**The Avatamsaka Sutra**

**CHAPTER2**

Translated in the Tang Dynasty by the Tripitaka Master Srãmana Siksananda of Khotan

**Explanation by VM. Hua**

**The Manifestations of the Thus Come One**

Outline

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VI. Concluding with the universal and infinite nature

**Commentary:**

Thus Come One is one of the ten titles of a Buddha. The Vajra Sutra says, “The Thus Come One does not come from anywhere, nor does he go anywhere. Therefore he is called ‘Thus Come One’.”

Thus Come One carries another meaning: He travels the Way that is “thus” [yathabhutam]—according to Reality—and “comes” to realize Proper Enlightenment. What does “He travels the Way according to Reality” mean? “According to Reality” is the true principle of the one true Dharma Realm. “And ‘comes’ to realize Proper Enlightenment” means that the Buddha attains the truth and has a great enlightenment; he realizes Proper Enlightenment. Proper Enlightenment refers to the Buddha’s enlightenment. Therefore, “He travels the Way according to Reality and ‘comes’ to realizes Proper Enlightenment” is one way of explaining “Thus Come One.”

Still another way of explaining it is that the basic substance of all dharmas is “thus”; all dharmas are “thus.” “Come” is the function of dharmas; the function arises from the substance. That is why he is called Thus Come One.

The meaning of “manifestation” is as follows. Originally the Buddha has no appearance. Why does the Buddha manifest when he is devoid of appearances? He is without an appearance, yet, in order to teach and transform beings, he manifests. What appearance does he manifest? The Thirty-two Hallmarks and the Eighty Subsidiary Characteristics.

This chapter will explain how the Thus Come One is able to manifest. This is **Chapter Two** of the Flower Adornment Sutra. It is entitled **The Manifestations of the Thus Come One**.

Some people may not understand these principles after hearing them; they still don’t understand what is meant by Thus Come One. Therefore I will elaborate further.

“Thus” represents stillness; “come” means movement. The state of the Flower Adornment Sutrais one where movement and stillness are of one “suchness”; movement and stillness are nondual. That is the Thus Come One. Movement does not obstruct stillness and stillness does not obstruct movement; they do not hinder one another. That is the Thus Come One.

Furthermore, “thus” is the principle; it’s the essence of the truth. “Come” is the actual appearance. While “thus” has no appearance, “come” is something that can be seen. This is to say, phenomena do not obstruct the noumenon, and the noumenon does not obstruct phenomena. They interpenetrate perfectly without obstruction.

Thus Come One is one of the ten titles of a Buddha. The ten titles are:

1. Thus Come One
2. One Worthy of Offerings
3. One of Proper and Pervasive Knowledge
4. One Who Is Perfect in Understanding and Practice
5. Well Gone One Who Understands the World
6. Unsurpassed Lord
7. Taming Hero
8. Teacher of Gods and Humans
9. Buddha
l0.World Honored One

The Buddha is now manifesting. When the Buddha first realized the Way, he manifested the inconceivable state of his great, awesome spiritual powers within the great Dharma Assembly. Therefore, Chapter Two is called “The Manifestation of the Thus Come One.”

I. The oceanic multitudes simultaneously request [Dharma]
A. Requesting by directly asking questions
1. Asking about perfect virtues and abilities
a. The grounds of the Buddhas

**Sutra:**

**At that time, the Bodhisattvas and all the world rulers had these thoughts: “What are the grounds of the Buddhas?”**

**Commentary:**

**At that time** refers to the time when the Buddha was speaking the chapter called “The Manifestations of the Thus Come One.”

There are some Dharma Masters who explain sutras in a fixed way and deliberately make their lectures sound abstruse. Their rigid explanations bind the Buddhist sutras up leaving no flexibility. What is more, such Dharma Masters criticize others who don’t follow the same rigid way of lecturing and binding the sutras up.

Actually, the principles in the sutras can be explained in a myriad ways; there’s nothing fixed about them. The Vajra Sutra says, “There are no fixed dharmas.”

There are those Dharma Masters who deliberately criticize others by saying they are wrong, in order to show that they themselves have a lot of knowledge. When I explain the sutras, I don’t criticize others because I know very little. When lecturing sutras, you should make them come alive and explain their principles very clearly. As long as you feel that your explanation accords with the sutra, that’s good enough. You don’t have to follow a certain person’s style of lecturing.

I am lecturing for you right now, but in the future, when you understand the principles in the sutras, you don’t have to explain them the same way that I am doing. You may explain those principles based on your own understanding.

Once a Dharma Master said that I had explained the words “At that time” incorrectly, and I told him, “That’s the way I lecture it. All you need to be concerned with is that you do not lecture it in that way.” He had nothing more to say. He was a case of someone trying to deliberately show off that he knew better.

In the future when all of you go out to lecture on the sutras and speak the Dharma, you need not listen to certain “erudite” Dharma Masters who deliberately criticize others even when they have lectured correctly. In America, in the future, don’t learn this bad habit. Now, some of you have picked up this habit as you translate the sutras. You say, “Your translation is wrong; mine is right.” That’s just seeking fame and gain. In what way is your translation good? In what way are other people’s translations bad? If you translate well, then go ahead and translate well. If other people don’t translate well, then gradually, they will improve. Some people have a nasty habit of wanting to make their own names a little bigger, a little higher, so they can have greater recognition. This is completely wrong. When you translate the sutras, don’t pay attention whether someone says it’s good or not. Just use your own wisdom and ability and do the best you can for the sake of Buddhism.

You shouldn’t let one little sentence of praise make you overjoyed, or one little criticism get you upset. You shouldn’t be influenced by these states. That’s just the Thus Come One. If you are disturbed by these states, you are not like the Thus Come One.

We are now talking about the Thus Come One. Everyone has the potential for becoming a Thus Come One. If you are not influenced by anything, then you are Thus. If you are always doing your work, then you are Come. Everything can be turned around.

What time is “at that time” referring to? It means the present time that we are lecturing on the Flower Adornment Sutra. You don’t have to say that it’s the time when the Buddha was speaking this sutra. We are lecturing on the Flower Adornment Sutra right now, so it can refer to this very interval of time. “It says ‘that’ time,” you may argue. What difference is there between that time and this time? We’re lecturing on the Flower Adornment Sutra right at this moment, so it’s this time.

In the future, if any Dharma Master tells you that you lectured incorrectly, you can just tell them that when they are lecturing they can lecture it the way they feel is correct.

**The Bodhisattvas** . Who are all these Bodhisattvas? Perhaps this is referring to all of us who are here now; you and I are those Bodhisattvas. There is certain to be one Bodhisattva among us.

Or, there might be many Bodhisattvas. It’s not certain. Would you agree with that? Someone might say, “I don’t think there are any Bodhisattvas here.” Well, I believe that there are many Bodhisattvas here. It’s just that you don’t recognize them.

All the Bodhisattvas were there with **all the world rulers**, such as kings and presidents who rule in the world. There aren’t any in this Dharma Assembly; perhaps in the future there will be some.

Together they **had these thoughts**. All of the Bodhisattvas and the world rulers together were thinking. What were they thinking about? They were thinking about the states of the Buddha. Otherwise, why would the Thus Come One appear? They were all thinking, **what are the grounds of the Buddhas?** What is meant by the grounds of the Buddhas? All of the great Bodhisattvas and the world rulers, who were extremely intelligent, didn’t understand what was meant by the grounds of the Buddhas. They all wanted to investigate this matter, to ponder over it.

“What are the grounds of the Buddhas?” is similar to the inquiry we make while investigating Chan and look into “Who is mindful of the Buddha?” What are the grounds of the Buddhas like? They can give birth to all Bodhisattvas, all Arhats, and all beings. All beings are born from the grounds of the Buddhas; Arhats all come forth from the grounds of the Buddhas; and all the great Bodhisattvas also come forth from the grounds of the Buddhas. Not only do the great Bodhisattvas come forth from the grounds of the Buddhas, all Buddhas come forth from the grounds of the Buddhas. The grounds of the Buddhas are a place where all sages and worthies dwell; they are the grounds where all sages and worthies practice. The grounds of the Buddhas are complete with both blessings and wisdom. Only when blessings are perfected and wisdom is perfected can one ascend to the grounds of the Buddhas.

And yet, although this is the case, none of the great Bodhisattvas or world rulers understood the state of the grounds of the Buddhas. Now, we are speaking just a little bit about the grounds of the Buddhas. Ultimately, they are wonderful beyond words.

The Bodhisattvas and all the world rulers are now entertaining an idle thought; they want to know what the grounds of the Buddhas are like. For now, I will give you a general idea; later on, I will explain this in more detail.

I.A.1.b. The states of the Buddhas

**Sutra:**

**What are the states of the Buddhas?**

**Commentary:**

The Bodhisattvas want to know, “**What are the states of the Buddhas?”** To know the state of the Buddha, you must “let your mind be as pure as space.” The state of the Buddhas is empty space. If you know what space is like, then you will be able to perceive the Buddhas’ state. Space contains nothing and the states of the Buddhas also contain nothing. However you perceive space, the state of the Buddhas is that way, too. So there’s a saying, “If there are people who wish to know the Buddhas’ state, they should make their minds as pure as empty space.” Empty space doesn’t possess anything at all, and yet, it contains everything. Although it is empty space, all the mountains, the rivers, the great earth, the buildings, and homes are all contained within it. Therefore, the state of the Buddhas is without any state at all. No state is the true state. Why do we say there is no state? It’s not one particular state; it’s all states. If you tried to speak about all states you would never finish, which is why we say it is without a state, like empty space.

Empty space contains everything. There isn’t a single thing outside of empty space. And there isn’t any state that can go beyond the state of the Buddhas. The state of the Buddhas is just like empty space in that it contains all the myriad things. It reaches the point where a state is not even a state; you have a state, yet there isn’t any state at all. That’s the state of the Buddhas. There are ten kinds of states of the Buddhas that are described in the commentary. If you want to know about them, you should investigate them. What I am discussing here is no state at all; the state of the Buddhas is no state. If you can “sweep away all dharmas and separate from all appearances,” then that will be like empty space, in which there isn’t anything at all.

I.A.1.c. The ways in which the Buddhas bestow aid

**Sutra:**

**What are the ways in which the Buddhas bestow aid?**

**Commentary:**

**What are the ways in which the Buddhas bestow aid?** All of us who are present here are being aided by the Buddhas. The Buddhas’ aid can help to perpetuate our resolve for Bodhi; they can make it so we don’t forget our bodhi resolve. The aid of the Buddhas can cause us to always keep our commitment to realize Bodhi. The aid of the Buddhas can make everything be auspicious and go according to our wishes. Absolutely everything is due to the Buddhas’ aid. Although the Buddhas aid us, we beings are not aware of it. Within the Buddhas’ Dharma-body we are permeated with the Buddhas’ Dharma, yet, we are unaware of that.

If you can cultivate and attain the fruition, you will know that everything is due to receiving the aid of the Buddhas. If you can open up your Five Eyes, you will know that absolutely everything is due to receiving the Buddhas’ aid. Not only do people and all other sentient beings receive the aid of the Buddhas, all of the trees, the grass, insentient things, the soil, and the rocks receive the Buddhas’ aid as well. The power of the Buddhas’ aid exhausts space and pervades the Dharma Realm. You could never finish speaking about it. Therefore, absolutely everything receives the Buddhas’ aid. There is a public record that relates to this passage of text, proving that everyone receives the Buddhas’ aid. This event took place when the Buddha first appeared in the world.

In the city of Campa lived a wealthy elder. Although he held a high position in society, he didn’t have a son. Consequently, he made offerings to six masters who happened to be from non-Buddhist sects. He did this because he wanted a son. Everyday he respectfully made offerings and bowed to these six masters. He told them he wanted a son.

Now, it’s not known which one, but among the six masters there was one who manifested spiritual powers, after which the elder’s wife became pregnant. But this wealthy elder was never satisfied with anything; when “given an inch, he would take a foot.” Once his wife was with child, he happily returned to these six masters and said to them, “My wife is pregnant. Can you tell me whether she will give birth to a boy or a girl?”

The six masters took a look at her physiognomy and said to the elder’s wife, “You are going to have a daughter.”

When the elder heard that his wife was going to have a daughter, he became very distraught again. He said, “If I have a son, I can bequeath my family heritage to him. But if I have a daughter, I won’t be able to give her anything! I have so much wealth; what am I to do?” He was extremely vexed.

At that time, a Good Knowing One came to his home. After he arrived he asked the elder, “Why are you so worried?”

The elder replied, “I’m so old now, and I was hoping for a son. My wife became pregnant, but there are six masters who have informed me that the child in her womb is a girl. I have so much wealth and property, yet I don’t know what will become of it in the future. That’s why I’m so worried.”

The elder had no children. Having sought for one, he got one. However, he was going to get a daughter instead of a son, so this caused him to be distressed again. This truly is the “suffering of not getting what you seek for.”

At that time the Good Knowing One began praising the Buddha, saying, “The Buddha knows everything. Go ask the Buddha. Maybe what the six masters said wasn’t right.” So the elder went off to talk to the Buddha. He asked him if his wife was going to have a boy or a girl. The Buddha replied, “It’s definitely going to be a boy! Not only will it be a boy, he will be extremely handsome.”

What do you think the elder did next? He was really an old fool; he didn’t have any wisdom. He went back and told the six masters, “I asked the Buddha and he said that my wife is going to have a son. She’s definitely going to have a son. The Buddha guarantees that it will be a boy; it’s not going to be a girl. All of you read her physiognomy and told me that I absolutely wouldn’t have a son, that I would have a daughter. Well, you all turned out to be wrong.”

Now, when the six masters heard that, they became extremely jealous. They thought to themselves, “Your Buddha says that you’re going to have a son. Very well, we’ll make it so that you won’t have a daughter or a son!” Whereupon they took an amalaka fruit, mashed it into a pulp, and added poison to it. Then they instructed the elder to bring it back to his wife and give it to her to eat. They told him, “If your wife eats this piece of fruit, even if she has a girl, the girl will become a boy. Not only that, his features will be extremely handsome. You should quickly return home and give this to your wife to eat.” The elder returned home and gave the fruit to his wife to eat. As soon as she ate it, she died. She had neither a son nor a daughter.

When the elder took his wife to be cremated, the Buddha was aware of this. He knew that the six masters had poisoned the elder’s wife. When the Buddha came to where the elder was, the elder said to him, “Buddha, you say you don’t lie, but you told me my wife was going to have a son. Now she is dead, and I don’t even have a daughter! What am I going to do? What you said was wrong.”

