, even in an instance where all beings possessed the wisdom and eloquence of the *pratyekabuddha* and they inquired of the Buddha on these four matters, the Buddha would in all cases adapt to their needs in answering their questions, offering replies that are neither excessive nor deficient. It is for these reasons that the Buddhas are said to possess the *pāramitā* of perfection in the answering of questions.

H. 17) INVULNERABILITY TO HARM BY ANYONE

There is no one whatsoever who can harm the Buddha. This is because he has gained that dharma by which one cannot be killed. There is no one who can cut off any part of the Buddha's body. He has sovereign mastery over whether he will live or die. This is as stated in scripture, wherein it states: "Were one to seek some method by which to inflict harm on the Buddha—there simply is no such possibility at all."

**Question:** Is the lifespan of a buddha fixed or is it unfixed?

**Response:** There are those who claim that it is unfixed. But if a buddha's lifespan were actually fixed, what difference then would there be between his case and that of all others who have fixed lifespans? Still, in truth, the lifespan of a buddha is not fixed. That there is no one who can harm a buddha—now *that* is extraordinary. There are those who say that the lifespan of a buddha is fixed. However, whereas others whose lifespans are fixed are indeed subject to having hands, feet, ears, and nose sliced off, the Buddha [is unique in that he] is entirely free of any such vulnerability.

**Question:** How is it that the Buddhas have this exclusive dharma of being invulnerable to being harmed?

**Response:** The inconceivability of the Buddhas can be understood by resort to analogy. Suppose for instance that all beings throughout the worlds of the ten directions were to have a given amount of power. Now, if a single *māra* could possess a certain amount of power, also suppose that each and every one of those beings throughout the ten directions was caused to possess powers like those of Māra, the Evil One. Even if all of those beings then joined in wishing to inflict harm on the Buddha, they would still be unable to move even a single hair on the Buddha's body. How much the less might they actually succeed in harming the Buddha.

**Question:** Well, if that is the case, how then could Devadatta have succeeded in injuring the Buddha?

**Response:** This question was already answered earlier. The Buddha wished to show beings the character of the three poisons. Even though

Devadatta had previously upheld the moral precepts and cultivated goodness, because he was attached to receiving offerings, he committing immensely evil deeds.

[The Buddha] also allowed this to happen in order to cause [beings] to realize that the mind of the Buddha does not vary in the way it regards any human or deva. His having compassion and pity for Devadatta on the one hand and Rāhula<sup>74</sup> on the other was the same as his equal regard for his own left and right eyes.

The Buddha always spoke of the mind of uniformly equal regard for everyone. He revealed his equality of regard at this time. When the devas and people observed this, they were struck by the extraordinary nature of this and thus felt even stronger resolute faith.

In addition, because of this, the devas of the long-life heavens could see that the Buddha was still bound to undergo retribution for bad karmic actions done in previous lives. Had he not undergone it now, they might have thought that bad actions could be free of corresponding karmic retributions. Because the Buddha wished to cut off their wrong views, he thereby revealed his own undergoing of this karmic retribution.

Furthermore, the Buddha's mind is no different in the presence of pain or pleasure. His mind is free of any concept of a self. This is because it is ultimately empty. Because his sense faculties have all been made pliant and imperturbable by change, he has no need to use expedients to separate from pain and enjoy pleasures. This is as described in the Bodhisattva canon where it states: "It was merely as an expedient that the Buddha manifested as subject to this experience." One should infer the broader implications of this.

The above points illustrate what is meant by the Buddha's exclusive dharma of being invulnerable to being killed or harmed.

#### I. 18) THEIR WORDS ARE NEVER SPOKEN WITHOUT A PURPOSE

In speaking on the Dharma, their words are never empty. All words spoken by the Buddhas have a corresponding intended effect. Therefore, when the Buddhas speak on Dharma, their words are never empty. And how is this so? Before the Buddhas begin to speak on Dharma, they first contemplate from root to branch where beings' minds abide and whether their fetters are thick or only scant. Thus they know the origins of their meritorious qualities in previous lives, observe the nature and strength of their karmic roots, and know:

Where and when beings [will encounter] obstacles;  
Whether they are susceptible to liberation through gentle teaching methods;

Whether they are susceptible to liberation through harsh teaching methods;

Whether they are susceptible to liberation through a combination of gentle and harsh teaching methods.<sup>75</sup>

Whether they need only a little bit of instigation to gain liberation;

Whether they require extensive distinguishing instructions to gain liberation;

That there are those who gain liberation through [teachings on] the aggregates, the sense bases, the sense realms, or the twelve links of conditioned co-production;

Whether they may gain access [to liberation] through the gateway of faith or through the gateway of wisdom;

That this person should gain liberation through the teaching of a buddha;

That this person should gain liberation through the teaching of a *śrāvaka* disciple;

That this person should gain liberation through some other set of conditions;

That this person should be able to gain success in the Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle;

That this person should be able to gain success in the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle;

That this person should be able to gain success in the Great Vehicle;

That this person has long practiced habitual greed, habitual hatred, and habitual delusion;

That this person has practiced habitual greed and hatred;

And that this person has practiced habitual greed and delusion.

In this way, they distinguish and determine with regard to each and every situation:

That this person has fallen into an annihilationist view;

That this person has fallen into an eternalist view;

That this person is for the most part attached to the view that seizes on the existence of a real self in association with the body [or any of the other four aggregates];<sup>76</sup>

That this person is most often habitually attached to extreme views;

That this person is most often habitually attached to the views that seize upon either prohibitions or on opinionated views;

That this person is for the most part habitually arrogant;

That this person is for the most part habitually inclined toward feelings of inferiority and the tendency to flattery and deviousness;

That this person's mind is mostly inclined toward doubt and regret.

That this person has developed a fondness for refined literary expressiveness;  
 That there are those who prize refinement in meanings and principles;  
 That there are those who delight in profundities;  
 That there are those who enjoy topics that are merely superficial;  
 That, in previous lifetimes, this person has accumulated the Dharma provisions requisite to success in the path;  
 That this person is accumulating the Dharma provisions for the path in this present lifetime;  
 That this person has only accumulated roots of goodness conducive to enjoying karmic rewards [from previous meritorious actions];  
 That this person has only accumulated roots of goodness associated with thorough understanding;  
 That this person should be able to rapidly become enlightened;  
 And that this person will require a long time before he can become enlightened.<sup>77</sup>

The Buddha first engages in investigative contemplation and assessment of individual circumstances and then, according with whichever approach is appropriate to instigate someone's liberation, he then speaks Dharma for them and thereby brings about their liberation.

It is as a consequence of this that every instance of the Buddha's speaking of Dharma is free of any merely empty discourse. This is as described in a sutra: "The Bhagavat first knows and sees and only then speaks Dharma. It is not the case that he speaks Dharma without first knowing and seeing."

J. 19) THEIR SPEECH IS FREE OF ERROR

Regarding the absence of errors and mistakes [in their speech], when the Buddhas speak Dharma, they do not commit any errors or make any mistakes. "Absence of errors" refers to there being no instances in which the meaning of what they say is contradictory. "Absence of mistakes" means they make no mistakes with regard to meanings.

It is because they do not make mistakes with regard to causes and conditions as they relate to the path that they are said to not make mistakes. It is because they do not commit errors with regard to causes and conditions as they relate to the fruits of the path that they are said to not commit any error.

It is because they are not deficient that they are said to not make mistakes and it is because they are not excessive that they are said to not commit any error.

This is accomplished through their possession of a penetrating comprehension of the four unimpeded knowledges, through their constant harmonization of mindfulness and stable wisdom, and through their utter abandonment of views associated with annihilationism, eternalism, acausality, erroneous causality, or other such wrong views.

In the Dharma that they speak, there is no cause by which people become perplexed. In whatsoever they say, there are no faults involving inconsistencies between what is set forth in the beginning and in the end.

Scriptures accordant with these concepts should be discussed more extensively herein. As it says in one of the sutras: “Bhikshus. When I speak Dharma for you, it is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end. The phrasings are good and the meanings are good. It possesses a singular purity free of any debasing admixture and it is perfectly complete in its proclamation of *brahmacharya*.”<sup>78</sup>

K. 20) COMPLETE USE OF THE THREE TURNINGS IN SPEAKING DHARMA

As regards the matter of [the Buddha’s] speaking of Dharma involving rarities, whomever they undertake to teach is immediately enabled to realize the fruits of the path. This is a rarity.

Whenever they provide a reply or offer a prediction, their statements are always genuine and do not differ [from actual circumstances]. This too is a rarity.

The Buddha has the path as the subject of his discourse. This path as it is proclaimed by the Buddha is not admixed with afflictions and is able to bring about the severance of the afflictions. This too is a rarity.

Whenever the Buddha speaks, benefit ensues from it and it never involves mere empty words. This too is a rarity.

Whenever a person applies mental diligence and vigor to the cultivation of the Buddha’s Dharma, he can cut off the unwholesome dharmas and bring about increase in the good dharmas. This too is a rarity.

There are three additional rarities: the rarity of displaying spiritual powers, the rarity of foretelling the content of others’ thoughts, and the rarity of being able to accomplish the transformational teaching of others. It is on the basis of these three sorts of rarities in the proclaiming of Dharma that the Buddha’s discourse on Dharma is said to be characterized by rarities.<sup>79</sup>

L. 21) THEY ARE THE GREAT GENERALS AMONG ALL ĀRYAS

Regarding [the Buddha’s] eminence as the most superior spiritual guide among all the Āryas, buddhas know what the minds of beings course in, know what they delight in, know whether their fetters are

deep or shallow, know whether their faculties are sharp or dull, and know whether their wisdom is superior, middling, or inferior. It is because they know these matters well and know them with penetrating comprehension that they are the most superior spiritual guides among all the Āryas.

They are also able to well know the characteristics of the four truths, and to well know all the general and specific characteristics of all dharmas.

It is also because, when they speak on the Dharma, their words are not empty and because, when they speak on the Dharma, they commit no errors and make no mistakes that they are therefore the most superior spiritual guides among all the Āryas.

**Question:** But the other four groups are also able to speak on the Dharma and thus refute the teachings of the non-Buddhists and thereby cause them to enter into the Dharma of the Buddha. Why then does one only speak of the Buddha as the most superior spiritual guide?

**Response:** This should be explained by an analogy. Suppose all beings possessed the wisdom powers of a *pratyekabuddha*. If all of these beings did not receive the intentional assistance of the Buddha and yet wished somehow to bring about the liberation of but a single person, this would be a complete impossibility. When all of these persons spoke Dharma, they would still be unable to cause the severance of a tiny fraction of even one of the formless realm fetters.