The Buddha told the elder, “You asked me whether your wife was going to have a son or a daughter. You didn’t ask me how long your wife was going to live. Although this has happened and your wife is now dead, I guarantee you that you will still have that son. If you don’t believe me, just take a look.”

Sure enough, they took a look and saw that the heat from the fire had caused the skin of the wife’s abdomen to burst open. And there was a child sitting on the fire looking very much at ease. The Buddha said, “Quickly go and pick up the child.” The six masters, who were also there, said, “Don’t do it!”

The elder took a look at his son and thought to himself, “How can I pick him up!” He then said, “If the Buddha told me to fall into the Hell of Boiling Water, the boiling water would become cool. This is just an ordinary fire. Basically, there isn’t any problem.” And with that, he picked up the child, handed him to the Buddha, and said, “The Buddha has aided this child. Although his mother was poisoned to death, and was cremated, the fire didn’t burn this child. This is due to the power of the Buddha’s aid.”

The Buddha then took the child from the elder and said to him, “Beings’ lifespans are as ephemeral as bubbles on the water. This child was in the fire but didn’t get burned to death. As a result of his reward from previous lives, he won’t be burned to death in this life.”

Then the elder requested the Buddha to name his son. The Buddha said, “Since the fire didn’t kill him, I will give him the name, Fire.” In Sanskrit, fire is jyotih, so the child was called Jyotishka. On the one hand, he received the power of the Buddha’s aid, and on the other hand, he himself cultivated this kind of reward whereby he couldn’t be burned by the fire.

I.A.1.d. The practices of the Buddhas

Sutra:

**What are the practices of the Buddhas?**

**Commentary:**

All of the Bodhisattvas are now wondering: “**What are the practices of the Buddhas?** What do they do? How do they conduct themselves?” These are some of the things they want to know about.

All Buddhas refers to the Buddhas throughout the ten directions and the three periods of time. What they do is to teach and transform beings. They cause beings to realize the Buddha Way together. Whatever the Buddhas do, it is just right. They never do too much nor too little; it’s just right. It’s right here where their conduct differs from that of beings.

There are ten opportunities that all Buddhas never pass up. The first is that all Buddhas realize Proper Enlightenment at the opportune time, neither too soon nor too late. Right when it’s time for them to realize Proper Enlightenment, they do so. The Buddhas never miss the opportunity to realize Proper Enlightenment.

The second is that all Buddhas never miss the opportunity to bring those with whom they have conditions to maturity. When beings are nearly mature and are ready to attain liberation, at that precise moment the Buddhas come to help them reach maturity and attain liberation. However, this is referring to those beings with whom the Buddhas have affinities. Those beings who do not have affinities with them must wait until their conditions ripen before they can be liberated.

The third is that all Buddhas never miss the opportunity to bestow predictions of bodhi upon beings. They tell beings when they will become Buddhas, what the name of their lands will be, what their Buddha names will be, and what their kalpas will be called.

The fourth is that all Buddhas, throughout the ten directions and the three periods of time, never miss the opportunity to manifest all kinds of spiritual powers in order to accord with the minds of beings.

The fifth is that all Buddhas, throughout the ten directions and the three periods of time , never miss the opportunity to manifest the body of a Buddha for beings according to their level of understanding. They enable beings to understand as much as they are able to understand.

The sixth is that all Buddhas never miss the opportunity to practice great renunciation. No matter what it is, they can renounce it. No matter what it is, they can let go of it. They are not greedy or stingy at all. They can renounce absolutely everything.

The seventh is that all Buddhas never miss the opportunity to enter into all communities. Communities refer to cities. It’s not that when they should go to the city they don’t go, and when they shouldn’t go to the city, they go. They go to a community or a city at the most appropriate time.

The eighth is that all Buddhas never miss the opportunity to gather in and transform beings. They do it at the most appropriate time.

The ninth is that all Buddhas never miss the opportunity to subdue beings who engage in the ten evil deeds and who neglect to do what is good. They don’t pass up the opportunity to tame and subdue such beings.

The tenth is that all Buddhas never miss the opportunity to reveal the inconceivable spiritual powers of the Buddhas. They manifest them exactly when they should.

All Buddhas never miss these ten kinds of opportunities in their practice. This has been a general discussion. If I were to speak of these ten opportunities in detail, I would never be able to finish discussing them, for their meanings are infinite.

I.A.1.e. The powers of the Buddhas

Sutra:

**What are the powers of the Buddhas?**

Commentary:

All of the Bodhisattvas are now wondering, “**What are the powers of the Buddhas?”** I have explained the Ten Powers before. The Buddhas’ powers are limitless, boundless, and inconceivable. They will now be explained in a general way.

The first is all Buddhas have powers that are vast and great.

The second is all Buddhas have a supreme and incomparable power; there is nothing higher than it.

The third is all Buddhas, throughout the ten directions and the three periods of time, have limitless and boundless powers.

The fourth is that all Buddhas cultivate blessings and wisdom at the level of planting causes. Consequently, they obtain the power of great majesty that comes from their previous cultivation.

The fifth is all Buddhas have a power that is difficult to attain.

The sixth is all Buddhas have nonretreating power; they never retreat from their resolve for Bodhi. They advance with vigor and never retrogress. They have this nonretreating power. While cultivating, they advance and never go backward.

The seventh is all Buddhas have a power that is solid.

The eighth is all Buddhas have an indestructible power. There is no way anyone can destroy it.

The ninth is all Buddhas have inconceivable powers in all worlds.

The tenth is all Buddhas have the power not to be moved by beings. Beings have no way to disturb the Buddhas.

This is the Flower Adornment Sutra’s meaning. Since I am not looking at anyone’s commentary, there may be times when I speak incorrectly. You may take a look at the Flower Adornment Sutra Prologue [by National Master Qing Liang of the Tang Dynasty]. I’m giving you an explanation based on what I remember. If you want more detail, you can investigate more on your own. As we investigate the Flower Adornment Sutra, it would be best if those of you who know Chinese do some studying beforehand. Then, when I lecture for you, you will have an understanding of the text. If you don’t read in advance, what use is it to have the Prologue? If you can read the Prologue before and after the lecture, taking time out to investigate it even if you are busy, then you will come to understand the Flower Adornment Sutra. This is an opportunity that is difficult to encounter.

Ten additional powers are listed in the Prologue. The first is, Buddhas have the power whereby their bodies and lives cannot be destroyed.

The second is, Buddhas have the power to contain other worlds within a single pore.

The third is, Buddhas have the power to manifest and hold large mountains on the tip of a single hair.

The fourth is, while within samadhi, Buddhas have the power of free and independent functioning.

The fifth is, Buddhas have the power of always pervasively expounding the Dharma. At all times, they pervasively fill up all worlds in order to speak the inconceivable, wonderful Dharma.

The sixth is, Buddhas have the power of being endowed with a virtuous appearance that can subdue demons.

The seventh is, Buddhas have the power of a perfect, penetrating sound. When the Buddhas speak Dharma, their sound pervasively fills up the great trichiliocosm. All beings can hear it.

The eighth is, Buddhas have the power of an unobstructed mind; a mind without any impediments.

The ninth is, Buddhas have the power of a subtle and secret Dharma body.

The tenth is, Buddhas are replete with the power of the cultivation of wisdom. These are the ten additional powers.

I.A.1. f. The fearlessnesses of the Buddhas

Sutra:

**What are the fearlessnesses of the Buddhas?**

Commentary:

Buddhas fear nothing at all, unlike ordinary beings, who have things they fear. Buddhas are fearless. The Buddhas’ fearlessnesses are also limitless and boundless.

Speaking in general terms, the first is the fearlessness of hearing and upholding. The Buddhas have the fearlessness of hearing, cultivating, and upholding.

The second is the fearlessness of eloquence. Buddhas have unobstructed eloquence. The principles they speak are completely accurate.

The third is the fearlessness of two kinds of emptiness in which beings and dharmas are both empty.

The fourth is the fearlessness of being flawless in awesome deportment. Buddhas have perfected the three thousand awesome deportments and eighty thousand fine aspects of conduct. Every aspect of their deportment is perfect. They have an awesome demeanor that beings revere.

The fifth is the fearlessness of being without errors or faults in the three modes of karma—physical, verbal, and mental. The Buddhas do not commit the three evil acts of killing, stealing, or sexual misconduct with their bodies. Their minds do not give rise to the three evils of greed, anger, and delusion. Their mouths do not commit the four evils of lying, loose speech, harsh speech, and divisive speech.

The sixth is the fearlessness of external protection. The Buddhas enjoy the protection of all the Dharma protectors. Therefore, none of the celestial demons or externalists can take advantage of them.

The seventh is the fearlessness of having proper mindfulness. Within samadhi, at all times the Buddhas dwell in proper mindfulness and proper concentration.

The eighth is the fearlessness of expedient means. Buddhas use all kinds of expedient means to teach and transform beings, leading them to make a great resolve for bodhi, and to end birth and death.

The ninth is the fearlessness of All-Wisdom. Buddhas have All-Wisdom; they understand everything, regardless of what it might be.

The tenth is the fearlessness of being perfect in all practices. They have completely cultivated and perfected the six perfections and the myriad practices.

Buddhas have these ten kinds of fearlessnesses. This has been a very simple explanation of them. If I were to speak of them more extensively, they are also measureless and boundless.

I.A.1.g. The samadhis of the Buddhas

Sutra:

**What are the samadhis of the Buddhas?**

Commentary:

Samadhi is a Sanskrit word translated as “proper concentration” and “proper perception.” The Buddhas’ samadhis are also limitless, boundless, inexhaustible, and infinite. In brief, there are ten kinds of samadhis.

The first is, Buddhas are always in proper samadhi. Although they are in samadhi, in the space of a single thought, they can pervade all places; they can go everywhere proclaiming the wonderful Dharma in great detail for the sake of beings.

The second is, all Buddhas, while in samadhi, in the space of a single thought, can pervade all places and speak the Dharma of no-self for the sake of beings.

The third is, all Buddhas, while in samadhi, in the space of a single thought, can reach all lands and enter into the three periods of time—the past, the present, and the future—without there being any obstruction among them.

The fourth is, not only can they pervasively enter into the three periods of time, all Buddhas, while in samadhi, in the space of a single thought, can pervasively reach all places and universally enter into vast and great Buddhalands throughout the ten directions, also without obstruction.

The fifth is, all Buddhas, while in samadhi, in the space of a single thought, can pervasively reach all places, everywhere manifesting all kinds of Buddhas’ bodies. This is yet another one of their samadhis.

The sixth is, all Buddhas, while in samadhi, in the space of a single thought, can pervasively reach all places and, complying with the various minds and various understandings of beings, manifest the purity of the three karmic vehicles—the body, the mouth, and the mind.

The seventh is, all Buddhas, while in samadhi, in the space of a single thought, can pervasively reach all places and speak the Dharma for the sake of beings, leading them to renounce love and desire and realize ultimate reality.

The eighth is, all Buddhas, while in samadhi, in the space of a single thought, can pervasively reach all places and proclaim the inherent nature of things, which is that they arise from causes and conditions.

The ninth is, all Buddhas, while in samadhi, in the space of a single thought, can pervasively reach all places and manifest limitless vast, great adornments, both worldly and world-transcending, enabling all beings to constantly see the Buddhas.

The tenth is, all Buddhas, while in samadhi, in the space of a single thought, can cause all beings to completely understand all Buddhadharmas, understand limitless passages into liberation, and ultimately arrive at the unsurpassed “other shore.”

This is a general explanation of the Buddhas’ ten kinds of samadhis.

I.A.1.h. The spiritual powers of the Buddhas

Sutra:

**What are the spiritual powers of the Buddhas?**

Commentary:

The spiritual powers of an Arhat are already inconceivable. They can fly and manifest spiritual transformations. By lifting a hand or a foot, they can shake heaven and earth. The wonderful functions of the Bodhisattvas’ spiritual powers are even more incredible than those of the Arhats. Yet, in comparison, the wonderful functions of the Buddhas’ spiritual powers are still more inconceivable than those of the Bodhisattvas. One could never finish describing the wonderful functions of the Buddhas’ spiritual powers and of their ability to create infinite transformations. We will mention just a few of their spiritual powers here.

The first is the wisdom of the spiritual power of knowing others’ thoughts. All the various thoughts that any being entertains are completely known and seen by the Thus Come One. Why is he able to know the various thoughts in beings’ minds? He has the wisdom of the spiritual power of knowing others’ thoughts.

The second is the wisdom of the spiritual power of the heavenly eye. Not only does the Buddha know the thoughts in beings’ minds within the human realm, he also know the thoughts going on in the minds of beings in the heavens.

The third is the wisdom of the spiritual power of knowing past lives through limitless kalpas.

The fourth is the wisdom of the spiritual power of knowing kalpas throughout all time.

The fifth is the wisdom of the spiritual power of the unobstructed, pure heavenly ear.

The sixth is the wisdom of the spiritual power whereby, without any particular quality, and without movement or action, he can quite naturally go to all Buddhalands.

The seventh is the wisdom of the spiritual power of being able to understand all languages.

The eighth is the wisdom of the spiritual power of being able to manifest innumerable physical bodies.

The ninth is the wisdom of the spiritual power of understanding all dharmas. Regardless of what dharma it is, the Buddha understands it thoroughly.

The tenth is the wisdom of the spiritual power of entering the samadhi of extinction.

The Buddhas’ spiritual powers can be explained in yet another way.

The first is, in the space of a single thought, all Buddhas throughout the ten directions and the three periods of time can manifest an ineffable, ineffable number of Buddhas coming into the world.

The second is, in the space of a single thought, all Buddhas can manifest an ineffable, ineffable number of Buddhas turning the Dharma wheel.

The third is, in the space of a single thought, all Buddhas can manifest an ineffable, ineffable number of bodies to teach, transform, and tame beings.

The fourth is, in the space of a single thought, all Buddhas can manifest an ineffable, ineffable number of Buddhalands.

The fifth is, in the space of a single thought, all Buddhas can manifest an ineffable, ineffable number of Bodhisattvas receiving predictions.

The sixth is, in the space of a single thought, all Buddhas can manifest all Buddhas of the past, present, and future.

The seventh is, in the space of a single thought, all Buddhas can manifest all worlds of the past, present, and future.

The eighth is, in the space of a single thought, all Buddhas can manifest all of the spiritual powers of the Buddhas of the past, present, and future.

The ninth is, in the space of a single thought, all Buddhas can manifest all beings of the past, present, and future.

The tenth is, in the space of a single thought, all Buddhas can manifest all the deeds done by Buddhas of the past, present, and future.

We could never finish talking about the wonderful functions of the Buddhas’ spiritual powers.

I.A.1.i. The kinds of self-mastery of the Buddhas

Sutra:

**What kinds of self-mastery do the Buddhas have?**

Commentary:

All of the great Bodhisattvas have another doubt; there is something they don’t understand, and so they further ask, “**What kinds of self-mastery do the Buddhas have?**” Are there any limits to the self-mastery of the Buddhas? Does it have any bounds? No, it doesn’t.

To have self-mastery means being free of afflictions. To have afflictions is to be without self-mastery. People who are free from afflictions have self-mastery. People who get afflicted experience troubles. People without afflictions don’t have any troubles. Troubles don’t come from the outside; they are induced by one’s inherent nature.

Yesterday I spoke about the Four Noble Truths. The Second Truth says, “This is accumulation; by nature it beckons.” To accumulate [afflictions, etc.] is to be without self-mastery. To not engage in accumulation [of afflictions] is to have self-mastery.

Self-mastery also means not having any false thinking. If you have false thoughts, you won’t have any self-mastery. If you don’t have false thoughts, you will attain self-mastery. Self-mastery is just not being greedy. If you are greedy, you won’t have any self-mastery. If you aren’t, you can experience self-mastery. Self-mastery is not being angry. If you indulge in anger, you won’t attain self-mastery. If you are free of anger, you will attain self-mastery. Self-mastery is not being deluded. If you are deluded, you won’t enjoy self-mastery.

If you have self-mastery with one thing, you will have self-mastery with everything. If you don’t have self-mastery with one thing, then you won’t have self-mastery with everything else.

What is meant by “the one”? The one is the beginning of all the other numbers; it already implies the notion of numbers. Once there is one, there will be two, and from two comes three. One leads to ten; ten leads to one hundred; one hundred leads to one thousand, and one thousand leads to ten thousand. The farther you go, the less self-mastery there is. If you can attain the one, you will have self-mastery. If you can’t attain the one, you won’t have self-mastery. One means being single-minded. Single-minded means not having two minds; there is only one mind.

For example, for those of us who cultivate the Way, why can’t we become enlightened? It’s just because we aren’t single-minded. Why haven’t we increased our wisdom? It’s also because we aren’t single-minded.

If you can be single-minded, then you have self-mastery. If you aren’t single-minded, you don’t have self-mastery. If you have many minds, your mind will not have self-mastery. If you have lots of false thinking, you do not having self-mastery.

We’ve just spoken about the one, yet still nobody understands what the one means. People are saying, “Dharma Master, you’ve been lecturing all wrong. Children could speak about this: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Not to mention adults, even children understand the one. Why did you say there are people who don’t understand?”

I said you didn’t understand because it’s for certain, you don’t. If you understood, I wouldn’t have said you didn’t understand. Why? Because this “one” is internal; it’s not external. What is the internal “one”? It’s your essence, energy, and spirit. If you can keep your essence from going out, you will attain the one. If you can’t keep your essence from leaving you, if you still want to let it go, not only will you be unable to attain the one, you won’t even be able to attain the two.

What is the Way that we are cultivating? What is the sutra that is lectured talking about? What is the Dharma that we are speaking? It all goes back to the “one.” It’s all telling us to cut off desire and sever love. Your thoughts of love and desire cause you to fall.

Therefore, self-mastery is simply the ability to keep your essence from escaping. If you cannot keep your essence from leaving, then you do not have self-mastery. You might consider yourself to have attained self-mastery, but it would be false. It’s right here that cultivators of the Way want to pay special attention.

When the one is attained, the myriad things are done with.

If you can attain the one, everything will be finished. All other matters will be unessential. If you are able to protect your true essence and not let it flow outside, then you have attained the one.

When you attain the one, you still have to protect it. If you don’t protect the one, it will still run off. So you need to guard it. Guarding the one, you still have to understand the one. If you don’t understand the one, you will be all muddled while you are trying to protect it, and your wisdom will not be able to unfold.

To attain the one is precepts. To protect the one is samadhi. To understand the one is wisdom. This is just precepts, samadhi, and wisdom. So you have to ask yourself whether or not you can attain the one. If you can’t attain it, you should quickly feel repentant, bring forth the bodhi resolve, and muster vigorous determination. Otherwise, in the future you will certainly fall into the hells. There won’t be any other road for you to take. That is because you don’t want to attain the one, you can’t protect the one, and you don’t want to understand the one. You figure you can just be all muddled and confused, and it doesn’t matter. If you can attain the one, then you have true self-mastery.

Why do all Buddhas have great self-mastery? It’s because they have attained the one. They hold the precepts, cultivate samadhi, and give rise to wisdom, so they have attained self-mastery. There are also ten kinds of self-mastery that Buddhas possess.

The first is the functioning of unobstructed self-mastery with regard to Buddhalands. These Buddhalands do not obstruct one another. The Buddha can take this land and move it to another land, and then take that land and move it to where this land was. They can take a world and move it at their leisure.

The second is the functioning of unobstructed self-mastery with regard to beings. The Buddha can teach and transform each and every being as he pleases. According to their circumstances, they are taught and transformed and can realize the Buddha Way.

The third is the functioning of unobstructed self-mastery with regard to the Dharma. The Dharma spoken by the Buddha is based on the principles of self-mastery. Self-mastery is just the mind; the minds of beings. Therefore, the Dharma spoken by the Buddha is not apart from beings’ minds. Apart from beings’ minds, of what use is any Dharma? Apart from the mind, Dharma isn’t necessary. This is the great functioning of unobstructed self-mastery with regard to Dharma.

The fourth is the functioning of the unobstructed self-mastery of the Buddha’s body. The Buddha can go wherever he wants. If he doesn’t feel like going anywhere, he doesn’t have to. Responding to conditions, he manifests in order to teach and transform beings. Why does the Buddha’s body have the functioning of unobstructed self-mastery? It is because of the power of the vows he made in past lives.

The fifth is the functioning of unobstructed self-mastery derived from the power of vows. Why does the Buddha have such great self-mastery? It’s because in his past lives—in life after life—he brought forth limitless vows to achieve self-mastery. And these vows do not obstruct one another in their functioning.

The sixth is the functioning of unobstructed self-mastery with regard to states. The states of the Buddha are limitless and boundless, because he has self-mastery. Using his self-mastery, he can transformationally create all of these states, which do not obstruct one another.

The seventh is the functioning of the unobstructed self-mastery of wisdom. The Buddha’s wisdom is even more unobstructed. Functioning with self-mastery, it can illumine everything.

The eighth is the functioning of the unobstructed self-mastery of spiritual strength.

The ninth is the functioning of the unobstructed self-mastery of spiritual powers.

The tenth is the functioning of the unobstructed self-mastery of the Buddha’s Ten Powers.

If I were to speak in detail about these kinds of self-mastery, I could not finish speaking to the end of time. And so I have just given a very simple explanation.

I.A.1.j. The kinds of indestructibility of the Buddhas

Sutra:

**What kinds of indestructibility do the Buddhas have?**

Commentary:

All of the great Bodhisattvas further asked, “**What kinds of indestructibility do the Buddhas have?”** Indestructible means impossible to vanquish or destroy. The force of the Buddha’s spiritual powers cannot be compared with those of gods, demons, externalists, adherents of the Two Vehicles, or even great Bodhisattvas. They cannot be destroyed by any being. This indestructibility is also limitless and boundless. One could never finish speaking about it. In general, there are ten kinds.

The first is that all Buddhas throughout the ten directions and the three periods of time—Buddhas of the past, present, and future—at the level of planting causes, made great vows. These great vows are solid; they can’t be destroyed. The Buddhas’ vows aren’t like those of one of my disciples, who made a vow that he said would expire after three years. That is not a solid vow; it’s a weak vow.

The vows that the Buddhas make are adamantine and indestructible. No one can destroy them. When they make vows, they definitely carry them out. They say, “I’ve made a vow; I’m certainly going to act on that vow.” They wouldn’t make a vow and then forget about it after a couple of days. They don’t deviate from their words. They don’t tell lies. That is the first kind of indestructibility.

The second is that, wishing to cultivate and perfect all merit and virtue, passing through eons to the end of time, they always cultivate the Bodhisattva conduct. They cultivate the six perfections and the myriad practices and never become weary or lazy.

The third is that they want to subdue all beings. Basically, beings are stubborn and difficult to regulate and subdue. Nonetheless, the Buddhas make vows to regulate and subdue all beings. And so they send innumerable division-bodies to an ineffable, ineffable number of worlds in order to regulate and subdue all the beings there. Their practice never ends.

The fourth is that they universally contemplate with great compassion those beings who have faith and who cultivate. Whoever has faith will receive the aid of the Buddhas. Whoever cultivates will also receive the aid of the Buddhas; it’s very egalitarian. However much faith you have, they will aid you that much.

The fifth is that from the time they first make the bodhi resolve, from the very first day they begin cultivating, up through the time when they become Buddhas, they never retreat from their resolve. They are vigorous from start to finish. They never retreat from their bodhi resolve. Such are the Buddhas’ conduct and vows with regard to the fifth kind of indestructibility.

The sixth is that they have accumulated an infinite amount of wholesome merit and virtue. Starting with a very small amount, they accumulate a limitless and boundless amount of merit and virtue. They transfer their merit and virtue to the nature of All-Wisdom; that is, they make transference to the Buddhas. The Buddhas make transference to one another, because the Way of all Buddhas is the same. They have no defiled attachments to worldly dharmas.

The seventh kind of indestructible conduct is that within all of the Buddhas’ bodhimandas, they cultivate the purity of the three karmic vehicles: the body, the mouth, and the mind. They cultivate the methods of practice cultivated by all Buddhas. They don’t cultivate the practices of the Two Vehicles. They simultaneously transfer all of the merit and virtue from their cultivation of all practices to the nature of All-Wisdom, or Buddhahood. And therefore they realize Unsurpassed, Proper and Equal, Right Enlightenment, or bodhi.

The eighth is that Buddhas always emit brilliant light. Their light equally illuminate all places, and also illuminate the Dharma spoken by all Buddhas, purifying the minds of all Bodhisattvas and enabling them to perfect All-Wisdom.

The ninth is that they renounce all worldly happiness. They neither covet nor become tainted by worldly happiness. Common people, greedy for quick gratifications, can’t experience ultimate happiness; they can’t leave suffering and attain happiness. The Buddha universally vows to help beings leave suffering and afflictions behind and attain ultimate happiness. He helps them to renounce non-ultimate sophistry.

The tenth is that the Buddhas pity all beings in their various plights of woe, and wish to rescue them. Buddhas protect the Buddhas’ seed, which is the bodhi resolve. One cultivates toward the states of the Buddhas, attains freedom from birth and death, and arrives at the fruition of the Ten Powers and the fearlessnesses.

We have spoken of ten kinds of indestructible conduct and vows of the Buddhas, or the ways in which the Buddhas cannot be vanquished or destroyed.

I. The oceanic multitudes simultaneously request [Dharma]
A. Requesting by directly asking questions
2. Asking about salient physical characteristics
a. The eyes of the Buddhas
b. The ears of the Buddhas
c. The noses of the Buddhas
d. The tongues of the Buddhas
e. The bodies of the Buddhas
f. The minds of the Buddhas

Sutra:

**What are the Buddhas’ eyes like? What are the Buddhas’ ears like? What are the Buddhas’ noses like? What are the Buddhas’ tongues like? What are the Buddhas’ bodies like? What are the Buddhas’ minds like?**

Commentary:

This is speaking about the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind of a Buddha. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind of a Buddha are not like those of ordinary people.

**What are the Buddhas’ eyes like?** Usually we speak of a Buddha as having the Five Eyes. But now the Flower Adornment Sutra is speaking about the ten eyes; a Buddha has ten eyes. The Five Eyes are: the heavenly eye, the flesh eye, the Dharma eye, the wisdom eye, and the Buddha eye. The flesh eye of a Buddha’s Five Eyes does not refer to the flesh eyes that we have been born with. His flesh eye can see things with shape and form, the things that ordinary people can see. It’s said,

The heavenly eye penetrates through solid objects and beyond.
The flesh eye sees solid objects and does not penetrate beyond.
The Dharma eye can contemplate only the relative truth.
The wisdom eye sees and understands true emptiness.
While the Buddha eye blazes forth like a thousand suns.
Although the Five Eyes’ perceptions differ, they are the same in essence.

The heavenly eye penetrates through solid objects and beyond. The heavenly eye is unobstructed. It can see all of the heavens. Above, it can see up to the peak of existence. Below, it can see the avici (relentless) hells. It can see everything that is going on. Therefore, the heavenly eye penetrates what is without obstruction.

The flesh eye sees solid objects and does not penetrate beyond. The flesh eye sees material things. However, it does not refer to our ordinary physical eyes. The heavenly eye can only see what is immaterial, what does not have shape. It cannot see material things very clearly. The flesh eye very clearly perceives those things with material form. It can also see very clearly those things without material form. That’s why the verse says, “the heavenly eye penetrates beyond,” and ‘the flesh eye sees solid objects and does not penetrate beyond.” The flesh eye can only see solid objects.

The Dharma eye can contemplate only the relative truth. The Dharma eye contemplates mundane and transcendental dharmas. It can recognize worldly, conventional truths as well as world-transcending truth.

The wisdom eye sees and understands true emptiness. This eye endowed with wisdom comprehends the principle of true emptiness.

The Buddha eye blazes forth like a thousand suns. The Buddha eye is as bright and illuminating as a thousand suns.

Although the Five Eyes’ perceptions differ, they are the same in essence. Although these Five Eyes differ in what they see, they basically are of a common substance.

In addition, there is also the knowledge eye, which has unobstructed knowledge of all phenomena and noumena. There is the light eye, which can see all kinds of light. There is also the eye that can transcend birth and death. There is the unobstructed eye, which has no obstructions. And there is the eye of All-Wisdom. Together with the previous five eyes, that makes a total of ten eyes.

**What are the Buddhas’ ears like?** A Buddha’s ears can hear all kinds of sounds. They can clearly distinguish among billions of sounds. **What are the Buddhas’ noses like?** A Buddha’s nose can distinguish the characteristics of every phenomema. It can smell all of them. **What are the Buddhas’ tongues like?** A Buddha’s tongue can taste all kinds of flavors including those that people don’t even know about. **What are the Buddhas’ bodies like?** What is meant by a Buddha’s body? The body of a Buddha pervades all places. **What are the Buddhas’ minds like?** A Buddha’s mind can fathom the minds of all beings. That’s what the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind of a Buddha are like.