If, on the other hand, the Buddha wished to bring about the liberation of some being and then proceeded to say something, even those burdened with the erroneous views of the non-Buddhists, the dragons, the *yakṣas*, and the various other sorts of beings who do not understand the language of the Buddha—these would all still be caused to understand. Then all of these would in turn be able to teach countless other beings. And so this proceeds even to the point that, today, whenever those within the community of *śrāvaka* disciples cause beings to abide in the four fruits of the path, they are all emblematically representative of the Tathāgata as the most superior of all spiritual guides.

It is for these reasons that the Buddha is known as the most superior spiritual guide, and it is for these reasons that this is regarded as an exclusive dharma not held in common with the other *āryas*.

M. 22–25) THEY ARE ABLE TO REMAIN UNGUARDED IN FOUR WAYS

As for the four unguarded dharmas, the Buddhas are unguarded in their physical actions, are unguarded in their verbal actions, are unguarded in their mental actions, and are unguarded with respect to



the means for sustaining life. And why is this? These four matters are not protected from others' [knowledge]. They do not think, "Regarding my [actions of] body, speech, and mind, and my [means of sustaining] life—I fear that others might come to know about them."

And why is this? This is because, during the long night [of previous lifetimes], they have cultivated every sort of pure karmic deed and have always well seen, well known, and well severed every one of the dharmas associated with the afflictions. And this is because they have perfected every sort of peerless root of goodness, because they have so well practiced whatever dharma is amenable to practice, because they have reached the point where there is nothing about them the least bit worthy of criticism, and because they have utterly perfected the *pāramitā* of equanimity.

Now, on this matter of their "equanimity," when their eyes view form, they relinquish any thoughts of either distress or delight. And so it goes [with the other sense faculties and objects] up to and including the mind faculty's engagement with dharmas [as objects of mind]. In this connection, one would ideally also discuss here citations from such scriptures as the *Poheti* and *Uttara* sutras.<sup>80</sup>

N. 26–29) THEY POSSESS THE FOUR TYPES OF FEARLESSNESSES

Now, as for the four types of fearlessness....

**Question:** There is a single dharma known as "fearlessness." How is it that we here have four of them?

**Response:** It is because there are four matters in which there is an absence of doubt or fear that we therefore speak of four of them, as follows:<sup>81</sup>

First, as the Buddha told the bhikshus, "I myself here utter these truthful words: 'I am a man possessed of all-knowledge.' If anyone here, whether he be a *śramaṇa*, brahmin, deva, Māra, Brahmā, or other person possessed of worldly knowledge were to challenge this statement in a manner consistent with Dharma, claiming that I do not indeed possess a direct knowledge of this Dharma, I would not then experience in this challenge even the slightest sign of fearfulness, and it is because of not experiencing any such sign that I have become established in security and fearlessness in this regard." This is the first type of fearlessness. It is a result of exhaustively knowing all dharmas in accordance with reality.

As for the second type of fearlessness, the Buddha said, "I myself here utter these truthful words: 'I have brought all of the contaminants to an end.' If any *śramaṇa*, brahmin, deva, Māra, or Brahmā were to claim that these contaminants have not indeed been brought to an end,

I would not then experience in this challenge even the slightest sign of fearfulness.<sup>82</sup> It is because of not experiencing any such sign that I have become established in security and fearlessness in this regard.” This is the second type of fearlessness. It is a result of having thoroughly cut off all afflictions and having also cut off the habitual propensities associated with past afflictions.

As for the third [type of fearlessness], [the Buddha said], “I have proclaimed which dharmas constitute obstacles to realization of the path. If anyone herein, whether he be a *śramaṇa*, brahmin, deva, Māra, Brahmā, or other person possessed of worldly knowledge were to challenge this statement in a manner consistent with Dharma, claiming that, even though one might avail oneself of these dharmas, they would not be able to cause an obstacle to the path, I would not then experience in this challenge even the slightest sign of fearfulness. It is because of not experiencing any such sign that I have become established in security and fearlessness in this regard.” This is the third type of the fearlessness. It is a result of having thoroughly known those dharmas that constitute obstacles to the achievement of liberation.

As for the fourth [type of fearlessness, the Buddha said], “Whoever practices the path I have proclaimed, practicing it in accordance with the way I have explained the Dharma, will succeed in reaching the end of suffering. If any *śramaṇa*, brahmin, deva, Māra, Brahmā, or other person possessed of worldly knowledge were to challenge this statement in a manner accordant with Dharma, claiming that, although one might practice a dharma such as this in a manner consistent with the way it has been explained, one would be unable to reach the path that brings about the end of suffering, I would not then experience in this challenge even the slightest sign of fearfulness. It is because of not experiencing any such sign that I have become established in security and fearlessness in this regard.” This is the fourth type of fearlessness. It is a result of thoroughly knowing the path leading to the extinguishing of suffering.

All four of these types of fearlessness are referred to as “fearlessnesses” because they all involve leaving behind such characteristic signs as fearfulness, terror, or horripilation. They are also termed “fearlessnesses” because they are able to maintain within the Great Assembly an awe-inspiring power of virtue extraordinary in its excellence. They are also called “fearlessnesses” because they so well know how to respond to all sorts of questions. Here, one should extensively discuss citations from *The Sutra on the Convocation of the Devas*.<sup>83</sup>

**Question:** If the Buddhas are indeed possessed of all-knowledge, then they should be fearless in relation to all dharmas. Why is it then that we speak only of these four types [of fearlessness]?

**Response:** These serve to raise the major essential topics in order to introduce the most important instances. All other instances are similar to these.

O. 30–39) THEY POSSESS THE TEN POWERS

As for the ten powers of the Buddha, “power” refers to the inexhaustible energetic strength that assists them and makes them invulnerable to interference by anyone. Although there are ten designations in this regard, in truth, this involves a single type of knowledge that, because it takes ten different circumstances as objective conditions, [these ten exemplary manifestations] are known as “the ten powers.”

Because the knowledge of the Buddha takes all things as its objective conditions, it should be that there are countless powers. But it is because these ten powers are adequate to bring about the liberation of beings that we only speak of “the ten powers.” Through merely introducing these ten powers, one can then know the others by inference.

1. THE FIRST POWER

The first power is [the Buddha’s] definite and completely penetrating knowledge with respect to all dharmas of what does and does not constitute the cause. This is the first power. [This was the basis for, as cited earlier], the Buddha’s having said [in reference to the *brahmacārin* named Patikaputra], “If this crazy person does not relinquish these claims, does not relinquish these perverse views, and does not relinquish these thoughts, then, as for his being able to arrive here in the presence of the Buddha—this is an utter impossibility.”

[This is also the basis for] the Buddha’s having said to Ānanda:

“It is utterly impossible that two buddhas might arise in the world at the same time. However, it is indeed possible for a single buddha to come forth into the world.”<sup>84</sup> This was said solely with respect to the circumstance of a single buddha emerging in a single world. In truth, in all of the countless and limitless worlds throughout the ten directions, there are countless hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of buddhas simultaneously emerging throughout those worlds.

Additionally, the sutras state: “It is impossible that bad physical, verbal, and mental karmic actions might have excellent and desirable results. However, it is indeed possible that good physical, verbal, and mental karmic actions may have excellent and desirable results.”<sup>85</sup>

Here one should extensively discuss related scriptural citations from among the five categorical repositories of Dharma.

## 2. THE SECOND POWER

The second power is [the Buddha's] knowing in accordance with reality and with distinguishing clarity the place, the circumstances, and the karmic retributions associated with all past, future, and present karmic deeds along with all the dharmas that are involved in experiencing [those retributions].

If the Buddha wishes to know with regard to any being their past karmic deeds and their past karmic retributions, he is able to immediately know them. So too, he is immediately able to know:

- With respect to past karmic deeds, their retribution in the present;
- With respect to past karmic deeds, their retribution in the future;
- With respect to past karmic deeds, their retribution in the past;
- With respect to past karmic deeds, their retribution in both the past and the future;
- With respect to past karmic deeds, their retribution in both the past and the present;
- With respect to past karmic deeds, their retribution in both the future and the present;
- With respect to past karmic deeds, their retribution in the past, the future, and the present;
- With respect to present karmic deeds, their retribution in the present;
- With respect to present karmic deeds, their retribution in the future;
- With respect to present karmic deeds, their retribution in both the present and the future;
- And with respect to future karmic deeds, their retribution in the future.

There are all manner of such distinctions regarding the dharmas involved in undergoing karmic retributions. There are four dharmas categorizing such karmic retributions, namely:

- Undergoing blissful experiences in the present followed by undergoing suffering in future lifetimes;
- Undergoing suffering in the present followed by undergoing blissful experiences in future lifetimes;
- Undergoing blissful experiences in the present followed by blissful experiences in the future;
- And undergoing suffering in the present followed by undergoing suffering in the future as well.<sup>86</sup>

As regards [the Buddha's knowing] "the place," this refers to his knowing for any karmic deed the time and place [of its occurrence] as well as the precise place in which this retribution will be undergone.

As regards [the Buddha's] knowing "the circumstances," this refers to knowing the corresponding causes and conditions, knowing the three corresponding types of bad karmic roots, knowing whether the deed was primarily performed by oneself, or knowing whether the deed occurred for the most part through the instigation of someone else. The Buddha entirely knows all such causes and conditions associated with good and bad karmic deeds.

As regards [the Buddha's knowing] "the karmic retributions," he knows that all karmic deeds have their corresponding karmic retributions. For instance, good karmic deeds may result in being reborn in a good place or in attaining nirvāṇa, whereas bad karmic deeds may result in being reborn in any of the wretched destinies.

The Buddha knows entirely with respect to all these karmic deeds their roots, their branches, their associated causes and conditions, and whether they were done at one's own behest or at the behest of others. It is because this power of knowledge does not diminish that it is referred to as a "power."

### 3. THE THIRD POWER

The third power is the Buddha's knowing in accordance with reality the *dhyānas*, the meditative concentrations, the liberations, and the *samādhis*, together with their corresponding marks of defilement and purity.

"*Dhyānas*" refers to the four *dhyānas*. "Meditative concentrations" refers to the four formless-realm meditative concentrations, the four immeasurable minds, and other such states, all of which are referred to as "meditative concentrations." "Liberations" refers to the eight liberations. As for "samādhis" all of the other meditative concentrations aside from the *dhyānas* and the liberations are referred to as "samādhis."