I.A.2. Asking about salient physical characteristics
g. The auras of the Buddhas
h. The light of the Buddhas
i. The sounds of the Buddhas
j. The wisdom of the Buddhas
I.A.3. Concluding request

Sutra:

**What are the auras around the Buddhas’ bodies like? What is the light of the Buddhas like? What are the Buddhas’ sounds like? What is the wisdom of the Buddhas like? We only hope the World Honored One will take pity on us and reveal and explain these for us.**

Commentary:

All of the great Bodhisattvas are further wondering, “**What are the auras around the Buddhas’ bodies like?**” How many kinds of auras and lights does a Buddha’s body have? **What is the light of the Buddhas like?** What is the difference between the lights of a Buddha’s body and a Buddha’s light? A Buddha’s light pervasively shines, while the light of his body refers to the light in close proximity to his body.

**What are the Buddhas’ sounds like?** A Buddha’s sounds are also limitless and boundless. The sutra will speak of this again later on. **What is the wisdom of the Buddhas like?** What is the difference between a Buddha’s wisdom and that of a Bodhisattva? All of the great Bodhisattvas are now reflecting on this.

**We only hope the World Honored One will take pity on us.** Now our wish is that the World Honored One will bring forth great kindness and compassion, sympathize with all of us beings, **and reveal and explain these** matters **for us.** Clearly explain this for us, so that we may listen and understand it.

I. The oceanic multitudes simultaneously request [Dharma]
B. Requesting by referring to examples of Dharma
1. Asking about the universality of transformational abilities

Sutra:

**Moreover, all the Buddhas in oceans of worlds throughout the ten directions, for the sake of the Bodhisattvas, spoke of oceans of worlds, oceans of beings, oceans of arrangements of dharma realms, oceans of Buddhas, oceans of Buddhas’ paramitas, oceans of Buddhas’ liberations, oceans of Buddhas’ transformations, oceans of Buddhas’ proclamations, oceans of Buddhas’ titles, oceans of Buddhas’ life spans.**

Commentary:

**Moreover,** furthermore, there were **all the Buddhas in oceans of worlds throughout the ten directions.** The worlds are so numerous the effect is like a great ocean. In the oceans of worlds throughout the ten directions, every world has a host who speaks the Dharma; a Buddha is there teaching and transforming beings. And all of the Buddhas, **for the sake of the Bodhisattvas, spoke of oceans of worlds**. In all of the oceans of worlds, all the Buddhas are speaking Dharma for all the great Bodhisattvas. They are speaking about the oceans of worlds and **oceans of beings**. How many beings are there? They too are limitless and boundless. Worlds are limitless and boundless, and beings are also limitless and boundless. These worlds and the beings in them are all within the Dharma Realm. How are these **oceans of arrangements of dharma realms** arranged? Within these dharma realms are many, many Buddhas—**oceans of Buddhas**.

They are speaking about the **oceans of Buddhas’ paramitas.** The paramitas that the Buddhas are speaking about are also like great oceans in number. There are oceans of methods that can take one to the other shore. They are speaking of the **oceans of Buddhas’ liberations**, the ways in which the Buddhas attained liberation. They are speaking of the **oceans of Buddhas’ transformations.** The Buddhas have great spiritual powers and transformations, which are like great oceans. They are speaking of the **oceans of Buddhas’ proclamations.** The Buddhas speak the Dharma, giving us all the sutras within the Twelve Divisions of the Canon in the Tripitaka, which are also like a great ocean.

They are speaking of the **oceans of Buddhas’ titles.** Every Buddha has his own name. Collectively, there are so many that they are like a great ocean. They are speaking of the **oceans of Buddhas’ life spans.** For example, there is a chapter in the Dharma Flower Sutra that speaks about the life spans of the Buddhas, giving various explanations and analogies, which are like a great ocean.

1.B. Requesting by referring to examples of Dharma
2. Asking about the depth and extent of causal virtues
3. Concluding request

Sutra:

**[The Buddhas spoke of] oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ vows, oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ tendencies, oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ aids to the Way, oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ vehicles, oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ practices, oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ transcendence, oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ spiritual powers, oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ paramitas, oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ grounds, and oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ wisdom. We hope the Buddha, the World Honored One, will explain these for us.”**

Commentary:

Previously, the sutra spoke about the oceans of established dharma realms, oceans of beings, oceans of Buddhas, oceans of Buddhas’ liberations, oceans of worlds—all kinds of oceans.

Moreover, they spoke of **oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ vows.** What are the oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ vows? This will be discussed in greater detail later on. Right now, it will be explained in a general way. All Bodhisattvas take the Four Vast Vows as fundamental. The Four Vast Vows are:

l. I vow to save the limitless beings. Beings include both humans and nonhumans. They are boundless; their numbers cannot be reckoned. This isn’t just referring to those beings on the outside. There are infinitely many beings inside each person’s body. People are just like big bugs. Within their bodies dwell countless smaller bugs. These small bugs depend on the bigger bugs for their survival. The big bugs, in turn, nourish the smaller bugs’ existence. They give of their flesh and blood in order to nourish all these beings. However, this kind of giving isn’t done voluntarily. One has no choice but to give. These small bugs are like bandits who come to plunder you; you can’t escape them. If you were to escape, the “big bug” would no longer exist. So, their relationship is such that they help one another out.

Within a single person’s body there are already innumerable beings. And so if we look at the big picture, we don’t know how many beings there are. Thus, beings are boundless. There are too many to speak of, which is why the text referred to oceans of beings. All of the bigger beings nourish the smaller ones. All of the smaller beings rely on the bigger ones for their existence.

Take a look at the lion; it’s so ferocious, yet on its body there are parasites that eat its flesh and drink its blood. The tiger is very fierce. However, there are also parasites living off its body, eating its flesh and drinking its blood. Think it over. Every being has limitless beings within it; and every one of those limitless beings further contains limitless beings. Therefore, “beings are boundless.” So, what should we do? We should save beings. How do we do that?

If you wish to lead beings to realize the Buddha’s wisdom,

First entice them with something they like.

If you want beings to uncover the Buddha’s wisdom within themselves, you first have to give them some benefit. Once they obtain a little benefit, they will want to study the Buddhadharma. This is an expedient and provisional way to save beings.

2. I vow to cut off the inexhaustible afflictions. When cultivating the Buddhadharma you have to pass through tests; you have to be able to bear tests. Every situation that you encounter is a test. Usually, you may think you have seen through everything and let it all go. You may feel you have no more attachments. But when situations arise, your attachments show up and you can’t handle them. When a situation arises, if you can act as if nothing special is going on, then you have some skill. You’ve really seen through things and let them go.

For example, suppose that when you are working hard in your cultivation, you experience an unusual state of mind. Maybe you see someone, a ghost or a demon king who comes holding a knife, ready to cut off your head. At that time, if you have power of concentration, you think: “If you want to cut off my head, go ahead. I don’t care. Not to speak of false and illusory states like this, even if the state were real and someone were really going to cut off my head, it’d be no big deal. Living and dying are no big problem. Life and death are the same. If I sit here and someone cuts off my head, it’ll be really wonderful!” If you can reflect in this way, you won’t be afraid.

Once upon a time there was someone who wished to renounce the life of a householder to become a monk. He went to ask a good advisor, “May I leave home?”

The good advisor replied, “Yes, but there is a requirement.”

He asked, “What’s the requirement?”

The good advisor said, “If you have a sincere mind, then you should do what I tell you to do. You should listen to what I say, and then I will accept you as my disciple. If you can’t do this, then I won’t allow you to leave home.”

The person asked, “What do you want me to do?”

The good advisor asked him, “Who is there in your family?”

The person replied, “My father, my mother, my wife, my son, my daughter, and my brothers. There are a lot of people in my home, so it’s no problem if I leave the home-life. My brothers can take care of my parents. My wife has a son and a daughter, who will grow up and not want me watching after them. And so I want to go forth from the home-life and cultivate the Way.”

The good advisor said, “Okay. I’ll give you a sword. You should take this sword, return home, and kill all the members in your family with it. Can you do this?”

The man replied, “If my teacher tells me to do this, I’ll do it.”

The good advisor said, “If you can really do it, that’s good. After you kill your family, take the sword and hang it behind the door. Then you can come back and become a monk.”

This is no joke. The man really had to do it. He thought, “If I don’t kill my mother and father, then I won’t be able to cultivate the Way; the good advisor won’t accept me.” And so he gritted his teeth, steeled his heart, and returned home and killed his entire family. Then he hung the sword behind the door and returned to his teacher, who accepted him as a disciple.

Did he in reality murder his family? No. His teacher was using magical powers. The person thought he had killed his family members, but actually, not a single person died. Due to his teacher’s magic, the bodies of the person’s parents turned into bags of gold and jewels and the sword hanging behind the door took on the person’s appearance.

On the following day when the people in the household woke up, they discovered that bags of gold, silver, and jewels that had appeared in their home for no apparent reason. They also found their son. It appeared that he had hung himself behind the door. The family concluded, “He must have become a thief and stolen these treasures and then hung himself to escape being caught and thrown in jail. What a pity!” They placed his body (which was really the transformed sword) in a coffin and buried him. After the parents put their son’s body to rest, they enjoyed perpetual wealth.

Meanwhile, the person returned to his teacher and cultivated for twelve years. Thinking that everyone in his family was dead, he cultivated with great determination. He thought, “If I don’t attain the Way, how can ever justify murdering the members of my family?” And so he cultivated zealously day and night. He had no afflictions whatsoever. He had cut them all off without even trying. He had no worries or hangups, and thus he was not afraid of anything. As it says [in the Heart Sutra], “Because he has no impediments, he is not afraid.”

After thirteen years, he realized the Way and attained the Five Eyes and Six Spiritual powers. At that time he saw that his parents, wife, son, daughter, and brothers were alive and well, and their lives were quite happy. Then he went before his good advisor and bowed to him, saying, “If my teacher hadn’t taught me in this way, I could never have become enlightened or attained the Way.” He realized that his teacher had been using expedient means to teach him.

“I vow to cut off the inexhaustible afflictions.” People can realize the Way only if they are free of afflictions. If they get afflicted, they won’t realize the Way. For example, when you cultivate, why do you have thoughts of desire? It’s because you have afflictions. Why do you break the precepts? It’s also because you have afflictions. Afflictions harm people more than anything else. People get afflicted because they haven’t practiced enough virtuous deeds. That is the root of the problem. If you don’t get to the root, it won’t do any good to work on the branchtips.

3. I vow to study the infinite dharma doors. The Buddha’s dharma doors [methods of practice ] are limitless and boundless. You should vow to study them. There are many dharma doors for becoming a Buddha, and we should learn them all.

4. I vow to realize the unsurpassed Buddha Way. Nothing surpasses the Buddha Way. It is the highest. Therefore, I certainly want to realize it.

These are the four great vows that you should make. These are the oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ vows. One Bodhisattva makes these four vast vows; ten Bodhisattvas, in turn, make forty vast vows; one hundred Bodhisattvas make four hundred vows. When the number of vows becomes uncountable, they become like an ocean.

**[The Buddhas spoke of] oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ tendencies.** Their tendencies toward entering the bodhi path are like oceans. They spoke of o**ceans of all Bodhisattvas’ aids to the Way.** These are oceans of aids for cultivating the Way. **They described oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ vehicles.** Bodhisattvas benefit themselves and benefit others; they enlighten themselves and enlighten others. Buddhas told of o**ceans of all Bodhisattvas’ practices.** The practices they cultivate are like the great sea.

**[The Buddhas spoke of ] oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ transcendence.** This refers to the oceans of ways to leave suffering and attain happiness. **They told of oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ spiritual powers and oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ paramitas.** These are dharma doors they cultivate for arriving at the other shore. **There were also oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ grounds and oceans of all Bodhisattvas’ wisdom.**

**We hope the Buddha, the World Honored One,** for the sake of all beings, **will explain these for us.**

I. The oceanic multitudes simultaneously request [Dharma]
C. Sounds from the offerings pronounce verses in request

**Sutra:**

**At that time, by virtue of the Bodhisattvas’ awesome spiritual powers, sounds spontaneously poured forth from within the clouds of offerings and pronounced the following verses.**

**Commentary:**

**At that time, by virtue of the Bodhisattvas’ awesome spiritual powers, sounds spontaneously poured forth from within the clouds of offerings and pronounced the following verses.** All of these great Bodhisattvas had inconceivable spiritual powers. Sounds spontaneously came forth from the clouds of offerings. These offerings were mentioned previously. These sounds very naturally came about on their own and spoke verses. This is by no means a strange incident. How is it that these sounds could come forth from the offerings? Now think about it. People have such great spiritual powers: sounds can be heard and images of people can be seen on the television; sounds come forth and voices can be heard over the radio. There is also the tape recorder. When a tape is placed inside of it, sounds come forth and people’s voices can be heard. People have such amazing abilities; how much the more do Bodhisattvas who, by comparison, have even more inconceivable and wonderful powers. Therefore, it is not unusual that Dharma sounds came forth from the offerings. They spoke verses in order to elaborate on the meanings spoken previously.

“Offerings” can be explained by means of this verse:

With joined palms like a flower bud,
The body itself becomes an offering.
Good words are the true incense.
Praises to the Buddhas spread a permeating sweetness.
When all Buddhas inhale this fragrance,
They follow the sounds to save beings.
The multitudes are diligent and vigorous;
They never doubt or disobey the Buddhas.

Previously the sutra listed clouds of offerings, adornments of offerings, and various kinds of adornments — these are all offerings.

**Sutra:**

**Through limitless eons the Buddha perfected his cultivation.
At the foot of the bodhi tree he realized Proper Enlightenment.
In order to rescue beings, he manifests bodies everywhere,
Like clouds filling the skies to the ends of time.**

**He helps beings sever all of their doubts,**
**Then arouses their great faith and understanding.**
**He completely vanquishes their boundless woes,
So they experience the peace and happiness of the Buddhas.**

**Commentary:**

The Buddha cultivated **through limitless eons until he perfected his cultivation.** He cultivated blessings and wisdom. Since his blessings and wisdom are both complete, he is called the Doubly Perfect Honored One.

**At the foot of the bodhi tree he realized Proper Enlightenment.** Sitting upon a vajra throne beneath the bodhi tree, the king of trees, he realized the Unsurpassed, Proper and Equal, Right Enlightenment, that is to say, Buddhahood.

**In order to rescue beings, he manifests bodies everywhere** . The Buddha isn’t someone who, having nothing to do, goes looking for something to do. The Buddha teaches and transforms beings, guiding them in order that they might realize the Buddha Way. That is the Buddha’s vow. Therefore, he manifests bodies for them, **like clouds filling the skies to the ends of time.** They are like clouds spreading throughout space and the Dharma Realm. They pervade the trichiliocosm to the ends of time and speak the Dharma for the sake of beings. This verse praises the Buddha. The next verse praises beings for having the roots of goodness to encounter the Buddha.

**He helps beings sever all of their doubts** .Beings have all kinds of doubts. They doubt this matter and that. “A multitude of doubts fills up one’s belly; a host of difficulties fills up one’s chest.” They are troubled by many seemingly unresolvable problems. Once they encounter the Buddha, however, they can resolve all their unresolvable problems and cut off all their unresolvable doubts.

**Then the Buddha arouses their great faith and understanding.** Beings’ faith and understanding becomes so vast that there is nothing they cannot encompass. Those beings bring forth a great bodhi resolve. Through faith, one can come to understanding. The Buddhadharma is like a great ocean; only through faith can one enter it. If you lack faith, you won’t be able to enter it. The Buddha inspires in beings faith, understanding, and a great resolve for bodhi.

**He completely vanquishes their boundless woes** . The Buddha universally casts out and eradicates the boundless suffering of beings, until it’s all gone, **so they experience the peace and happiness of the Buddhas.** All Buddhas are extremely peaceful and happy. The Buddha enables all beings to attain the peace and happiness realized by the Buddhas. He enables them to attain Buddhahood.

**Sutra:**

**Countless Bodhisattvas, equal to dust particles in lands,
Arrive at this gathering and behold the Buddha.
Wishing to respond to the needs in their minds,
The Buddha, in proclaiming wondrous Dharma, severs their doubts.**

**How should we understand the Buddhas’ grounds?
How should we regard the Thus Come Ones’ states?
Boundless are the ways in which the Buddhas bestow aid.
May the Buddha explain this Dharma so all can attain purity.**

**Commentary:**

A voice resounding from within the offerings said: **Countless are the Bodhisattvas, equal to dust particles in lands.** These Bodhisattvas, great heroes of the Dharma body, are numberless, as limitless as motes of dust in lands. They all **arrive at this gathering and behold the Buddha.** Boundlessly many Bodhisattvas come together to the foot of the bodhi tree where the Buddha realized the Way, to join the Dharma assembly in front of the Buddha’s throne of vajra.

At that time, because the Buddha had realized Buddhahood, he emitted a powerful light that reached all worlds throughout the ten directions, summoning all the great Bodhisattvas. Realizing Buddhahood is an extremely important matter. It is the most important thing there is. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions all came to the bodhimanda and gazed up at Shakyamuni Buddha, who had newly realized Buddhahood.

**The Buddha then wishes to respond to the needs in their minds.** All of these Bodhisattvas gazed up at the Buddha, hoping to benefit from hearing the Buddha speak Dharma suitable to each of their needs. **The Buddha does proclaim wonderful Dharma, casting out their doubts.** When the Buddha realized the Way, he spoke Dharma for all beings in order to sever their doubts and confusion.

The voice, coming from the offerings, continues to ask in verse: **How should we understand the Buddhas’ grounds?** How can we come to understand the grounds of all Buddhas? **How should we regard the Thus Come Ones’ states?** How can we know the states of the Buddhas? **Boundless are the ways in which the Buddhas bestow aid.** Although we know that the aid of the Buddhas is boundless, we want to focus on how it is so. **May the Buddha explain this Dharma so all can attain purity?** All of us hope the Buddha will offer instruction on this wonderful Dharma so that all beings can attain their inherent purity.

**Sutra:**

**What are the aspects of the Buddhas’ practice,
And how can we wisely understand and enter those?
The Buddhas’ powers are pure and vast beyond any bounds.
For the sake of the Bodhisattvas please instruct us.**

**What are the vast, great samadhis?
What are the dharmas of fearlessness of their pure practice?
The functions of their spiritual powers cannot be reckoned.
May you accord with beings’ wishes and speak of them.**

**Commentary:**

All of the Bodhisattvas are now asking: **What are the aspects of the Buddhas’ practice**?What are the differences between the Buddhas’ practice and the Bodhisattvas’ practice? **And how can we, with wisdom, understand and enter?** What is the Buddha’s wisdom like? How can we understand the aspects of the Buddhas’ practice and enter them? **The Buddhas’ powers are pure and vast beyond any bounds.** What are the powers of the Buddhas like? **For the sake of the Bodhisattvas you should instruct us.** Now, there are so many Bodhisattvas here. Buddha, you should discuss this for everyone. That is, how can one obtain the Buddha’s powers and purity? Explain this so that everyone can understand and then rely on the Dharma to cultivate.

**What are the vast, great samadhis** of the Buddhas like? **What are the dharmas of fearlessness of their pure practice?** What is the Buddhas’ purity? What are their dharmas of fearlessness? **The functions of their spiritual powers cannot be reckoned.** What are the functions of the Buddhas’ spiritual powers? They are probably beyond reckoning. **May you accord with beings’ wishes and speak of them.** We hope that the Buddha will now, in accordance with what beings delight in and wish for, proclaim this for the great assembly, so everyone can understand.

**Sutra:**

**The Buddhas, Dharma Kings, are like world rulers.
Invincible, they act with total self-mastery.
This, and their other vast and great dharmas,
Please proclaim for our benefaction.**

**How is it that the Buddha’s eyes have no measure,
And his eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body are that way, too?
And how is it that his mind is measureless as well?
Please show us so that we can know those expedients.**

**Commentary:**

**The Buddhas, Dharma Kings, are like world rulers.** All Buddhas are kings within the Dharma. They are like world rulers. **Invincible, they act with total self-mastery.** The Buddhas’ powers are unsurpassed. No Bodhisattva can compare with the Buddhas. The Buddhas are at ease in everything they do. They are invincible; no one can overcome the Buddhas’ powers, or destroy them.

**This, and their other vast and great dharmas, / Please proclaim for our benefaction.** Will the Buddha please proclaim them for everyone?

**How is it that the Buddha’s eyes have no measure, / And his eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body are that way, too?** The Buddha’s eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body cannot be measured. **And how is it that his mind is measureless as well?** Even his mind cannot be measured. What is this all about? How does one explain this? **Please show us so that we can know those expedients.** We hope the Buddha will compassionately point this out for all of us in this Dharma Assembly, so that we can know about this expedient Dharma.

**Sutra:**

**As to the oceans of lands and oceans of beings,
The oceans of all arrangements of Dharma realms,
And the oceans of all Buddhas, which are boundless, too—
Please discuss all these for the Buddha’s disciples.**

**Commentary:**

**As to the oceans of lands and oceans of beings,** oceans of Buddhalands in numbers like motes of dust, as well as oceans of beings, **the oceans of all arrangements of Dharma realms,** which pervade space and the Dharma Realm, **and the oceans of all Buddhas** throughout the ten directions and the three periods of time, pervading space and the Dharma Realm**, which are boundless, too— / Please discuss all these for the Buddha’s disciples.** We hope the World Honored One will, for the sake of all of the disciples of the Buddha, explain this for us now. Please provide us with an explanation of all these oceans, as well as these various states. Everyone wishes to listen.

**Sutra:**

**How can one leave forever the seas of all thought and reckoning,
And universally enter the oceans of expedients for liberation,
As well as the oceans of all the dharma doors that there are?
All in this bodhimanda wish that the Buddha would proclaim this.**

**Commentary:**

**How can one leave forever the seas of all thought and reckoning,** forever transcending concepts and reckonings?To reckon means to deduce or to investigate. Since there are so many beings in this Dharma Assembly, their reckonings resemble seas. **And** how can one **universally enter the oceans of expedients for liberation**? All beings can everywhere attain the oceans of expedient dharma doors of liberation and self-mastery, **as well as the oceans of all the dharma doors that there are.** There are 84,000 dharma doors, and all of them are included here. **All in this bodhimanda wish that the Buddha would proclaim this.** All of the beings in the bodhimanda are waiting for the World Honored One to compassionately proclaim these many dharma doors for them.

II. The Buddha emits lights to summon those with affinities
A. The purpose for emitting lights
B. The source of the lights
C. The substance of the lights
D. Listing the lights

**Sutra:**

**At that time, the World Honored One, knowing what the Bodhisattvas were thinking, emitted from his mouth, from between his teeth, as many lights as there are dustmotes in a Buddhaland. For example , there was a light from multitudes of precious flowers that shone everywhere; a light that produced various sounds to enhance the Dharma Realm; a light of softly trailing ethereal clouds; a light of Buddhas seated in bodhimandas and displaying spiritual transformations throughout the ten directions; a light in the form of a canopy composed of clouds of scintillating jewels; a light that suffused the Dharma Realm without obstruction.**

**Commentary:**

**At that time,** Shakyamuni Buddha, **the World Honored One, knowing what the Bodhisattvas were thinking, emitted from his mouth, from between his teeth, as many lights as there are dustmotes in a Buddhaland.** This light shone on the assemblies throughout the ten directions: the Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, the Buddhas, the Hearers, those Enlightened by Conditions, the gods, the ghosts, the spirits, and so forth. It summoned them all to come to the bodhimanda. This is like when we want to invite someone to come over, we send them a telegram, or perhaps we telephone them, or send a message via wireless; this is the meaning here. When the Buddha attained Buddhahood, he also invited the Buddhas of the ten directions to attend this auspicious assembly in honor of his attaining Buddhahood. And so the Bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions went there and produced all kinds of clouds of offerings, and requested the Buddha to speak the Dharma.

The Buddha knew what each of the Bodhisattvas wished to know, what they hoped to understand, and what questions they wanted to ask. He already knew about these matters early on, and now, “from his mouth” he emitted light. Now, most people would read these two characters (mian men) as “face,” but actually, they refer to the place below the nose and above the mouth; this is just referring to the mouth. The face doesn’t have any door (men) that can be entered. The mouth, on the other hand, can open, like a door. So the text reads, “emitted from his mouth, from between his teeth, as many lights as there are dustmotes in a Buddhaland.” The Buddha emitted all kinds of lights, as many as there are dustmotes in limitless and boundless Buddhalands. There were lights in numbers like fine dustmotes, and they were of various colors. Some were golden colored of gold light, some were white colored of white light, some were red colored of red light, and some were blue colored of blue light. The lights were of all different colors.

**For example, there was a light from multitudes of precious flowers that shone everywhere; a light that produced various sounds to enhance the Dharma Realm; a light of softly trailing ethereal clouds; a light of Buddhas seated in bodhimandas and displaying spiritual transformations throughout the ten directions; a light in the form of a canopy composed of clouds of scintillating jewels; a light that suffused the Dharma Realm without obstruction.**

What kinds of lights were there? **For example, there was a light from multitudes of precious flowers that shone everywhere.** There were jeweled lotus flowers that emitted light that shone everywhere. There was **a light that produced various sounds to enhance the Dharma Realm.** All kinds of sounds came forth adorning the Dharma Realm. There was **a light of softly trailing ethereal clouds.** That light came trailing down just like wonderful and inconceivable clouds.

There was **a light of Buddhas seated in bodhimandas and displaying spiritual transformations throughout the ten directions.** The Buddhas throughout the ten directions were seated in the bodhimanda manifesting great spiritual powers and inconceivable transformations. There was **a light in the form of a canopy composed of clouds of scintillating jewels.** There were also light from brilliantly shining jewels, and there was **a light that suffused the Dharma Realm without obstruction.** This light completely filled up the ten directions of the Dharma Realm without any hindrance. There were various kinds of light.

**Sutra:**

**[There was] a light that pervasively adorned all Buddhalands; an extraordinary light from the creation of pure, precious banners of vajra; a light that universally graced all bodhimandas where Bodhisattvas assemble; a light that resonated with exquisite tones praising all Buddhas’ epithets.**

**Commentary:**

There was **a light that pervasively adorned all Buddhalands.** This kind of light made all the Buddhalands exquisitely adorned, inspiring reverence in all who saw them. There was **an extraordinary light from the creation of pure, precious banners of vajra**.It’s not that the above adornments were not adorned, but that this adornment was an extraordinary one: it was the pure among the pure, a light of precious vajra banners. And there was **a light that universally graced all bodhimandas where Bodhisattvas assemble.** There was light that adorned all bodhimandas everywhere in which there were assemblies of Bodhisattvas. And there was **a light that resonated with exquisite tones praising all Buddhas’ epithets.** It put forth subtle, wondrous sounds causing listeners to bring forth the resolve for bodhi. This light praised all Buddhas’ titles.

II. The Buddha emits lights to summon those with affinities
E. Giving the number
F. Showing the retinue
G. Describing the hues
H. Clarifying the far-reaching scope
I. The multitudes can see in response
J. Beckoning with verses

**Sutra:**

**[There were those lights] and others such as those, as numerous as dustmotes in a Buddhaland. Each and every light further had a retinue of lights as numerous as dustmotes in a Buddhaland. Those lights all came in myriads of exquisite, precious hues and shone everywhere throughout the ten directions, each illuminating as many seas of worlds as there are dustmotes in a hundred million Buddhalands. Within that illumination, all the Bodhisattva multitudes in those seas of worlds were able to see this Flower Treasury Adorned Sea of Worlds. By means of the Buddha’s spiritual power, those lights spoke verses before all those assemblies of Bodhisattvas.**

**Commentary:**

**[There were those lights] and others such as those, as numerous as dustmotes in a Buddhaland.** Previously the text spoke about there being as many lights as there are dustmotes in a Buddhaland. Within every world in numbers like fine motes of dust in Buddhalands, **each and every light further had a retinue of lights as numerous as dustmotes in a Buddhaland as its retinue. Those lights all came in myriads of exquisite, precious hues**.Each light possessed infinite colors and lights like those of myriads of wondrous jewels. **And** they **shone everywhere throughout the ten directions, each illuminating as many seas of worlds as there are dustmotes in a hundred million Buddhalands. Within that illumination** afforded by the lights emitted by the Buddha from between his teeth**, all the Bodhisattva multitudes in those seas of worlds were able to see this Flower Treasury Adorned Sea of Worlds.** All Bodhisattvas, no matter how many worlds away they were, saw the Flower Treasury Sea of Worlds as if it were right before them. **By means of the Buddha’s spiritual power, those lights spoke verses before all those assemblies of Bodhisattvas.** Those lights were due to the great spiritual power of the Buddha. Before the assemblies in the bodhimandas of all the Bodhisattvas, those lights spoke Dharma for the Bodhisattvas. Within the light emitted from the Buddha’s teeth, which shined upon the assemblies in the ten directions, Dharma was spoken.