There are others who claim that the three gates to liberation, meditative concentrations still characterized by initial ideation (*vitarka*) and discursive thought (*vicāra*), meditative concentrations characterized by the absence of initial ideation and the presence of discursive thought, and meditative concentrations devoid of both initial ideation and discursive thought—these may all be referred to as "samādhis."

There are yet others who claim that "meditative concentrations" are relatively minor [meditative states] whereas "samādhis" are relatively major. Therefore, one may refer to all meditative concentrations realized by any buddha or bodhisattva as constituting a "samādhi."

All four of these constituent categories are subsumed within all explanations of "*dhyāna pāramitā*."

As for “defilement,” this refers to [meditative states characterized by] the experience of delectably pleasurable (*āsvādana*) sensations whereas “purity” refers here to not indulging delectably pleasurable sensations.

Then again, “defilement” may refer to any meditative concentration still characterized by the contaminants (*āsrava*) whereas “purity” may refer to any meditative concentration characterized by the absence of the contaminants.

As for the distinctions among the samādhis, liberations, and so forth, [the Buddha] knows with distinguishing clarity these sorts of *dhyāna* meditation states.

#### 4. THE FOURTH POWER

The fourth power is [the Buddha’s] knowing in accordance with reality the relative superiority or inferiority of the faculties of other beings and other personages.

“Other beings” refers to common persons. “Other personages” refers here to the stream enterer and the other classes of worthies and *āryas*. There may be others who interpret “beings” as a reference not only to common persons, but also even to those practitioners still involved in the learning stages, this because all of these have still not succeeded in putting an end to all of the contaminants. For them, “other personages” is a reference reserved for arhats and such, this because they have utterly ended all afflictions.

Yet others point out that both “beings” and “other personages” are but a single category and it is only the designations themselves that differ.

As for their “faculties,” in this context they refer to faith, vigor, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom and *not* to the sense faculties such as the eye and so forth [as the word might otherwise signify].

“Superior,” as it applies to these faculties, refers to faculties that are fiercely sharp and which have the capacity to enable the attainment of enlightenment. “Inferior,” on the other hand, refers to [faculties] that are dim, dull, and inadequate to enable one to take up [the practice of] the path.

The Buddha knows the relative superiority and inferiority of these two types of faculties and knows these matters in accordance with reality and in a manner free of any sort of error.

#### 5. THE FIFTH POWER

The fifth power is [the Buddha’s] knowing in accordance with reality that in which the minds of other beings and other personages delight. “That in which they delight” refers to whatever endeavors they esteem

and are inclined to engage in. For instance, there are those people who esteem wealth and worldly pleasures, whereas there are others who deeply esteem karmic merit and the practice of good dharmas. The Buddha knows all of these matters in accordance with reality.

#### 6. THE SIXTH POWER

The sixth power is the Buddha's knowing in accordance with reality the different types of natures of beings in the world as well as the countless [distinctions among those] natures. "Different types of natures" refers to the myriad variations in these natures. "Countless natures" is a reference to the countless distinctions in each and every one of these types of natures. As for the term "nature," it is because one's mind has always habitually practiced [particular sorts of endeavors] and has always delighted in practicing and cultivating them throughout one's past lives right up until the very present—it is for this reason that they therefore form the basis of one's "nature." The Buddha knows in accordance with reality these two categories of natures, the good and the bad.

#### 7. THE SEVENTH POWER

The seventh power is [the Buddha's] knowing in accordance with reality the paths leading to all destinations. As for "the paths leading to all destinations," those are the means by which one may succeed in acquiring all meritorious qualities. These paths are referred to as "the paths leading to all destinations."

These include, for instance, the five-factor samādhi,<sup>87</sup> the five-fold awareness samādhi,<sup>88</sup> the eight-fold path of the Āryas, all dharmas subsumed by the path of the Āryas, or the four bases of psychic power, the latter as cited in a sutra that says: "If a bhikshu cultivates the four bases of psychic power, there is no benefit that he will not acquire."

There are others who claim that this may also refer to the four *dhyānas*, as cited in a sutra that says: "When a bhikshu gains the four *dhyānas*, his mind comes to abide with stability and purity in a single place in which he then succeeds in ridding himself of all afflictions and in destroying all obstacles. It then becomes well-regulated so that it becomes serviceable and no longer subject to movement or distraction."

#### 8. THE EIGHTH POWER

The eighth power is the [Buddha's] immediate ability to know past-life matters whenever he chooses to direct his awareness to events from previous lives. If the Buddha wishes to recall any of the countless and limitless lifetimes of either himself or all other beings, he then

knows all of these matters entirely. There are no instances in which he is unable to know some particular matter even beyond a number of kalpas equal to the number of sands in the Ganges River.

He knows where this person was born, what his name was, whether he was of noble or lowly caste, what he drank and ate, how he sustained his life, whether he experienced suffering or happiness, the types of endeavors in which he engaged, the karmic retributions that he underwent, what his mind engaged in, and from whence he originally came. He knows all such matters.

#### 9. THE NINTH POWER

The ninth power is the [Buddha's] ability to see with the heavenly eye purified beyond the power of man's eyes the beings of the six destinies taking on bodies in accordance with their karmic deeds.

A *śrāvaka* disciple possessed of great powers uses the heavenly eye to see the lands contained within a small chiliocosm and also sees when the beings therein are born and when they die.

A lesser *pratyekabuddha* sees the lands of a thousand small chiliocosms and sees when the beings therein are born and when they die.

A *pratyekabuddha* possessed of middling powers sees the lands contained in a hundred myriads of small chiliocosms and sees when the beings therein are born and when they die.

A *pratyekabuddha* possessed of great powers sees the lands contained in a great trichiliocosm and sees the destinies to which they proceed when they die and are reborn.

The Buddhas, the Bhagavats, see a countless, boundless, and inconceivable number of worlds and also see when the beings therein are born and when they die.

#### 10. THE TENTH POWER

As for the tenth power, it is the [Buddha's] ending of all contaminants, including the contaminant of sensual desire, the contaminant of [craving for] existence, and the contaminant of ignorance, these together with the utter ending of all afflictions or affliction-associated energetic propensities. This is the tenth power.

#### P. 40) THEY HAVE ACHIEVED UNIMPEDED LIBERATION

As for unimpeded liberation, there are three types of liberations. The first is the liberation from the obstacles of the afflictions. The second is the liberation from the obstacles to meditative concentration. The third is the liberation from the obstacles to [the knowledge of] all dharmas. Among these, an arhat who has achieved liberation through wisdom gains liberation from the obstacles of the afflictions. Both the



doubly-liberated arhat and the *pratyekabuddha* succeed in achieving both the liberation from the obstacles of the afflictions and the liberation from the obstacles to the *dhyāna* concentrations.

It is only the Buddhas who have completely achieved all three of these liberations, namely liberation from the obstacles of the afflictions, liberation from the obstacles to acquisition of the *dhyāna* concentrations, and the liberation from the obstacles to [the knowledge of] all dharmas. It is because he brings together all three of the liberations that the Buddha is designated as having achieved unimpeded liberation. This [unimpeded liberation] always accompanies the mind all the way up to the point of entry into the nirvāṇa without residue.

Q. SUMMARY DISCUSSION OF THE DHARMAS EXCLUSIVE TO THE BUDDHA

These forty dharmas exclusive to the Buddhas provide a general introduction to an entryway into the dharmas of the Buddha. They are discussed here because this allows beings to thereby acquire an understanding of them. However, those [exclusive dharmas] that remain undiscussed herein are innumerable and boundless. Specifically, these include the following:

- 1) [The Buddha] never departs from wisdom.
- 2) He never errs in knowing the right time.
- 3) He has extinguished all habitual karmic propensities.
- 4) He has gained the meditative concentration *pāramitā*.
- 5) All of his meritorious qualities are possessed of extraordinary supremacy.
- 6) He has perfected the *pāramitā* of always according in his actions with what is appropriate to the circumstances.
- 7) No one is able to view the very top of [the light rays radiating from] the crown of his head.
- 8) No one is his equal.
- 9) No one is able to surpass him.
- 10) He is superior to all beings in the world.
- 11) His attainment of the path is not learned from anyone else.
- 12) He never turns away from the Dharma.
- 13) Whoever else might claim to be a buddha is forever unable to enter the presence of the Buddha.
- 14) He has perfected the dharma of never retreating.
- 15) He has acquired the great compassion.
- 16) He has acquired the great kindness.
- 17) He is the foremost among all whose teachings one may accept in faith.

- 18) He is the foremost among those [who are worthy of] fame and offerings.
- 19) No guru who is a contemporary of the Buddha is equal to the Buddha.
- 20) No guru gains a community of disciples equal to that of the Buddha.
- 21) The supreme refinement of his appearance causes all who see him to be delighted.
- 22) Whoever is sent forth as an emissary of a Buddha cannot be harmed by anyone.
- 23) No one is able to injure anyone whom the Buddha has set out to liberate.
- 24) From the very moment he first brings forth a thought, he is able to sever all thought-related fetters.
- 25) He never misses the right time [to provide appropriate instruction to] beings who are capable of achieving liberation.
- 26) In the sixteenth [mind-moment involved in the acquisition of] wisdom, a buddha attains *anuttarasamyakṣambodhi*.
- 27) He is the foremost among the world's fields of merit.
- 28) He emanates measureless radiant light.
- 29) His actions differ from those of anyone else.
- 30) He possesses the [physical] marks that are associated with a hundred-fold generation of merit.<sup>89</sup>
- 31) He has measureless and boundless roots of goodness.
- 32) When he enters the womb—
- 33) When he is born—
- 34) When he achieves buddhahood—
- 35) When he turns the wheel of the Dharma—
- 36) When he relinquishes the possibility of the long lifespan—
- 37) And when he enters nirvāṇa—[on all these occasions], he is able to cause all the worlds throughout the great trichiliocosm to shake.
- 38) [On all of the above occasions], he sets quaking the countless palaces of the *māras*, causing them to lose their awesome power and be struck with terror.
- 39) [When he achieves buddhahood], the world-protecting heavenly kings, Śakra, ruler of the devas, the Yāma Heaven King, the Tuṣita Heaven King, the Nirmāṇarati Heaven King, the Paranirmita Vaśavartin Heaven King, the Brahma Heaven King, the devas of the Pure Abodes, and the other devas—they all simultaneously assemble and request the turning of the Dharma wheel.
- 40) The Buddha's body is as solid as the body of Nārāyaṇa.<sup>90</sup>

- 41) When the moral precepts have not yet been formulated, he is the one who first formulates the moral precepts.
- 42) Whenever he takes up any endeavor, his power in accomplishing this is superior to that of any man.
- 43) During the entire time the Bodhisattva is residing in his mother's womb, she loses all thoughts of defiling attachment for men.
- 44) His power is such that he is able to bring about the rescue and liberation of all beings.

There are measurelessly and innumerably many dharmas such as these that are exclusive to the Buddha. Because it would interfere with the explanation of other matters, there is no need to present an extensive discussion of them here. Although these dharmas as found in the Dharma of the Śrāvaka Disciples do resemble dharmas of the Buddha, due to dissimilarities in the degree of superiority or inferiority, there are distinct differences [in how they are described].

Moreover, to summarize, all of the dharmas of the Buddhas are measureless, limitless, inconceivable, of the foremost degree of rarity, and such that no other being is able to have them in common [with any buddha]. Even if all the countless beings in the worlds of all the great trichiliocosms throughout the ten directions possessed wisdom comparable to the king of the Great Brahma Heaven, comparable to a great *pratyekabuddha*, or comparable to Śāriputra, and one were somehow able to collect all this wisdom together in a single person—even if that one person then wished to approach the most minutely small fraction of these forty dharmas exclusive to the Buddhas—this would still be an utter impossibility. He could not even measure up to but one part in a hundred thousand myriads of *koṭis* of parts of just a single one of those dharmas.

The Buddhas possess the power of just such an immeasurable and limitless number of meritorious qualities. And why is this so? It is because they have securely established themselves in the four bases of meritorious qualities for a countless number of great kalpas during which they have deeply practiced the six *pāramitās* and have become well able to completely equip themselves with all dharmas practiced by the bodhisattva. Because [these dharmas] are not held in common with any other beings, so too, the fruits resulting [from their practice] are not held in common with any beings, either.

### The End of Chapter Twenty-Three

## Ch. 24: Verses Offered in Praise

### V. CHAPTER 24: VERSES OFFERED IN PRAISE

#### A. THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAISES TO MINDFULNESS-OF-THE-BUDDHA PRACTICE

Now that, in this way, we have reached the end of this explanation of the forty dharmas exclusive to the Buddhas, one should take the aspects emblematic of these forty exclusive dharmas and use them in one's own practice of mindfulness of the Buddha. One should also use verses to praise the Buddha, doing so as if one were standing directly before him, speaking to him. If one proceeds in this manner, then one may succeed in entering the mindfulness-of-the-Buddha samādhi. Accordingly, there are verses, as follows:

#### B. THE PRAISE VERSES

##### 1. VERSES IN PRAISE OF THE FORTY DHARMAS EXCLUSIVE TO THE BUDDHAS

Oh, greatly vigorous lord of the Āryas—  
Now, in the presence of the Buddha,  
I shall praise with reverential mind  
these forty dharmas possessed only [by buddhas].<sup>91</sup>

As for his supernatural powers and travel through flight,  
their power when enacted is utterly limitless.  
Among the psychic powers of the other *āryas*,  
there are none at all that can equal these.

Among the *śrāvaka* disciples, he holds sway with sovereign mastery,  
using his measureless knowledge of others' thoughts.

Thus he is well able to train their thoughts  
by according with their minds as he appropriately responds to them.

His mindfulness is as expansive as the great ocean  
while also being tranquil and calmly secure.

In all the world, there is no dharma  
able to cause him to become perturbed.

The jewel of the vajra samādhi  
that is praised by all buddhas—  
he has acquired it and it resides within in his heart  
just as the Worthies embrace the straightforward mind.

He thoroughly knows the unfixed dharmas  
and the matters associated with the four formless absorptions  
that are so subtle they are difficult to distinguish.  
He exhaustively knows them all without exception.

Regarding whether a being has already died in the past,  
dies now in the present, or will die at some point later in the future,  
it is solely the Bhagavat, and he alone,  
whose wisdom is able to fully comprehend such things.

He knows well all matters related  
to the formless dharmas unassociated with the mind  
that everyone else throughout all worlds  
remains entirely unable to know.

The Bhagavat's great awesome powers,  
his measureless meritorious qualities,  
and his boundless wisdom  
are all unmatched by anyone at all.

In the four types of responses to questions,  
he is so preeminent that he has no peer.  
As for all the challenging questions that beings present,  
he replies to them all with utter ease.

If anywhere in any world  
there is someone wishing to harm the Buddha,  
this circumstance never comes to pass,  
for he has gained the dharma by which he cannot be slain.

If at any point throughout the three periods of time  
there is anything that he says,  
those words are definitely not set forth in vain,  
but rather always bring great fruits as a result.

Of all the dharmas that he proclaims,  
none of them are not especially rare.  
He is never in error as regards their significance,  
how much the less might he ever err in words and phrases.

For the three types of *ārya* disciples  
that differ as either superior, middling, or inferior,  
and include the eight classes in four pairs,<sup>92</sup> and the others,  
he is the foremost great spiritual guide.

In actions of body, speech, and mind, and in sustaining his life,  
he is ultimately and always pure  
and hence, in all of these,  
he never again needs to act in a guarded way.

When he himself proclaims his possession of all-knowledge,  
his mind remains utterly free of any doubt or fear  
such that he might think, "If someone comes and challenges me,  
I fear there may be something I do not know."

When declaring his characteristic of having ended the contaminants,  
thus reaching the utmost elimination of the contaminants,  
his mind remains utterly free of any doubt or fear  
that there might be residual contaminants that are not yet ended.

When proclaiming his knowledge of the obstructive dharmas,  
he has no doubt at the prospect of being challenged  
that, though one might indulge in these dharmas,  
they might not actually then constitute an obstacle.

As for the eight-fold path of the Āryas that he has proclaimed,  
his mind is free of any doubt or fear  
that someone might rightly claim of this eight-fold path  
that it is unable to lead one to reach liberation.

He knows in accordance with reality that this is a cause,  
this is its result, and this other factor does not constitute [a cause].  
It is for these reasons that he is said to be omniscient  
and that his fame spreads immeasurably far.

All actions carried out throughout the three periods of time,  
the fixed retribution associated with these actions,  
and their unfixed karmic results—  
He thoroughly knows all of these different matters.

As for all coarse, subtle, deep, and shallow phenomena  
within all of the *dhyāna* absorptions and samādhis,  
he is able to entirely know them all.  
In the realm of *dhyāna* absorptions, no one is his equal.

He first knows with regard to the faculties of beings,  
their distinctions as either superior, middling, or inferior,  
knows what they delight in, and knows their individual natures,  
whereupon, adapting to what is fitting, he teaches them the Dharma.

He cultivated the path and gained its benefits  
while also teaching and guiding others.  
It is in this manner that the community of disciples  
gains the wholesome benefit that accords with reality.

His knowledge of past lives is measurelessly vast  
and the vision of his heavenly eye has no bounds.  
Among all humans and devas,  
no one is able to know their limits.

He abides in the vajra samādhi,  
having extinguished the afflictions and karmic propensities,  
and also knows the utter ending of the human contaminants.  
Hence this is known as the power of having ended the contaminants.

The obstacle of afflictions, the obstacles to *dhyāna* absorptions,  
and the obstacles to the knowledge of all dharmas—  
he has gained liberation from all three obstacles  
and hence is known as one who has gained unimpeded liberation.

The forty exclusive dharmas  
have measureless meritorious qualities  
of which no one could present an expansive explanation.  
I have hereby now concluded this general explanation.

Even if, for an entire kalpa, the Bhagavat  
spoke in praise of these dharmas of the Buddhas,  
he would still be unable to completely describe them.  
How much the less might I do so in the absence of such wisdom.

## 2. VERSES PRAISING THE FOUR BASES OF MERITORIOUS QUALITIES

The shade of the Bhagavat's great kindness  
has been thoroughly gathered together through countless deeds.  
It is because of the four bases of meritorious qualities  
that he has gained the Buddha's measureless Dharma.

As for these four supreme bases of meritorious qualities  
of which the Bhagavat has spoken with praise—  
I shall now return to these  
in setting forth praises of the Tathāgata.

He is completely endowed with the thirty-two marks,  
each mark of which requires a hundred-fold generation of merit.  
As for the eighty marvelous secondary characteristics,  
who residing in the three realms could possibly possess them?

Were one to multiply by a hundred all the karmic rewards  
produced by the merit created by all the beings  
residing within a great trichiliocosm,  
each of the marks has just such a quantity of merit [as its cause].

It would require just such a quantity of merit  
as well as its associated karmic rewards,  
multiplied yet another hundred times  
to produce a buddha's mid-brow white hair mark.

It would require for each and every one of thirty marks  
all of their corresponding merit and karmic rewards,  
multiplied yet again a thousand more times,  
to produce the fleshy *uṣṇīṣa* sign atop a buddha's crown.

The meritorious qualities of the Bhagavat  
are such that they could never be measured.  
Any attempt to do so would be like someone using a ruler  
to measure the endless expanse of empty space.

From the moment he brought forth the great resolve  
for the sake of bringing about the liberation of all beings,  
he persevered for countless kalpas with solid resolve.  
It was because of this that he then achieved buddhahood.

Intensely diligent in his zeal to achieve the fulfillment  
of such a magnanimous vow,  
throughout an immeasurably great number of kalpas,  
he has cultivated all the difficult ascetic practices.

Just as with all buddhas of the ancient past  
who taught these four bases of meritorious qualities,  
only after countless kalpas were they then perfected  
so that now he has succeeded in securely abiding within them.

a. VERSES PRAISING THE TRUTH BASIS OF MERITORIOUS QUALITIES

Their foundation lies in preservation of the actual truth,  
for which he relinquished even his own body and loved ones,  
his riches, treasures, and the happiness associated with wealth.  
It is through this that he achieved its complete fulfillment.

Throughout measurelessly many kalpas,  
in every instance, he has first thoroughly contemplated  
the dharmas that are seen, heard, sensed, and known,<sup>93</sup>  
and then, afterward, has explained them for the sake of others.

Where others had not observed (some aspect of Dharma) and such,  
as well as in situations where they were beset by doubts,  
he was then able to explain these matters in accordance with reality.  
Those whom he benefited in this way were measurelessly many.

He would not discuss the confidential matters of others.  
Even if resented or ridiculed for this, he still refused to betray them.  
His thoughts always dwelt in a state of stable wisdom  
as he adapted his teachings to lead others to peace and security.

As for the foremost and most genuinely sublime truth,  
nirvāṇa is truly supreme,  
for all else, in every case, is false.