**Sutra:**

**Through countless eons, the Buddha did oceans of practices.
Making offerings to oceans of Buddhas in the ten directions.
He transforms and liberates oceans of beings, who become
Wonderfully Enlightened Honored Ones of universal illumination.**

**Clouds appear magically from his pores.
Their radiance lights up the ten directions.
Those ripe for teaching open to enlightenment.
They strive for bodhi, pure and unhindered.**

**The Buddha traveled every path and way,
Teaching and nurturing beings, helping them mature.
So boundless are his spiritual powers and self-mastery.
That in one thought he brings them to liberation.**

**The bodhi tree with its wondrous mani gems
Has a myriad ornaments most sublime.
In its shade, the Buddha realized Proper Enlightenment
And shone with a magnificent, universal resplendence.**

**His booming roar resounds in the ten directions,
As he everywhere preaches the Dharma of still quiescence.
Catering to beings’ wishes and delights,
He employs sundry expedients to help them understand.**

**Commentary:**

**Through countless eons, he cultivated oceans of practices.** Limitless eons in the past, the Buddha set his mind on cultivation. He has cultivated so many dharma doors for such a long period of time that they can be called oceans of practices. **Making offerings to oceans of Buddhas in the ten directions.** What was the main dharma door that he practiced? It was making offerings to the Buddhas of the ten directions. He used his body, mouth, and mind to make all kinds of offerings. With his body he revered and bowed to the Buddhas. With his mouth he praised the Buddhas’ inconceivable merit and virtue. And with his mind he constantly reflected upon the Buddhadharma. That was how he made offerings to the Triple Jewel with his body, mouth, and mind.

In making offerings to the Buddha, you must have no anger on your face. If you have no temper, then you are making an offering. If your mouth is free from anger, it will give off a wondrous fragrance. If your mouth doesn’t utter angry words—if it doesn’t engage in harsh speech, backbiting, idle chatter, or false speech—then you make the offering of a wondrous fragrance. If your mind is devoid of anger, then you are offering a true jewel, a real treasure, to the Buddhas. The basic thing to remember about making offerings is to have no anger. If you have a temper, then it prevents you from making an offering.

**He teaches and liberates oceans of beings.** After realizing Buddhahood, the Buddha wants to teach and transform beings. Since there are limitlessly many of them—as numerous as motes of dust—they are referred to as oceans of beings. Although there are so many of them, the Buddha wants to teach and transform all the oceans of beings, **who become Wonderfully Enlightened Honored Ones of universal illumination.** All beings are led to become Buddhas, World Honored Ones, who illuminate the entire Dharma Realm.

**Clouds appear magically from his pores.** From each pore of the Buddha, infinite numbers of clouds appear by transformation. **Their radiance lights up the ten directions. / Those ripe for teaching open to enlightenment.** All those who should receive the Buddha’s teaching are led to develop wisdom and become deeply awakened. **They strive for bodhi, pure and unhindered.** The light and the retribution they attain are pure and unhindered.

**The Buddha traveled every path and way** . In the past, the Buddha also went around and around in the six paths of the wheel of rebirth. He did this for the sake of **teaching and nurturing beings, helping them mature./So boundless are his spiritual powers and self-mastery.** The Buddha has innumerable and immeasurable spiritual powers and self-mastery. **That in one thought he brings them to liberation.** In a single thought, the Buddha can enable infinite numbers of beings to be liberated.

**The bodhi tree with its wondrous mani gems, / Has a myriad ornaments most sublime. / In its shade, the Buddha realized Proper Enlightenment / And shone with a magnificent, universal resplendence.** The bodhi tree, the king of trees, is adorned with mani gems and all kinds of precious and rare jewels. After realizing Buddhahood while seated at the foot of the tree, the Buddha gave forth a magnificent light that shined throughout the world and the Dharma Realm.

**His booming roar resounds in the ten directions** . The Buddha’s voice is extremely loud—his booming roar can be heard throughout the worlds of the ten directions, **as he everywhere preaches the Dharma of still quiescence**, speaking the Dharma of nirvana for all beings. **Catering to beings’ wishes and delights,** their hopes and dreams, **he employssundry** skillful **expedients** to enlighten them and **help them understand.**

**Sutra:**

**The Buddha has cultivated to perfection, paramitasAs numerous as the dustmotes in a thousand lands.
He has fully achieved all the powers.
All of you should go and make obeisance.**

**Commentary:**

Within the light, another verse was spoken: **The Buddha has** already **cultivated to perfection, paramitas**, the dharmas for reaching the “other shore,” **as numerous as the dustmotes in a thousand lands. / He has fully achieved all the powers**—various powers such as the Buddha’s Ten Powers. **All of you should go and make obeisance** to the World Honored One, Shakyamuni.

**Sutra:**

**Disciples of the Buddha, numerous as the dustmotes in a land,
Joyfully gather from the ten directions.
Having rained down clouds of offerings,
They are now before the Buddha, eagerly gazing upward.**

**One sound from the Thus Come One is yet limitless.
He can give discourses as deep as the mighty ocean.
He rains wondrous Dharma everywhere, in response to beings’ minds.
You ought to go see that Doubly Perfect Honored One.**

**Commentary:**

**Disciples of the Buddha** ,all of the worthy sages, **mumerous as the dustmotes in a land, / Joyfully gather from the ten directions.** They were so happy they jumped for joy and came to the Buddha’s bodhimanda under the bodhi tree. **Having rained down** various kinds of **clouds as offerings** to Shakyamuni Buddha, **before the Buddha**’s Vajra Jeweled Seat, **they now intently gaze upon him**, bowing and paying reverence to the Buddha.

**One sound from the Thus Come One is yet limitless.** When Shakyamuni, the World Honored One, speaks the Dharma with a single sound, limitless beings each understand it according to their capacity. One sound disperses into infinite sounds; infinite sounds come from a single sound. The Buddha’s sound transforms into infinite sounds, and **he can give discourses**, “tallying texts,” whose wondrous meanings are **as deep as the mighty ocean.**

The Buddha is now under the bodhi tree speaking Dharma. **He rains** inconceivably **wondrous Dharma everywhere, in response to beings’ minds.** He speaks the Dharma that beings wish to hear. **You ought to go see that Doubly Perfect Honored One,** Shakyamuni Buddha, who is perfect in both blessings and wisdom. He is a fertile “field of blessings” in which beings can plant blessings. All of you Bodhisattvas, disciples of the Buddha, and worthy sages should quickly go to see him.

**Sutra:**

**All the vows of the Buddhas of the three periods of time
Are proclaimed beneath the bodhi tree.
In an instant they are all revealed.
You should make haste to the Thus Come One.**

**Vairochana has wisdom like a great ocean.
None have not seen the light from his mouth.
He now waits for all to assemble, and soon he will speak.
Go now to see and hear what he will say.**

**Commentary:**

**All the vows of the Buddhas of the three periods of time** . The three periods of time are past, present, and future. We could also think of them as last year, this year, and next year, or as yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Buddhas of the past have already become Buddhas; Buddhas of the present are now becoming Buddhas; Buddhas of the future are beings who will become Buddhas in the future. All of the beings of the present are future Buddhas. Those who are now cultivating the Way will definitely become Buddhas in the future. Therefore, cultivators should take care not to become afflicted with one another, or find fault with one another. Take a look at the Buddhas. They are all one with each other. They don’t scowl or lose their tempers upon seeing each other. If you can regard all beings as future Buddhas, then losing your temper at beings is the same as losing your temper at the Buddhas. If you can think in that way, your temper will vanish.

We are talking about the vows made by Buddhas in the three periods of time. Cultivators should definitely make vows. If you vow to become a Buddha, you will do so. If you vow to become a ghost, you’ll become a ghost. If you vow to be a human being, you will be a person. If you vow to do the deeds of asuras, you’ll become an asura. Everything is made from the mind. Everything is made from vows. The fundamental reason the Buddha could become a Buddha was that he made a vow to realize the Buddha Way.

We often make the vow, saying, “I vow to dedicate this merit and virtue to all beings, so that we in this Dharma assembly and all other beings can realize the Buddha Way.” This is making a vow to attain Buddhahood. Then there are the Four Vast Vows:

1. I vow to save the limitless beings. Ask yourself if you have saved them yet. If not, then you should.

2. I vow to cut off the inexhaustible afflictions. Although there is no end to our afflictions, we make a vow to cut them off. If we haven’t cut them off, we should do so.

3. I vow to study the infinite dharma doors. We make this vow to learn the limitless and boundless dharma doors [methods of practice ] taught by the Buddha. If we haven’t learned them yet, we should do so.

4. I vow to realize the unsurpassed Buddha Way. There is nothing loftier or more noble than the Buddha Way, so we should vow to realize it. If we haven’t done so, we must cultivate. Only through cultivation can we become Buddhas.

The Buddhas of the three periods of time made such vows, which enabled them to attain Buddhahood. Now, all the vows made by the Buddhas **are proclaimed beneath the bodhi tree** by Shakyamuni Buddha upon his realization of Buddhahood. He proclaimed these vows so that beings would also be able to make them and thus eventually attain Buddhahood as well. **In an instant they are all revealed.** It didn’t take a very long time, but just a kshana—the briefest instant of time—for all the vows to be revealed.

This verse being spoken from within the light continues: **You**, all of you Bodhisattvas, Hearers, and Those Enlightened to Conditions—all the holy sages in the ten directions—**should make haste to the Thus Come One.** Hurry to the bodhi tree, where Shakyamuni Buddha has realized Buddhahood.

Having realizing Buddhahood, Shakyamuni Buddha manifests the appearance of Vairochana Buddha. **Vairochana has wisdom like a great ocean.** The Buddha’s wisdom is even greater than the ocean. **None have not seen the light from his mouth**. From between his teeth, he sends forth innumerable rays of light, which shine upon Buddhalands as numerous as motes of dust. And the light is seen by all the sages of the ten directions. None fail to see it.

**He now waits for all to assemble, and soon he will speak.** The Buddha is waiting for the worthy sages of the ten directions—the Bodhisattvas, Hearers, and Those Enlightened to Conditions—to gather together, like clouds gathering in the sky. The Buddha is about to proclaim the wonderful Dharma. **Go now to see and hear what he will say.** All of you should go to see the Buddha. This verse is spoken from within the light to invite all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and sages of the ten directions to hear the Buddha speak Dharma.

III. Those summoned gather like clouds
A. Congregating in the bodhimanda

**Sutra:**

**At that time, every assembly in all the seas of worlds of the ten directions, awakened by the Buddha’s light, collectively approached the Thus Come One Vairochana, drawing near to make offerings.**

**For example, east of this sea of worlds called Adornments of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Adornment with Pure and Radiant Lotuses. Within the seed of those worlds, there was a land called Vajra Treasury of Strands of Mani. The Buddha there was named Infinite King of Dharma Water Awakening Space. Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Lotus Banner Contemplating the Supreme Dharma. He and Bodhisattvas as numerous as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha [Shakyamuni] was. Each Bodhisattva displayed ten clouds of characteristics of bodies of Bodhisattvas, which filled all of space and did not disperse. They further displayed ten clouds of light raining down myriads of precious lotus blossoms. They further displayed ten clouds of jeweled summits of Sumeru. They further displayed ten clouds of sunlight. They further displayed ten clouds of jeweled flower garlands. They further displayed ten clouds of every kind of music. They further displayed ten clouds of trees of powdered incense. They further displayed ten clouds of fragrant ointments and burning incense of every form and color. They further displayed ten clouds of trees of assorted fragrances. Clouds of offerings such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completed filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the east, each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne from a profusion of luminous lotuses, and then seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**Commentary:**

**At that time, every assembly in all the seas of worlds of the ten directions** responded. In every world, there was a Buddha seated in a bodhimanda surrounded by an assembly. These assemblies, **awakened by** the verse of Dharma which was spoken from within **the Buddha’s light**—emitted from Shakyamuni Buddha’s teeth—**collectively approached** the bodhi tree in the Saha world, where Shakyamuni Buddha, manifesting as **the Thus Come One Vairochana,** was, **drawing near to make offerings.**

**For example, east of this sea of worlds called Adornments of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Adornment with Pure and Radiant Lotuses. Within the seed of those worlds, there was a land called Vajra Treasury of Strands of Mani.** Worlds also have seeds, which make it possible for new worlds to come into being. **The Buddha there was named Infinite King of Dharma Water Awakening Space. Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One**, the Buddha Infinite King, **was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Lotus Banner Contemplating the Supreme Dharma. He and Bodhisattvas as numerous as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha** Shakyamuni **was.**

**Each Bodhisattvadisplayed ten** inconceivable **clouds of characteristics of bodies of Bodhisattvas, which filled all of space** and the Dharma Realm, **and did not disperse.** They appeared clearly in the air. **They further displayed ten clouds of light raining down myriads of precious lotus blossoms. They further displayed ten clouds of jeweled summits of Sumeru**—wonderfully high summits. **They further displayed ten clouds of sunlight. They further displayed ten clouds of jeweled flower garlands. They further displayed ten clouds of every kind of music.** Music was made in the clouds. **They further displayed ten clouds of trees of powdered incense. They further displayed ten clouds of fragrant ointments and burning incense of all** wondrous **colors and appearances. They further displayed ten clouds of trees of assorted fragrances. Clouds of offerings such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completed filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him.** They offered all those clouds of light to the Buddha. **Then, in the east, each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne from a profusion of luminous lotuses, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.** They all sat upon their thrones and entered samadhi.

**Sutra:**

**South of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Exquisite Treasury of All Jeweled Moonlight. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Boundless Light Perfect and Adorned. The Buddha there was named King Sumeru of Universal Wisdom and Radiant Virtue.**

**Commentary:**

**South of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Exquisite Treasury of All Jeweled Moonlight. Within the seed of those worlds** to the south, **there was a land called Boundless Light Perfect and Adorned.** The light shined everywhere, full and magnificent. **The Buddha there was named King Sumeru of Universal Wisdom and Radiant Virtue.** That Buddha’s wisdom pervaded space and the Dharma Realm. He had a great radiance that emanated from his virtuous conduct. Sumeru is Sanskrit and means “wonderfully high,” so he was the Buddha King Wonderfully High.

**Sutra:**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Wisdom that Universally Illumines the Sea of Dharmas. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.**

**Each Bodhisattva displayed ten supreme mani clouds of a treasury of light from all adornments, which filled all of space and did not disperse. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds that rained down exquisite ornaments and illuminated everywhere. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds with blazing jewels praising the epithets of Buddhas. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds that expounded all Buddhadharmas. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds of multitudes of beautiful trees adorning bodhimandas. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds of jeweled light shining everywhere revealing multitudes of transformation Buddhas. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds universally showing all of the adorned images in bodhimandas. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds of mysteriously blazing lamps describing all Buddhas’ states. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds of images in palaces in inconceivably many Buddhalands. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds universally showing the bodies of the Buddhas of the three periods of time. Supreme mani clouds such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the south, each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne from a profusion of lotuses of sapphire and jambunada gold, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**Commentary:**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One** , the Buddha namedKing Sumeru of Universal Wisdom and Radiant Virtue, **was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Wisdom that Universally Illumines the Sea of Dharmas. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was** beneath the bodhi tree.