The Bhagavat has achieved<sup>94</sup> its complete fulfillment.

b. VERSES PRAISING THE RELINQUISHMENT BASIS OF MERITORIOUS QUALITIES

[He made gifts of] beverages, food, bedding, and such,  
halls, buildings, marvelous residences, viewing terraces,  
highly prized elephants, horses, and vehicles, and also  
relinquished female companions of especially fine appearance.

[He gave away] gold, silver, pearls, jewels, and such,  
villages, cities, and towns,



entire states, and exalted official positions,  
and gave away [his dominion over] the four continents as well.

[He relinquished] cherished sons, beloved wives,  
his limbs, his head, and his eyes,  
and made gifts by slicing off his flesh, removing bones and marrow,  
or even giving away his entire body.

Doing so out of pity for beings,  
he gave them all, having none that he continued to cherish.  
He did so aspiring to go beyond *samsāra*  
and not out of some quest to secure his own bliss.

All of the stars and constellations throughout empty space,  
and all the grains of sand in this entire earth—  
when the Tathāgata was still a bodhisattva,  
the number of times he gave in such ways exceeded even these.

He never resorted to actions contrary to Dharma  
as he sought out wealth to be used in giving.  
He never engaged in giving unaccompanied by knowledge and  
never engaged in giving that was invasive or distressing to others.

He never gave bad things as gifts  
because he coveted some other fine thing [in return].  
He never gave with an ingratiating deviousness  
and never engaged in forceful giving because of coveting something.

He never gave with a hate-filled or doubting mind,  
never did so with perverse intent or with derisive laughter,  
never did so out of disgust or disbelief,  
and never gave with the face turned away, or in other such ways.

He had no discriminating mind [by which he judged],  
“This one is worthy and that one is unworthy.”  
Because he only relied on the mind of compassion,  
it was with equal regard for everyone that he practiced giving.

He did not slight other beings,  
considering them to not qualify as fields of merit.  
On seeing *āryas*, his mind was reverential.  
On seeing those who have broken the precepts, he felt pity for them.

He did not elevate himself above others,  
treat others as mere inferiors,  
engage in giving for the sake of praise,  
give in expectation of rewards, or give in other such ways.

He never gave with regrets or with worry-filled misgivings  
and never gave with thoughts of disdain or disrespect.

He never gave with a mind affected by irritability or hostility  
and never gave simply as a protocol-dictated formality.

He never gave with a disrespectful mind,  
never gave by simply tossing the gift on the ground,  
never gave deliberately seeking to cause distress,  
and never gave out of a jealousy-driven struggle for supremacy.

He would never tease a supplicant,  
never failed to present a gift with his own hands,  
did not slight the recipient with a merely paltry gift,  
and did not give excessively in order to enhance his own esteem.

His giving was never motivated by intentions associated with  
either the Śrāvaka Disciple Vehicle or the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle.  
His giving was never limited to concern for only a single lifetime  
and he never engaged in giving done at the wrong time.

For countless kalpas, the Bhagavat  
practiced every form of rare giving,  
always doing so for the sake of the unsurpassable path  
and not merely in order to seek his own happiness.

Throughout the duration of all buddhas' Dharma,  
he became a monastic, practiced renunciation,  
cultivated the Dharma of all buddhas,  
and proclaimed the Dharma for the sake of all humans and devas.

He taught just such a dharma of giving as this  
that is supreme among all types of giving,  
just as, among all the stars and the moon,  
it is the light of the sun that is supreme.

Such supremacy in the relinquishment basis [of meritorious qualities]  
surpasses that of any deva or human,  
just as it is the Bhagavat  
who is superior to everyone in the world.

He was therefore able to perfect  
such supreme practice of the relinquishment basis.  
His fame shall endure for countless kalpas,  
flowing on and spreading ceaselessly.

#### C. VERSES PRAISING THE QUIESCENCE BASIS OF MERITORIOUS QUALITIES

For countless kalpas, the Bhagavat  
preserved and upheld the precepts of moral purity  
and opened the gates of the *dhyāna* absorptions  
for the sake of acquiring the deep quiescence basis.

He began by abandoning five characteristics<sup>95</sup>  
and later practiced the eight liberations.  
He entered and purified the three samādhis,  
and also dwelt in the three liberations.

The Bhagavat well distinguishes  
the sixty-five kinds of *dhyānas*.  
There is no *dhyāna* whatsoever  
that he has not formerly produced.

Even when abiding in these meditative absorptions,  
he did not indulge in their delectably pleasurable states.  
Due to the various meditative absorptions,  
the Bhagavat gained three types of spiritual superknowledges.

He used these in the liberation of beings  
and so became supreme in all things.  
For countless kalpas, with a mind of equal regard,  
the Bhagavat widely spread his kindly transformative teaching.

An *asaṃkhyeya* of beings  
was thereby caused to abide in the Brahma World Heavens  
because he was able to use skillful means  
in thoroughly teaching the *dhyāna* absorptions.

While still a bodhisattva, the Bhagavat  
for incalculably many lifetimes, always  
remained free of any entanglement in the affliction of covetousness.  
Thus he was able to come and go in the world.

Of those who succeeded in encountering him in the past,  
countless such beings thereby achieved rebirth in the heavens.  
As for that quiescence that  
all bodhisattvas of the past were able to practice,  
when still a bodhisattva, the Bhagavat  
also practiced, doing so in a manner no different from theirs.  
Thus, as regards the realization of quiescence,  
that supreme basis [of meritorious qualities], it was entirely fulfilled.

d. VERSES PRAISING THE WISDOM BASIS OF MERITORIOUS QUALITIES

All those forms of wisdom  
possessed by the Bhagavat while he was still a bodhisattva—  
He relied on such wisdom in his quest for bodhi  
so that, as a karmic result, he has now developed this wisdom.  
Just as people rely on the earth for the production  
of all the food that it supplies,  
[so, too], as in life after life, the Bhagavat  
relinquished the ten courses of dark and bad actions

and always practiced the path of the ten good actions,  
these [deeds] were all due to the power of wisdom.<sup>96</sup>

He renounced the five desires and the five hindrances  
and thus acquired all the various *dhyāna* absorptions.  
He accomplished this for the number of lifetimes in countless kalpas  
and did not acquire this from others.  
This is excellent indeed, O Great Honored One of the Āryas.  
All of this was due to the power of wisdom.

It is because of the Bhagavat that beings,  
countless in number, have taken rebirth in the six heavens.  
So too has he enabled them to reach the Brahma World.  
All of this was due to the power of wisdom.

Throughout the course of his births and deaths, the Bhagavat,  
even when confused and perturbed by sufferings and pleasures,  
never lost the resolve to attain bodhi.  
All of this was due to the power of wisdom.

Throughout the course of *saṃsāra*, the Bhagavat  
did not delight [in worldly existence] and yet still always remained.  
He delighted in nirvāṇa, yet did not seize on its [final] realization.  
All of this was due to the power of wisdom.

When sitting peacefully there in the *bodhimaṇḍa*,  
he overcame Māra and his armies  
and proceeded to liberate all the classes of beings.  
All of this was due to the power of wisdom.

When he originally strove in quest of bodhi,  
he accumulated countless provisions for the path.  
If merely hearing of them causes one to be confused and perturbed,  
how much the less might one be able to take on their practice.  
That the Bhagavat was able to patiently endure such things  
was in every case due to the power of wisdom.

That, in lifetime after lifetime, he was able to naturally know  
the classic texts as well as all the arts and skills  
while also being able to teach them to others  
was in every case due to the power of wisdom.

He drew close to countless buddhas  
and from them all drank the sweet-dew nectar of their teachings,  
He consulted them and inquired about the many different topics  
and then also pursued additional distinguishing [clarifications].

He was never the least bit miserly  
with the wisdom of the sutras' Dharma,

but rather offered it even to servants, youths, and menials,  
 allowing them to freely receive his fine explanations.  
 Because of this, [the fame of] the Bhagavat's  
 supreme wisdom basis [of meritorious qualities] spreads on afar.

Throughout his former lifetimes, as the Bhagavat  
 pursued his quest for the realization of bodhi,  
 he practiced the great kindness and compassion  
 toward all beings.

Relying on the foremost wisdom,  
 he always marshalled his great strength  
 to take up and do all the countless kinds  
 of rare and difficult endeavors.

### 3. CONCLUDING PRAISE VERSES

In all of the many worlds,  
 he exhaustively contributed all his efforts for countless kalpas.  
 One could never come to the end of them through verbal description,  
 nor could one even reach it through mathematical calculation.

All of his endeavors of such sorts  
 surpass those done by any human or deva.  
 Even in all the many worlds,  
 there is nothing comparable to his extraordinary marvels.

The fruits reaped through such great deeds  
 reach complete fulfillment in the realization of all-knowledge.  
 He is the king of those able to destroy *saṃsāra*  
 and dwells securely in the place of the Dharma king.

## The End of Chapter Twenty-Four



## Ch. 25: Teachings to Aid the Mindfulness-of-the-Buddha Samādhi

### VI. CHAPTER 25: TEACHINGS AIDING MINDFULNESS-OF-THE BUDDHA SAMĀDHI

#### A. INITIAL INSTRUCTIONS ON THE MINDFULNESS-OF-THE BUDDHA SAMĀDHI

The bodhisattva should rely on these  
forty exclusive dharmas  
in his mindfulness of the Buddhas' Dharma body,  
for the Buddhas are not their form bodies.

These [preceding] verses have sequentially and summarily explained six categories of meanings associated with the forty exclusive dharmas.<sup>97</sup> In doing so, the practitioner therefore first takes up the mindfulness of the Buddha's form body and then takes up the mindfulness of the Buddha's Dharma body.

Why is this the case? The bodhisattva who has only recently brought forth the resolve [to attain buddhahood] should first take up the practice of mindfulness of the Buddha in reliance on the thirty-two marks and eighty secondary characteristics [of the Buddha's form body], doing so in the manner described earlier.

Then, as one's practice progressively penetrates more deeply, one will develop a middling degree of strength in that practice. One should then rely on the Dharma body in his mindfulness of the Buddha.

Then, as one's mind progressively penetrates yet more deeply, one will then achieve a supreme degree of power in the development of this practice. At that point, one should then take up mindfulness of the Buddha in accordance with the true character of [all dharmas]<sup>98</sup> and remain free of any sort of attachment in doing so.

One must not become deeply attached to the form body.<sup>99</sup>

One also refrains from becoming attached to the Dharma body.

One should thoroughly realize that all dharmas  
are as eternally quiescent as empty space.

As this bodhisattva develops a superior degree of power [in this practice], he refrains from developing a deep attachment to the Buddha on the basis of either the form body or the Dharma body. Why not? Through one's resolute belief in the dharma of emptiness, one understands that all dharmas are like empty space.

Empty space is defined by the absence of obstruction. The causal circumstances associated with obstruction include phenomena like

Mount Sumeru, Yugamdhara Mountain, the rest of the ten jeweled mountains, the Iron Ring Mountains, Black Mountain, Stone Mountain, and the others. There are all sorts of other such causal bases for the existence of obstructions.

Why is this [a point at issue]? Because this person has still not yet gained the heavenly eye, if he brings to mind buddhas abiding in the worlds off in the other directions, the various mountains will block them from his view. Consequently, The bodhisattva who has only recently brought forth the resolve [to attain buddhahood] should use the sublime characteristics described by the ten names as bases for his mindfulness of the Buddha. This is as described in these lines:

The bodhisattva who has only recently brought forth the resolve  
uses the sublime features described by the ten names  
in practicing mindfulness of the Buddhas that is free of fault,  
seeing them just as if they were images in a mirror.

As for “the sublime features described in the ten names,” those ten names are:

Tathāgata,<sup>100</sup>  
Worthy of Offerings;  
The Right and Universally Enlightened One;  
Perfect in the Clear Knowledges and Conduct;  
Well Gone One;  
Knower of the Worlds;  
Unsurpassable Trainer of Those to Be Tamed;  
Teacher of Devas and Humans;  
Buddha;  
Bhagavat.

As for “free of fault,” the phenomena that one contemplates are beheld as empty and like space itself. Thus [one’s contemplation] is free of any fault with regard to the Dharma. And how is this so? It is because all dharmas, from their very origin on forward to the present, have been unproduced and quiescent. Just as this is true [with respect to these dharmas], so too is this also true of all other dharmas.

By taking these names as the object [of his contemplation], this person develops his practice of the dharma of *dhyāna* meditation. Having done so, he is then able to take these characteristic signs themselves as the object of his contemplation.

At this time, this person then immediately acquires these signs in his practice of the dharma of *dhyāna* meditation and experiences what is referred to as the direct personal experience of an especially



extraordinary bliss. One should realize that when this occurs, one has acquired the *pratyutpanna samādhi*. Because of developing this *samādhi*, one is then able to see the Buddhas.

As for “as if they were images in a mirror,” once the bodhisattva has developed this *samādhi*, it is as if one is seeing one’s own face in a clean, brightly-lit mirror or like seeing the image of one’s own body in a clear, still pool of water.

Initially, whichever buddha one first brings to mind, it is that very image that one sees. After one has seen this image, if one wishes to see buddhas in other regions, then, in accordance with whichever region one brings to mind, one obtains an unimpeded vision of those very buddhas. Hence, regarding this person:

Although he does not yet possess the spiritual superknowledges  
by which he could fly to visit them,  
he is nonetheless able to see those buddhas  
and has an unimpeded ability to listen to their Dharma.

For this bodhisattva who has only recently brought forth the resolve [to attain buddhahood], neither Mount Sumeru nor any other mountain can present an obstacle and, even though he has not yet acquired any of the spiritual superknowledges, the heavenly eye, or the heavenly ear, and even though he has not yet developed the ability to fly from this country to that country, through the power of this *samādhi*, even while still abiding in this country, he is able to see the Buddhas, the Bhagavats, abiding in the other regions and is able to hear the Dharma as they are speaking it. Through always cultivating this *samādhi*, he becomes able to see all of the buddhas throughout the ten directions just as they really are.

#### B. FOUR DHARMAS CAPABLE OF BRINGING FORTH THIS SAMĀDHI

**Question:** Through which dharmas is one able to bring forth this meditative absorption and how can one acquire it?

**Response:**

One draws close to the good spiritual guide,  
brings forth non-retreating vigor,  
develops extremely solid and durable wisdom,  
and develops the power of unshakeable faith.

It is through utilizing these four dharmas that one is able to bring forth this *samādhi*.

As for “drawing close to the good spiritual guide,” someone able to instruct a person in the acquisition of this *samādhi* qualifies here as “the good spiritual guide.” One should bring forth reverential respect

and assiduous diligence and, in drawing close [to the good spiritual guide], one must not allow any indolence, diminishment in motivation, or relinquishing of effort to take place. If one acts accordingly, one will then be able to hear the teaching of the deep meaning of this samādhi.

Sharp wisdom, wisdom characterized by penetrating comprehension, and undiminishing wisdom are what qualify as “solid and durable” [wisdom]. One’s faculty of faith is deeply and firmly established, so much so that, no matter whether it be a *śramaṇa* or a brahmin or a celestial *māra* or Brahmā or anyone else in the world—none of them could cause it to quaver even slightly. This is what is meant by an unshakeable power of faith. It is these very four dharmas described here that are able to bring forth this samādhi.

C. FOUR MORE DHARMAS CAPABLE OF BRINGING FORTH THIS SAMĀDHI

Furthermore:

With a sense of shame, dread of blame, cherishing reverence, and offerings to those who proclaim the Dharma presented as if they were given to the Bhagavats themselves, one thereby becomes able to bring forth this samādhi.

As for “with a sense of shame, dread of blame, and cherishing reverence,” one brings forth a profound sense of shame and dread of blame in relation to those who teach the Dharma. With sincere reverence and affectionate delight, one makes offerings to them as if they were the Buddhas themselves. In this way, these four dharmas are able to produce this samādhi.

D. FOUR MORE DHARMAS CAPABLE OF BRINGING FORTH THIS SAMĀDHI

Another preliminary set of fourfold dharmas is as follows:

First, for a period of three months, one strives to refrain from sleeping and, with the exception of using the toilet and eating and drinking, one refrains from sitting down;

Second, for that period of three months, one avoids, even for the duration of a finger snap, indulgence in any thought seizing on the existence of a self;

Third, for that entire three months, one strives to always walk and never rest;

Fourth, for that entire three months, when also engaged in the giving of Dharma, one refrains from seeking offerings from others.

These are the four. There are four more such dharmas, as follows:

E. FOUR MORE DHARMAS CAPABLE OF BRINGING FORTH THIS SAMĀDHI

First, one becomes able to see the Buddhas;

Second, one reassures and encourages others to listen to the teaching of this samādhi;

Third, one is never envious or jealous of anyone who is putting the resolve to attain bodhi into practice;

Fourth, one is able to accumulate the dharmas of the bodhisattva path.

These are the four. There are four more such dharmas, as follows:

F. FOUR MORE DHARMAS CAPABLE OF BRINGING FORTH THIS SAMĀDHI

First, one makes buddha images that may also include painted images;

Second, one should carefully write out copies of the sutra that discusses this samādhi and then encourage others who have a resolute faith in it to study and recite it aloud once they have obtained it;<sup>101</sup>

Third, teach those of overweening pride<sup>102</sup> to abandon their overweening pride<sup>103</sup> and then influence them to pursue the attainment of *anuttarasamyakṣaṃbodhi*;

Fourth, one should devote oneself to the protection and preservation of the right Dharma of all buddhas.

These are the four. There are four more such dharmas, as follows:

G. FOUR MORE DHARMAS CAPABLE OF BRINGING FORTH THIS SAMĀDHI

First, one avoids speaking;

Second, both lay and monastic practitioners are to refrain from dwelling together with others;

Third, one always anchors one's mind on the characteristic sign that has been chosen as the object of one's mental focus;<sup>104</sup>

Fourth, one delights in dwelling far apart from others, in a location that is vacant, serene, and silent.

These are the four. The first of the five-fold sets of associated dharmas is as follows:

H. FIVE MORE DHARMAS CAPABLE OF BRINGING FORTH THIS SAMĀDHI

First, abiding in the unproduced-dharmas patience (*anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti*), one renounces all conditioned dharmas, does not delight in any of the destinies of rebirth, refuses to accept any of the non-Buddhist dharmas, and remains so disgusted with all worldly desires that one does not even bring them to mind, how much the less might one draw physically close to them;

Second, even as one's mind always cultivates and practices countless dharmas, it remains in a state of one-pointed concentration;

One remains free of the obstacle of hatred toward any being and one's mind always accords with the practice of the four means of attraction;

Third, one becomes able to perfect kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity while also refraining from exposing others' transgressions;

Fourth, one becomes able to accumulate a multitude of dharmas proclaimed by the Buddha while also being able to carry them out in accordance with the way they were taught;

Fifth, one purifies one's physical, verbal, and mental actions as well as one's views.

These are the five. There are five more associated dharmas, as follows:

I. FIVE MORE DHARMAS CAPABLE OF BRINGING FORTH THIS SAMĀDHI

First, one delights in according with the practice of giving as praised in the sutras, doing so without miserly thoughts. One delights in speaking on profound dharmas, withholds nothing due to stinginess, and also remains able to dwell in those very dharmas oneself;

Second, one abides in patience, mental pliancy, and delight when abiding in close proximity to others and, if subjected to harsh speech, scolding and cursing, whippings, beatings, being tied up, or other such experiences, one simply attributes it to one's own karmic conditions and does not hate others for doing this;

Third, one always delights in listening to teachings that explain this samādhi, in reading and reciting them, in thoroughly understanding them, in explaining them for others, and in causing them to circulate and spread ever more widely even as one diligently practices and cultivates [this samādhi];

Fourth, one's mind remains free of any jealous feelings toward others, one refrains from elevating oneself and looking down on others, and one strives to rid oneself of the hindrance of drowsiness;

Fifth, one maintains a mind of pure faith in the Buddha Jewel, the Dharma Jewel, and the Sangha Jewel, offers up deeply sincere service to those of senior, middling, and lower station, always remembers and never forgets even the smallest kindnesses of others, and always abides in truthful speech.

These are the five. In addition, there are the following lines:

J. THE GUIDELINES FOR LAY AND MONASTIC CULTIVATION OF THIS SAMĀDHI

As for those samādhi dharmas  
in which monastic bodhisattvas train,  
householder bodhisattvas  
should also know these dharmas.