**Each Bodhisattvadisplayed** in infinite profusion **ten supreme mani clouds of a treasury of light from all adornments, which filled all of space and did not disperse.** Although the ten clouds manifested by every Bodhisattva filled space, these clouds did not impede each other. They reflected one another as they remained in space, clearly seen by all. **They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds that rained down exquisite ornaments and illuminated everywhere.** All kinds of precious ornaments rained down from the clouds, which pervasively illuminated all of space and the Dharma Realm. **They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds with blazing jewels praising the epithets of the Buddhas. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds that expounded all Buddhadharmas.** The clouds themselves could proclaim the wonderful meaning of all Buddhadharmas. **They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds of multitudes of beautiful** bodhi **trees adorning bodhimandas. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds of jeweled light shining everywhere** in the Dharma Realm and **revealing multitudes of transformation Buddhas. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds universally showing all the adorned images** of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas **in bodhimandas. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds of mysteriously blazing lamps describing all Buddhas’ states.** This kind of lamplight proclaims the inconceivable state of the Buddhas. **They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds of** Buddha **images in palaces in inconceivably**, ineffably **many Buddhalands. They further displayed ten supreme mani clouds universally showing the bodies of the Buddhas of the three periods of time** and in the ten directions.

**Supreme mani clouds such as those** mentioned above, **as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him.** Their bowing was also a way of making offerings to the Buddha. **Then, in the south, each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne from a profusion of lotuses of sapphire and jambunada gold, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.** Lord Shakra has a kind of blue jewel, which is very precious. In southern Jambudvipa, there is a jambu tree whose leaves turn to gold when they fall into the water. That kind of gold is much more precious than ordinary gold. All the Bodhisattvas sat upon their lion thrones in full lotus posture and appeared to be in a state of samadhi as they single-mindedly listened to the Buddha speaking Dharma.

**Sutra:**

**West of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Delightful Jewel Light. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Producing Supreme Life-Sustenance. The Buddha there was named Precious Adornment with Merit and Virtue Resembling Fragrant Flames.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Universal Adornment with Moonlight’s Fragrant Flames. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.**

**Each Bodhisattva displayed ten clouds of pavilions composed of precious fragrant flowers, which filled all of space and did not disperse.**

**Commentary:**

To the **west of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Delightful Jewel Light. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Producing Supreme Life-Sustenance.** This land naturally produced sources of sustenance, such as various fruits and grains, material for making clothing, and other necessities that sustain human life in the world. These materials were of the finest quality. In that land, there was a Buddha speaking Dharma. **The Buddha there was named Precious Adornment with Merit and Virtue Resembling Fragrant Flames.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva** , a great Bodhisattva among Bodhisattvas, **named Universal Adornment with Moonlight’s Fragrant Flames. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha** Shakyamuni **was** under the bodhi tree.

**Each Bodhisattvadisplayed ten clouds of pavilions composed of precious fragrant flowers, which filled all of space and did not disperse.** They stayed there forever, without scattering.

Sutra:

**They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions composed of all kinds of magnificent jewels of boundless colors and forms. They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions composed of the fragrant flames of jeweled lamps. They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions composed of pearls. They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions composed of precious flowers. They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions adorned with jeweled necklaces. They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions showing splendid light from all ornaments in the ten directions. They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions adorned with the dust of various precious stones blended together. They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions adorned with multitudes of jewels from throughout the ten directions. They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions composed of all kinds of flowers, door chimes, and nets. Clouds of pavilions such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the west, each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne from a great profusion of gold leaves, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**Commentary:**

**They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions built of all kinds of magnificent jewels of boundless colors and forms.** These wondrous forms included the Thirty-two Hallmarks and Eighty Subsidiary Characteristics [of a Buddha]. Such colorful clouds of pavilions built, appeared in the air. **They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions composed of the fragrant flames of jeweled lamps.** All kinds of jeweled lamps, flowers, and flames appeared in space. **They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions composed of** all kinds of **pearls.** These pavilions were inlaid with pearl. **They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions composed of precious flowers** and jewels. **They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions adorned with jeweled necklaces. They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions showing splendid light from all** wondrous jewels and **ornaments in the ten directions. They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions adorned with the dust of various precious stones** of many colors **blended together** and reflecting each other. **They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions adorned with multitudes of jewels from throughout the ten directions. They further displayed ten clouds of pavilions composed of all kinds of flowers, door chimes, and** various jeweled **nets.**

**Clouds of** precious jeweled **pavilions such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air.** Each kind of cloud filled up all of space, and yet the clouds did not get in the way of each other. They appeared distinctly, layer upon layer in infinite profusion. That’s what a wonderful state it was. **And** they **did not disperse**; they would always be there in space. **Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas** circled the Buddha three times to the right, **bowed to the Buddha, and offered them to him.** They used both the clouds and the bows as offerings to the Buddha.

**Then, in the west,** those Bodhisattvas, who were in the west to begin with, stayed there. The Buddha’s state is inconceivable, so the Bodhisattvas didn’t have to come to the Buddha and the Buddha didn’t have to go to the west where they were. Although they didn’t come and the Buddha didn’t go, it was as if they were all together in one place, face-to-face. There in the west, **each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne from a great profusion of gold leaves, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture**, waiting for the Buddha to speak Dharma.

**Sutra:**

**North of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Perfect Treasury of Vaidurya Lotus Light. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Adorned with Utpala Flowers. The Buddha there was named King of Sound of the Banner of Universal Wisdom.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Lion-Sprint Light. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.**

**Each Bodhisattva displayed ten clouds of wondrous trees of all kinds of fragrance and mani, which filled all of space and did not disperse.**

**Commentary:**

To the **north of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Perfect Treasury of Vaidurya Lotus Light. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Adorned with Utpala Flowers. The Buddha there was named King of Sound of the Banner of Universal Wisdom.** His wisdom was comparable to a jeweled banner.

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Lion-Sprint Light. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.** All the Bodhisattvas came to the splendid Dharma assembly held upon Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment under the bodhi tree.

**Each Bodhisattvadisplayed** in space **ten clouds of wondrous trees of all kinds of fragrance and mani**,adornments of incense and precious gems, **which filled all of space and did not disperse.** These clouds lingered in the air without scattering.

**Sutra:**

**They further displayed ten clouds of trees adorned with dense foliage of sublime fragrance. They further displayed ten clouds of trees adorned with trees of boundless colors and forms that magically appeared. They further displayed ten clouds of trees that were everywhere adorned with flowers. They further displayed ten clouds of trees adorned with the perfect light of dazzling jewels. They further displayed ten clouds of trees adorned with Bodhisattva bodies manifesting in the midst of chandana incense. They further displayed ten clouds of trees revealing inconceivable adornments in bodhimandas of the past. They further displayed ten clouds of trees made of myriad jeweled garments as bright as the sun. They further displayed ten clouds of trees that universally made all delightful sounds.**

**Clouds of trees such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the north, each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne from mani lamps and lotuses, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**Commentary:**

The previous section said that the Bodhisattvas made appear clouds of wondrous trees, which filled all of space. What clouds of trees were there? **They further displayed ten clouds of trees adorned with dense foliage**—lots of leaves—**of sublime fragrance.** These trees were extremely beautiful. **They further made appear ten kinds of clouds of trees adorned with trees of boundless colors and forms that magically appeared.** These trees were especially adorned and splendidly colorful. **They further displayed ten clouds of trees that were everywhere adorned with flowers.** The trees were covered with numerous blooming flowers. **They further displayed ten clouds of trees adorned with the perfect light of dazzling jewels.** The jewels gave off a fiery light. **They further displayed ten clouds of trees adorned with Bodhisattva bodies manifest ing in the midst of chandana incense.** Within the incense, many Bodhisattva bodies came into being by transformation. **They further made appear ten clouds of trees revealing inconceivable adornments in bodhimandas of the past**, bodhimandas where the Buddha had cultivated, had made offerings to all Buddhas, and had spoken Dharma. **They further displayed ten clouds of trees made of myriad jeweled garments as bright as the sun.** The clothing was made with gems as bright as sunlight. **They further displayed ten clouds of trees that universally made all delightful sounds.** Whoever heard those sounds felt happy. It was a natural kind of music.

**Clouds of trees such as those** described above**, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air** throughout the Dharma Realm **and did not disperse. Having displayed those** wondrous **clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the north, each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne from** precious **mani lamps and lotuses, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.** Each Bodhisattva sat on his lion throne and cultivated his own samadhi.

**Sutra:**

**Northeast of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Banner of Jambunada Gold and Crystal Hues. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Adorned with Multitudes of Jewels. The Buddha there was named Lamp of Fearlessness Regarding All Dharmas.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Inexhaustible Treasury of Merit and Virtue of the Lamp of Supreme Light. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.**

**Each Bodhisattva displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of a profusion of precious lotuses of boundless colors and forms, which filled all of space and did not disperse.**

**Commentary:**

To the **northeast of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Banner of Jambunada Gold and Crystal Hues. Within the seed of those worlds there was a country called Adorned with Multitudes of Jewels. The Buddha there was named Lamp of Fearlessness Regarding All Dharmas.** He was turning the Dharma wheel and teaching living beings in that land.

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Inexhaustible Treasury of Merit and Virtue of the Lamp of Supreme Light.** That Bodhisattva didn't come alone. **He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was** seated upon his precious vajra throne at the base of the bodhi tree.

**Each Bodhisattvadisplayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of a profusion of precious lotuses of boundless colors and forms, which filled all of space and did not disperse.**

**Sutra:**

**They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of the brilliant light of supreme mani. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of assorted ornaments and decorations. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of jeweled garlands and blazing lanterns. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones that rain down strands of jewels everywhere. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of a profusion of incense, flowers, and strands of jewels. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of a plethora of supreme mani revealing the adornments of the thrones of all Buddhas. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones adorned with doors, windows, steps, beads, and other ornaments. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of the jeweled branches and trunks of mani trees. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of a blend of jewels and incense and shining as brilliantly as sunlight.**

**Clouds of lion thrones such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the northeast, each Bodhisattva created a lion's throne from an abundance of precious lotuses and luminous mani banners, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**Commentary:**

A few days ago at the World Peace Conference in Seattle, as we were all reciting the Spiritual Mantra for Quelling Disasters and Bringing Auspiciousness, a white cloud appeared in the air, and the cloud gave off white light. The cloud stayed for about two hours; it didn't disperse until after our lectures were over. I don't know if you were aware of this. Several others did take notice of this even. It was a very propitious omen. That was an auspicious cloud, a response to our prayers for world peace. The cloud appeared like a Dharma-protecting dragon.When the Buddha attained Buddhahood, the Bodhisattvas of the ten directions also made auspicious clouds appear in the air as an offering to the Buddha. At this point in the sutra, the Bodhisattvas made clouds of lion thrones appear.

**They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of the brilliant light of supreme mani. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of assorted ornaments** such as lamps, censor, bells, and so forth—all the objects that beautify the altar that are placed before the Buddha; **and decorations,** such as carvings, flowers, and so forth, which embellish the temple. For example, the other day someone brought in several dozen sheets on which she had written “Om Mani Padme Hum.” Those are also decorations. **They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones of jeweled garlands and blazing lanterns. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones that rain down strands of jewels everywhere.** Within the clouds appear lion thrones adorned with strands of jewels. **They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of a profusion of incense, flowers, and strands of jewels.** These lion thrones were made of all kinds of incense, flowers, and jewels. **They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of a plethora of supreme mani revealing the adornments of the thrones of all Buddhas. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones adorned with doors, windows,** brick or stone **steps, beads, and other ornaments. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of the jeweled branches and trunks of mani trees. They further displayed ten clouds of lion thrones made of a blend of** all kinds of **jewels and incense and shining as brilliantly as sunlight.**

**Clouds of lion thrones such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him.** They made an offering to the Buddha of all those clouds of lion thrones. **Then,in the northeast, each Bodhisattva created a lion's throne from an abundance of precious lotuses and luminous mani banners, and seated himself upon his throne in full lotus posture.** Although the Buddha didn't go to the northeast and the Bodhisattvas didn't come to the Buddha, they were as if face-to-face. Each Bodhisattva sat in full lotus posture and cultivated Contemplative Prajna in order to realize the wisdom of the ultimate reality.

**Sutra:**

**Southeast of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Adorned with Gold and Universally Illuminated by Vaidurya Light. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Pure Fragrance and Light. The Buddha there was named King of Universal Joy and Profound Faith.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Universally Bright Lamp of Wisdom. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.**

**Each Bodhisattva displayed ten clouds of banners made of wish-fulfilling mani gems, which filled all of space and did not disperse.**

**Commentary:**

To the **southeast of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Adorned with Gold and Universally Illuminated by Vaidurya Light. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Pure Fragrance and Light. The Buddha there was named King of Universal Joy and Profound Faith.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva** , a great Bodhisattva among Bodhisattvas, **named Universally Bright Lamp of Wisdom. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.** He and Bodhisattvas from other worlds as numerous as motes of dust all came to the base of the bodhi tree, where Shakyamuni Buddha had just realized Buddhahood.

**Each Bodhisattva displayed** in infinitely many layers **ten clouds of banners made of** all kinds of **wish-fulfilling mani gems, which filled all of space and did not disperse.** These clouds of mani banners lingered in the air as an offering to the Buddha.