## 1. TWENTY GUIDELINES FOR LAY CULTIVATORS OF THIS SAMĀDHI

If a householder bodhisattva wishes to cultivate this samādhi, [he should observe the following twenty guidelines]:

- 1) One should proceed with a mind of deep faith;
- 2) One should not seek any sort of karmic reward;
- 3) One should give up all personal and extra-personal things;
- 4) One should take refuge in the Three Jewels;
- 5) One should uphold the five moral precepts purely and in a manner free of any transgression or deficiency;
- 6) One should perfect the practice of the ten courses of good karmic action while also influencing others to abide in these dharmas;
- 7) One should cut off all sexual desire;
- 8) One should repudiate the five types of desire;
- 9) One should refrain from any feelings of jealousy toward others;
- 10) One should not nurture an affectionate attachment for either one's spouse or one's children;
- 11) One should always maintain an aspiration to leave the householder's life to become a monastic;
- 12) One should always take on and observe the layperson's precepts of abstinence;<sup>105</sup>
- 13) One's mind should delight in the opportunity to abide within the precincts of a temple;<sup>106</sup>
- 14) One should be well possessed of a sense of shame and a dread of blame;
- 15) One should bring forth thoughts of reverential respect toward bhikshus who are pure in upholding the moral precepts;
- 16) One should not act in a miserly way with the Dharma;
- 17) One should maintain a mind of deep affection and reverence toward those who teach the Dharma;
- 18) One should think of teachers of Dharma as if they were one's father, mother, or great teaching master;
- 19) One should respectfully present all manner of delightful gifts as offerings to the Dharma teaching masters;
- 20) One should feel gratitude for the kindnesses that have been bestowed upon one and one should repay those kindnesses accordingly.

If a householder bodhisattva abides in meritorious qualities such as these, he will then be able to learn this samādhi.

## 2. SIXTY GUIDELINES FOR MONASTIC CULTIVATORS OF THIS SAMĀDHI

As for [the guidelines appropriate to] a monastic bodhisattva's cultivation of dharmas pertaining to this samādhi, they are as follows:

- 1) One remains free of any defect as regards observance of the moral precepts;
- 2) One maintains uncorrupted observance of the moral precepts;
- 3) One maintains unsullied observance of the moral precepts;
- 4) One maintains pure observance of the moral precepts;
- 5) One maintains undiminished observance of the moral precepts;
- 6) One does not seize on the moral precepts themselves [as constituting the very essence of moral virtue];
- 7) One does not rely on the moral precepts [alone as the sole component of one's practice];
- 8) One realizes that the moral precepts cannot finally be apprehended at all [as inherently existent entities];
- 9) One never retreats from one's observance of the moral precepts;
- 10) One upholds the moral precepts in the manner that is praised by the Āryas;
- 11) One upholds the moral precepts in the manner that is extolled by the wise;
- 12) One accords with the *prātimokṣa* precepts;
- 13) One perfects the bases for the awe-inspiring deportment;
- 14) One remains immensely fearful of committing even the most minor transgression of the precepts;
- 15) One purifies the actions of body, speech, and mind;
- 16) One maintains purity in right livelihood;
- 17) One completely upholds all of the moral precepts;
- 18) One maintains resolute belief in the extremely profound dharmas;
- 19) One is able to patiently acquiesce in the dharma of the non-apprehension [of any dharma whatsoever] and is able to not be frightened even by the dharmas of emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness;
- 20) One remains diligent in bringing forth vigor [in one's practice];
- 21) One always maintains ever-present mindfulness;
- 22) One maintains a mind of solid faith;
- 23) One is well possessed of a sense of shame and a dread of blame;
- 24) One does not covet offerings;
- 25) One remains free of jealousy toward others;
- 26) One abides in the meritorious qualities associated with practicing the *dhūta* austerities;
- 27) One abides in the subtleties of Dharma practice;
- 28) One takes no delight in speaking the coarse language of the world;

- 29) One avoids gathering in groups for [idle] conversation;
- 30) One knows to repay kindnesses one has received;
- 31) One acknowledges those who bestow kindnesses and those who repay kindnesses;
- 32) Toward one's monastic preceptors and monastic Dharma teachers, one brings forth thoughts of sincere reverence and appreciation for the rarity of being able to encounter them;<sup>107</sup>
- 33) One does away with any arrogance one might be harboring;
- 34) One overcomes the self-cherishing mind;
- 35) Because a good spiritual guide can only rarely be encountered, one strives with diligence to look after his needs;
- 36) With regard to the source from which one first learned about this Dharma, whether by obtaining a sutra text from someone or by hearing someone recite it, one thinks of them with the same regard as one would maintain for one's own father or mother, one's good spiritual guide, or a great teaching master, and with regard to them, one also feels a sense of shame, dread of blame, affection, and reverence;
- 37) One always delights in dwelling in a forest hermitage;
- 38) One does not delight in dwelling in a city or village;
- 39) One does not covet the opportunity to frequent the homes of benefactors<sup>108</sup> and good spiritual friends;
- 40) One does not maintain a stinting covetousness for one's own physical survival;
- 41) One remains ever mindful of death;
- 42) One does not hoard offerings;
- 43) One does not indulge any defiling attachment for possessions.
- 44) One remains free of cravings;
- 45) One guards and preserves right Dharma;
- 46) One is not attached to one's robes or bowl;
- 47) One does not hoard leftover things;
- 48) One prefers to eat only food that has been obtained on the alms round;
- 49) On the alms round, one moves along seeking alms according to the proper sequence;<sup>109</sup>
- 50) One always maintains a sense of shame and dread of blame and always feels remorse [for one's past transgressions];
- 51) One refrains from hoarding gold, silver, precious jewels, or money and also avoids indulging in unwholesome remorsefulness;<sup>110</sup>
- 52) One's mind remains free of entangling defilements;
- 53) One always puts the mind of kindness into practice;

- 54) One cuts off all feelings of anger;
- 55) One always puts the mind of compassion into practice;
- 56) One cuts off affectionate attachments;
- 57) One always seeks ways to benefit and bring peace to the entire world;
- 58) One always feels pity for all beings;
- 59) One always delights in [meditative] walking;
- 60) One does away with lethargy and sleepiness.

The monastic bodhisattva who abides in dharmas such as these should cultivate and practice this samādhi. Additionally:

### 3. FIFTY DHARMAS SUPPORTING CULTIVATION OF THIS SAMĀDHI

One should also train in this same manner  
in the other dharmas pertaining to the cultivation of samādhi.

In order to be able to bring forth this *pratyutpanna* samādhi, one should also cultivate the other supportive dharmas. And what are these? They are:

- 1) One takes the Buddha's kindness as one's objective focus and always mindfully contemplates him as if he were directly before one;
- 2) One does not allow one's mind to become scattered;
- 3) One anchors one's attention directly before one;
- 4) One guards the gates of the sense faculties;
- 5) With respect to food and drink, one is easily satisfied;
- 6) One always cultivates samādhi in both the first and last watches of the night;
- 7) One abandons the obstacle of the afflictions;
- 8) One brings forth all of the *dhyāna* absorptions;
- 9) In one's practice of *dhyāna* meditation, one does not indulge in the delectably pleasurable meditation states;
- 10) One demolishes through separation the appearance of attractive forms;<sup>111</sup>
- 11) One acquires the sign of unloveliness;<sup>112</sup>
- 12) One does not desire the five aggregates;
- 13) One does not become attached to the eighteen sense realms;
- 14) One does not indulge any defilement in relation to the twelve sense bases;
- 15) One does not presumptuously rely on one's [superior] caste origins;
- 16) One destroys any arrogance;
- 17) One's mind always remains empty and quiescent in relation to all dharmas that one encounters;



- 18) One imagines all beings as one's close relatives;
- 19) One does not seize on the moral precepts themselves [as constituting the very essence of moral virtue];
- 20) One does not make discriminating distinctions regarding the meditative absorptions;
- 21) One should diligently pursue abundant learning;
- 22) One does not become arrogant because of this abundant learning;
- 23) One remains free of doubts with respect to any of the dharmas.
- 24) One does not oppose the Buddhas;
- 25) One does not act in a manner that is contrary to the Dharma;
- 26) One does not do anything that contributes to the destruction of the Sangha;
- 27) One always goes to pay one's respects to worthies and *āryas*;
- 28) One distances oneself from foolish common people;
- 29) One delights in discussion of world-transcending topics;
- 30) One cultivates the six dharmas of mutual harmony;<sup>113</sup>
- 31) One always cultivates the five bases of liberation;<sup>114</sup>
- 32) One rids himself of the nine bases for generating the affliction of anger;<sup>115</sup>
- 33) One cuts off the eight dharmas associated with indolence;<sup>116</sup>
- 34) One cultivates the eight types of vigor;<sup>117</sup>
- 35) One always contemplates the nine signs [of the deterioration of the corpse];<sup>118</sup>
- 36) One has realized for himself the eight realizations of great men;<sup>119</sup>
- 37) One perfects all of the *dhyāna* concentrations and samādhis;
- 38) One has no covetous attachment to these *dhyāna* concentrations and realizes they have no apprehensible reality;<sup>120</sup>
- 39) When listening to Dharma, one does so with a focused mind;
- 40) One demolishes the perception of the five aggregates [as inherently existent phenomenal];
- 41) One does not abide in the perception of phenomena [as inherently existent];
- 42) One is deeply fearful of *saṃsāra*'s births and deaths;
- 43) One contemplates the five aggregates as like enemies;<sup>121</sup>
- 44) One contemplates the sense bases as like an empty village;
- 45) One contemplates the four great elements as like venomous serpents;
- 46) One brings forth the contemplation of nirvāṇa as quiescent, secure, and happy;<sup>122</sup>
- 47) One contemplates the five desires as worthy of being spat upon and one's mind delights in escaping from them;

- 48) One never opposes the teachings of the Buddha;  
 49) One has no disputes or quarrels with any other being;  
 50) In teaching beings, one influences them to dwell securely in all of the meritorious qualities.

K. THE BENEFITS OF CULTIVATING THIS PRATYUTPANNA SAMĀDHI

In addition:

The bodhisattva should understand the benefits that result from such a samādhi.

The bodhisattva should also understand the benefits that result from practicing this *pratyutpanna* samādhi.

**Question:** What are the resulting benefits gained by cultivating this samādhi?

**Response:** One obtains the resulting benefit of becoming irreversible with respect to the unsurpassable path. Additionally, as for what the sutra says about these resulting benefits, we have the following:<sup>123</sup>

The Buddha told Bhadrāpāla Bodhisattva, “By way of analogy, suppose there was a person who was able to crush to dust all the earth in all worlds in a trichiliocosm and was also able also to crush to dust all the grasses, trees, flowers, leaves, and everything else throughout all of the worlds in a great trichiliocosm.

“Bhadrāpāla, let us consider now that each and every one of those motes of dust were to constitute one world in which a single buddha dwells and suppose then that one filled to overflowing just such a number of worlds with sublimely marvelous precious jewels and presented all of these jewels as an offering to them.

“Bhadrāpāla, what do you think? By performing such an act of giving, would this person gain a great deal of merit or not?”

“Indeed, O Bhagavat, he would reap a great deal.”

The Buddha said, “Bhadrāpāla, I will now tell you truthfully that if there was a son of good family who heard of this samādhi in which all buddhas appear before one and he were then to be neither startled nor frightened by hearing of it, the merit he would reap from that alone would be immeasurably vast. How much the more so would this be the case if he were to have faith in it, accept it, uphold it, read [teachings in which it is explained], recite them, and explain them for others. How much the more so yet would this be the case if he were to actually cultivate it with concentrated mind even for the time it takes to tug a single squirt of milk from the udder of a cow.

“Bhadrāpāla, let me tell you: Even this person’s merit would surpass one’s ability to measure it. How much the more so would this be so in the case of someone who was actually able to succeed in acquiring this samādhi.”

The Buddha continued, telling Bhadrāpāla, “If a son or daughter of good family who receives, upholds, reads, recites, and explains [teachings on this samādhi] for others were on the verge of falling into the fires arising at the end of the kalpa, those fires would immediately become extinguished.

“Bhadrāpāla, whosoever sustains this samādhi—supposing that he were to encounter some difficulty with officialdom, or supposing that he were to encounter hostile thieves, lions, tigers, wolves, fearsome beasts, fearsome dragons, any of the venomous serpents, or any other such threat, whether from *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, *kumbhāṇḍas*, *piśācis*, and such, or from humans, non-humans, or any other sort of entity—that any of those entities might succeed in physically harming him, taking his life, or causing him to break the precepts—this would be an utter impossibility.

So too would this also be the case with respect to those who might be reading, reciting, or teaching this to others. In those cases too they would remain free of any destructive affliction, with the sole exception of instances where they were already bound to undergo compulsory karmic retributions.<sup>124</sup>

“Furthermore, Bhadrāpāla, when a bodhisattva accepts, upholds, reads, or recites the sutra on this samādhi, if he happens to contract some sickness of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, mouth, or teeth, some disease instigated by wind or cold, or any other such disease, that he might then lose his life because of any of these diseases would be an utter impossibility with the sole exception of instances where he was already bound to undergo compulsory karmic retributions.

“Also, Bhadrāpāla, if a person were to accept, uphold, read, or recite the sutra on this samādhi, the devas themselves would protect him. So too would he be protected by the dragons, *yakṣas*, *mahoragas*, humans, non-humans, the Four Heavenly Kings, Śakra, ruler of the devas, the Brahma Heaven King, and the Buddhas, the Bhagavats. They would all join in remaining protectively mindful of this practitioner.

“Furthermore, this person would be one of whom the devas would all be affectionately mindful, and so too would this be so for other such beings up to and including the Buddhas themselves who would also remain affectionately mindful of this practitioner.

“Additionally, this person would be one whom the devas praise, and so too, he would be one whom other beings up to and including all buddhas would praise as well.

“Also, this bodhisattva would be one whom the devas would all wish to see coming to visit them, and so too with the others on up to the Buddhas themselves who would all wish to see him coming to visit them.

“Furthermore, the bodhisattva who accepts and upholds the sutra on this samādhi will naturally become able to hear whichever other sutras he has not yet heard.

“Additionally, this bodhisattva who gains this samādhi will become able to acquire all of these beneficial experiences even in his dreams.

“Bhadrapāla, were I to attempt to describe the merit of this bodhisattva who accepts, uphold, reads, and recites the sutra on this samādhi, doing so even for an entire kalpa or somewhat less than a kalpa, I would still be unable to come to the end of it. How much the less would this be possible in the case of someone who actually succeeds in perfecting this samādhi.

“Bhadrapāla, if some man with strong body and speed like the wind ran for a hundred years without resting, always proceeding to the east, south, west, north, the four midpoints, above, and below, what do you think? Would anyone be able to know the number of miles he traveled in all those regions throughout the ten directions?”

Bhadrapāla replied, “That would be an incalculable number. Except for the Tathāgata, someone like Śāriputra, or an *avaivartika* [bodhisattva], nobody would be able to know such a number.”

“Bhadrapāla, suppose that, on the one hand, there was a son or daughter of good family who filled up with real gold all the area traveled by that man and then give it all away as gifts. Suppose too that, on the other hand, there was someone who merely heard of this samādhi and then engaged in four types of rejoicing and dedication of merit to *anuttarasamyakṣambodhi* and the constant pursuit of abundant learning, [doing so by reflecting as follows]:

Just as all buddhas of the past when practicing the bodhisattva path rejoiced in this samādhi, so too do I now rejoice in it;

Just as the bodhisattvas of the present now rejoice in this samādhi, so too do I now rejoice in it;

Just as all future buddhas during their practice of the bodhisattva path shall rejoice in this samādhi, so too do I now rejoice in it;

And in just that fashion as this samādhi was practiced by all past, future, and present bodhisattvas, so too do I now also rejoice in all of that, and just as they all did so for the sake of pursuing abundant learning [essential to the path], so too do I now rejoice in this samādhi for the sake of the quest for such abundant learning.

“Bhadrapāla, if one were to attempt to compare the previously described merit with the merit from this rejoicing, it could not approach a hundredth part or even one part in a hundred thousand

myriads of *koṭis* of parts. The futility of this comparison simply could not be adequately described through any form of calculation or analogy. The benefits resulting from this samādhi are just so immeasurable and boundless as this.”

#### L. THIS SAMĀDHI'S VARIOUS STATIONS AND LEVELS OF CULTIVATION

In addition:

As for the stations in which one may abide in this samādhi as well as the distinctions pertaining to lesser, middling, and greater, the many different characteristics such as these should all be taken up for a discussion of their meaning.

The stations in which one may abide in this samādhi as well as its lesser, middling, and greater characteristics—all such things should be distinguished and known and these matters should then be explained.

Regarding “the stations in which one may abide in it,” this samādhi may be acquired in the first *dhyāna*, the second *dhyāna*, the third *dhyāna*, or the fourth *dhyāna* and one may acquire strength in it while in the first *dhyāna*.

It may be that someone who is “lesser” is able to bring forth this samādhi. Here, “lesser” may refer to the fact that a person is possessed of only a lesser degree of strength [in this practice]. “Lesser” may also refer to abiding [in the samādhi] for a shorter period of time. “Lesser” may also refer to the practitioner’s seeing a relatively smaller number of buddha worlds. Distinctions regarding “middling” and “greater” may be made in just the same way.

#### M. VARIOUS QUALITATIVE VARIATIONS IN HOW THIS SAMĀDHI MANIFESTS

In discussing this samādhi, one may speak of it as:

Sometimes involving the presence of ideation (*vitarka*) and the presence of discursion (*vicāra*);

Sometimes involving the absence of ideation and the presence of discursion;

Sometimes involving the absence of ideation and the absence of discursion;

Sometimes involving the presence of joy (*prīti*);

Sometimes involving the presence of bliss (*sukha*);

Sometimes involving neither suffering nor bliss;

Sometimes involving the presence of breathing;

Sometimes involving the absence of breathing;

Sometimes definitely being of a wholesome nature;

Sometimes involving the presence of the contaminants;

Sometimes involving the absence of the contaminants;

Sometimes connected with the desire realm;  
 Sometimes connected with the form realm;  
 Sometimes connected with the formless realm;  
 Sometimes not connected with the desire realm;  
 Sometimes not connected with the form realm;  
 And sometimes not connected with the formless realm.

N. VARIOUS ABHIDHARMIC CLASSIFICATIONS OF THIS SAMĀDHI

This samādhi;

Is a mental dharma;  
 Is [a dharma] associated with the mind;  
 Is a dharma that occurs along with the mind;  
 Is a non-form [dharma];  
 Is a non-manifest [dharma];  
 Is able to take an object;  
 Is not karma [*per se*];  
 Is associated with karmic activity;  
 Is coexistent with karmic activity;  
 Is not the result of karmic actions from a previous life except when it  
 is the result of a particular cause;<sup>125</sup>  
 Can be cultivated, can be known, and can be realized;  
 Can be realized both with the body and by means of wisdom;  
 Can be subject to severance or may be invulnerable to severance;  
 Should be severed when contaminants are present;  
 And is invulnerable to severance when free of the contaminants.

Similar distinctions of this sort may also made with respect to the knowledge and vision associated with this samādhi. Also, it is not necessarily conjoined with the seven limbs of enlightenment.<sup>126</sup> Ideally, all of these distinctions should be discussed herein.

O. THE PRACTITIONER'S OFFERINGS, ROOTS OF GOODNESS, AND TEACHING

Furthermore, it is through the cultivation of this samādhi that one may succeed in seeing the Buddhas. Accordingly, it is said that:

After one has succeeded in seeing the Buddhas,  
 one proceeds with diligent resolve to present offerings [to them].  
 As one's roots of goodness are thus able to grow,  
 one becomes able to rapidly teach beings.

"Making offerings" refers to having a pure mind imbued with reverence and delight as one brings to mind the countless meritorious qualities of the Buddha. When one praises him in various ways, this constitutes the making of verbal offerings. When one makes formal

reverential bows and presents flowers, incenses, and other such things, this constitutes the making of physical offerings.

Because of these actions, one's karmic merit grows ever greater just as a seed starts to grow when it is planted in earth and receives moisture from the rain. "Rapidly teaching" refers to influencing beings to abide in the Three Vehicles. It is in this way that the bodhisattva brings about the growth of his roots of goodness.

P. THE PRACTITIONER'S USE OF THE FOUR MEANS OF ATTRACTION

Through availing oneself of the first two dharmas of attraction, one is able to attract beings [to the Dharma].

One resorts to the latter two dharmas of attraction for those not yet fully able to believe and accept [Dharma teachings].

"The first two" refers to "giving" and to "pleasing words" whereas "beneficial actions" and "joint endeavors" constitute "the latter two dharmas" [of the four means of attraction]. Because this bodhisattva who abides on the first ground is as yet unable to completely comprehend everything, [there may be certain aspects of the teaching] that he can only accept on faith.

Q. THE PRACTITIONER'S DEDICATION OF ROOTS OF GOODNESS

He then takes all of his roots of goodness and dedicates them to the realization of buddhahood.

This is comparable to when others smelt gold and then refine it, whereupon it thereby becomes amenable to use.

It is through being smelted by the fire of wisdom that, in all the endeavors undertaken by the bodhisattva, his roots of goodness ripen and then finally become amenable to use.