**Sutra:**

**They further displayed ten clouds of banners adorned with sapphires and all kinds of flowers. They further displayed ten clouds of mani banners of all kinds of fragrances. They further displayed ten clouds of banners made of blazing, jeweled lamps. They further displayed ten clouds of supreme mani banners showing the Buddhas' spiritual powers and speaking of Dharma. They further displayed ten clouds of mani banners made of all kinds of garments for adorning the body. They further displayed ten clouds of luminous banners made of clusters of precious flowers. They further displayed ten clouds of banners of tinkling sounds from bells hung in a jeweled net. They further displayed ten clouds of banners made of mani daises and lotus nets. They further displayed ten clouds of banners showing all kinds of inconceivable adornments and images.**

**Clouds of precious banners such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the southeast, each Bodhisattva created a lion's throne from a profusion of precious lotuses, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**Commentary:**

**They** , these Bodhisattvas as numerous as dustmotes, **further displayed ten clouds of banners adorned with sapphires and all kinds of** wonderful **flowers.** Sapphires refer to the blue gems owned by the Jade Emperor. **They further displayed ten clouds of mani banners of all kinds of** rare **fragrances. They further displayed ten clouds of banners made of blazing, jeweled lamps,** burning lamps adorned with various precious gems. **They further displayed ten clouds of supreme mani banners showing the Buddhas' spiritual powers and speaking of Dharma.** These clouds showed the Buddhas of the ten directions and three periods of time using spiritual powers and speaking Dharma to teach living beings. **They further displayed ten clouds of mani banners made of all kinds of** superb **garments for adorning the body. They further displayed ten clouds of luminous banners made of clusters of precious flowers.** These numerous flowers radiated a banner of bright light. **They further displayed ten clouds of banners made of tinkling sounds from bells hung in a jeweled net.** The net was made of the seven precious things. **They further displayed ten clouds of banners made of mani daises and lotus nets. They further displayed ten clouds of banners showing all kinds of inconceivable adornments and images.**

**Clouds of precious banners such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him.** They made an offering to the Buddha of their bows and of the precious clouds. **Then, in the southeast** in his own land**, each Bodhisattva created a lion's throne from a profusion of precious lotuses, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**Sutra:**

**Southwest of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Universally Shining Sunlight. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Lion Sunlight. The Buddha there was named Luminous Sound of Universal Wisdom.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Exquisite Light Universally Blazing Forth from the Cowl. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.**

**Each Bodhisattva displayed ten clouds of precious canopies made of a plethora of exquisite ornaments, which filled all of space and did not disperse.**

**Commentary:**

**Southwest of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Universally Shining Sunlight. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Lion Sunlight. The Buddha there** , the teaching host of that land, **was named Luminous Sound of Universal Wisdom.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva** , a great leader of Bodhisattvas, **named Exquisite Light Universally Blazing Forth from the Cowl. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.** All of those numerous Bodhisattvas gathered at the foot of the bodhi tree.

**Each Bodhisattva displayed** their own **ten clouds of precious canopies made of a plethora of exquisite ornaments, which filled all of space and did not disperse.**

**Sutra:**

**They further displayed ten clouds of floral canopies adorned with lights. They further displayed ten clouds of treasuries of pearl canopies of boundless colors. They further displayed ten clouds of supreme mani canopies uttering all Bodhisattvas' sounds of compassion and empathy. They further displayed ten clouds of canopies of garlands made from beautiful, glowing jewels. They further displayed ten clouds of canopies of chimes suspended from nets and embellished with beautiful gems. They further displayed ten clouds of canopies adorned with mani tree branches. They further displayed ten clouds of supreme mani canopies of universally shining sunlight. They further displayed ten clouds of canopies made of fragrant ointments and burning incense. They further displayed ten clouds of canopies made of an abundance of chandana. They further displayed ten clouds of canopies adorned with the universal light of the magnificent state of the Buddhas.**

**Commentary:**

**They further displayed ten clouds of floral canopies adorned with lights. They further displayed ten clouds of treasuries of pearl canopies of boundless colors. They further displayed ten clouds of regal mani canopies uttering all Bodhisattvas' sounds of compassion and empathy . They further displayed ten clouds of canopies of garlands made from beautiful, glowing jewels.** These canopies were made of flames from jewels in the form of flower garlands. **They further displayed ten clouds of canopies of chimes suspended from nets and embellished with beautiful gems. They further displayed ten clouds of canopies adorned with mani tree branches. They further displayed ten clouds of supreme mani canopies of universally shining sunlight. They further displayed ten clouds of canopies of fragrant ointments and burning incense. They further displayed ten clouds of** precious **canopies made of an abundance of chandana** incense. **They further displayed ten clouds of canopies adorned with the universal light of the magnificent state of the Buddhas.**

**Sutra:**

**Clouds of precious canopies such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the southwest, each Bodhisattva created a lion's throne richly adorned with glowing sapphire, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**Commentary:**

**Clouds of precious canopies such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse.** Each of the clouds manifested by the Bodhisattvas pervaded all of space, and yet they did not impede one another. And each of the clouds remained distinct from the others. They were not all mixed up in disarray. None of the clouds dispersed. **Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him.** All the Bodhisattvas made obeisance to the Buddha and offered the clouds of precious canopies to him. **Then, in the southwest, each Bodhisattva created a lion's throne richly adorned with glowing sapphire**—the imperial gem of Lord Shakra—**and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.** The Bodhisattvas did not come to the Saha world, and the Buddha did not go to all those lands as numerous as dustmotes. Yet they were as if face-to-face. The Bodhisattvas each sat in full lotus posture and practiced their own dharma doors.

**Sutra:**

**Northwest of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Dazzling Light of Jewels. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Adorned with All Fragrances. The Buddha there was named Luminous Ocean of Limitless Merit and Virtue.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Infinitely Bright, Supreme Mani. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.**

**Each Bodhisattva displayed ten clouds of perfect light from all jewels, which filled all of space and did not disperse. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light from all glowing jewels. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light from all gorgeous flowers. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light from all transformation Buddhas. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light from the Buddhalands in the ten directions. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light from jeweled trees, with roaring thunder from the realm of Buddhas.**

**Commentary:**

**Northwest of this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Dazzling Light of Jewels. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Adorned with All Fragrances.** All the beings in that land had a natural fragrance about them. **The Buddha there was named Luminous Ocean of Limitless Merit and Virtue.** That was the name of the Dharma King who taught beings in that land.

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva** , a great Bodhisattva with a great resolve, **named Infinitely Bright, Supreme Mani.** The light of that Bodhisattva was inexhaustible. **He**, a leader of Bodhisattvas, **and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.** Coming before the Buddha, who was seated upon a precious vajra throne beneath the bodhi tree, **each** Bodhisattva **displayed ten clouds of perfect light from all jewels, which filled all of space and did not disperse. They further displayed** not just one, but **ten clouds of perfect light from all glowing jewels. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light from all gorgeous flowers**, the most beautiful and exquisite flowers there were. **They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light from all transformation Buddhas.** The transformation Buddhas appeared within the light and also emitted light themselves. **They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light from the Buddhalands in the ten directions. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light from jeweled trees, with roaring thunder from the realm ofBuddhas.**

**Sutra:**

**They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light from vaidurya gems and supreme mani. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light manifesting boundless beings in a single thought. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light that proclaim the great vows of all Thus Come Ones. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light that utter sounds to teach all beings.**

**Clouds of perfect light such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the northwest, each Bodhisattva created a lion's throne from the infinite light of abundant, awesome virtue, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**Commentary:**

**They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light from vaidurya gems and supreme mani. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light manifesting boundless beings in a single thought. They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light that proclaim the great vows of all Thus Come Ones** of the past, present, and future pervading space and the Dharma Realm. **They further displayed ten clouds of perfect light of supreme mani that utter sounds to teach all beings.** These clouds emanated the sounds made by the Buddha in speaking to and teaching all living beings, and also the sounds of living beings requesting Dharma.

**Clouds of perfect light such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed** reverently **to the Buddha and offered them to him.** They presented their bows and the clouds of light to the Buddha as offerings. **Then, in the northwest, each Bodhisattva created a lion's throne from the infinite light of abundant, awesome virtue, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.** Each of the Bodhisattvas sat in full lotus and cultivated the Four Limitless States of Mind—kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

**Sutra:**

**Below this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Lotus Fragrance Treasury of Wonderful Virtues. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Dazzling Light of a Jeweled Lion. The Buddha there was named Light of the Dharma Realm.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Flaming Wisdom of the Light of the Dharma Realm. He and as many Bodhisattvas as there are dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.**

**Each Bodhisattva displayed ten brilliant clouds produced from a profusion of mani, which filled all of space and did not disperse. They further displayed ten brilliant clouds full of all kinds of incense. They further displayed ten brilliant clouds of the effulgence of all jewels.**

**Commentary:**

**Below this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Lotus Fragrance Treasury of Wonderful Virtues. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Dazzling Light of a Jeweled Lion. The Buddha there was named Light of the Dharma Realm.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One,** that King of Dharma, **was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Flaming Wisdom of the Light of the Dharma Realm. He and as many Bodhisattvas as there are dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was**, at his vajra seat beneath the bodhi tree.

**EachBodhisattva displayed ten brilliant clouds produced from a profusion of mani, which filled all of space and did not disperse. They further displayed ten brilliant clouds full of all kinds of incense. They further displayed ten brilliant clouds of the effulgence of all jewels.**

**Sutra:**

**They further displayed ten brilliant clouds that issued sounds of all Buddhas speaking the Dharma. They further displayed ten brilliant clouds manifesting the adornments of all Buddhalands. They further displayed ten brilliant clouds produced from towers of splendid blossoms. They further displayed ten brilliant clouds showing the Buddhas teaching beings throughout all eons. They further displayed ten brilliant clouds containing infinitely many jeweled flower buds. They further displayed ten brilliant clouds of lavishly ornamented thrones.**

**Commentary:**

**They further displayed ten brilliant clouds that issued sounds of all Buddhas speaking the Dharma.** Buddhas speaking Dharma could be seen within the light. They proclaimed the Dharma continuously without cease. **They further displayed ten brilliant clouds manifesting the adornments of all Buddhalands**, All the pure, adorned, bright and wondrous characteristics of those lands appeared within the clouds of light. **They further displayed ten brilliant clouds produced from towers of splendid blossoms.** All kinds of flowers and towers appeared in the light. **They further displayed ten brilliant clouds showing the Buddhas teaching beings throughout all eons.** The clouds showed how each Buddha spoke the Dharma and expounded the sutras in order to teach beings. **They further displayed ten brilliant clouds containing infinitely many jeweled flower buds.** Endless layers of floral canopies appeared in the air. **They further displayed ten brilliant clouds of lavishly ornamented thrones.** These clouds displayed ornate Dharma seats.

The above passage of the sutra described various kinds of brilliant clouds. Basically, everyone probably understands the meaning of the text. However, according to the rules of lecturing on sutras, one should explain the passage once even if everyone already understands. And of course if people don’t understand, it’s even more critical that one explains it. Whether or not one lectures well, and whether or not people understand it, one should explain it. You can’t say, “This passage is very clear and all of you understand it, so there’s no need for me to explain it.” That’s cheating. If there’s no need to explain it, then why are you lecturing in the first place? How do you know everyone understands it? If someone doesn’t understand, then he or she will be confused. Even if everyone already understands, if you explain it again, it will plant another seed in their eighth consciousness, which is very good. Why don’t you want to explain it? It must be because you yourself don’t understand the sutra’s meaning. And so you try to pull the wool over people’s eyes. As for me, I explain whatever I know. If I don’t understand something, then I don’t explain it. I don’t say, “Oh, you all understand, so I don’t need to explain it.” If I don’t explain something, it’s because I don’t understand it either, so I have no way to explain it. Sometimes I don’t care whether I understand or not; I just explain the meaning the way I see it. If you can give a better explanation, then that’s very good.

In explaining sutras, the wise see wisdom, and the humane see humaneness. The profound see what is profound, and the shallow see what is shallow. And so one must take into account the level of understanding of one’s audience. If one speaks elegantly but people don’t understand, it’s not much use. In studying the Buddhadharma, we have to really understand the principles in the sutras.

When I explain sutras, I encourage people to put the principles into practice. If you understand but don’t practice, it’s useless. If you don’t understand but you can practice, you’ll certainly succeed; you’ll surely realize the fruition of sagehood. Don’t just concentrate on intellectual Chan and literary wisdom. To be a Dharma Master, it’s not enough to read a few commentaries and memorize them. That is merely intellectual wisdom.

**Sutra:**

**Brilliant clouds such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the lower direction, each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne from blazing, jeweled lamps and abundant lotuses, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**Commentary:**

**Brilliant clouds such as those** described above, **as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse.** Every one of the clouds pervaded space without obstructing the others; they each appeared clearly and distinctly. If these brilliant clouds had been ordinary clouds, they would have scattered and disappeared, but instead they lingered in the air. **Having displayed** all **those** brilliant **clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the lower direction, each Bodhisattva** among the infinite numbers of great Bodhisattvas **created a lion’s throne from blazing, jeweled lamps and abundant lotuses**—there were lots of lotuses—**and sat upon his** Dharma **throne in full lotus posture**, entering the Vajra Samadhi and waiting for the Buddha to speak Dharma.

**Sutra:**

**Above this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds called Adorned with Dazzling Mani Jewels. Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Wondrous Radiance Beyond Appearances. The Buddha there was named Radiant King of Unobstructed Merit and Virtue.**

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Unimpeded Strength of Vigorous Wisdom. He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.**

**Each Bodhisattva displayed ten effulgent clouds made from jewels of boundless colors and forms, which filled all of space and did not disperse. They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from a net of mani jewels. They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from the adornments in all the magnificent Buddhalands. They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from all sublime fragrances. They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from all adornments.**

**Commentary:**

**Above this sea of worlds of the Flower Treasury, there was another sea of worlds.** Our sea of worlds is called Flower Treasury, and that one was **called Adorned with Dazzling Mani Jewels.** Mani jewels must have been plentiful in that sea of worlds. They illuminated the world and made it a beautiful and happy place. **Within the seed of those worlds there was a land called Wondrous Radiance Beyond Appearances.** In that country there was a Buddha teaching and transforming beings. **The Buddha there was named Radiant King of Unobstructed Merit and Virtue.** That Buddha’s virtue was perfect and unobstructed. It was full to the extreme, and so it appeared radiant.

**Within the great sea-like assembly of that Thus Come One,** there were Hearers, those Enlightened to Conditions, and Bodhisattvas waiting to hear the Buddha speak Dharma. Among them **was a Bodhisattva Mahasattva**, a leader of Bodhisattvas, **named Unimpeded Strength of Vigorous Wisdom.** He had tremendous power, which was based on courageous and vigorous wisdom. He was so vigorous that no amount of suffering or hardship could daunt him. **He and as many Bodhisattvas as dustmotes in a sea of worlds all came to where the Buddha was.** By means of their spiritual powers and self-mastery, they all came to the Saha World to gather before Shakyamuni Buddha at the foot of the bodhi tree. Since they used their spiritual powers, they came without coming. With their powers of self-mastery, they went and yet did not go. Although it was an extremely great distance, they were as if face-to-face with the Buddha.

**Each displayed ten effulgent clouds made from jewels of boundless colors and forms, which filled all of space and did not disperse.** If this were not a state manifested by the spiritual powers of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the clouds would have vanished after a while. Instead they remained in space while the Buddha was speaking Dharma, and they have not dispersed even up to the present time. If you attain such a state, you should know that it is the state of the Flower Adornment. The state of the Flower Adornment is beyond all conception. And so there is no way to talk about it. Yet even though it is beyond conception, we still try to think about it. Although it is impossible to express, we try to talk about it. We are talking about something that is impossible to talk about or conceptualize. This is “the talking of not talking”—speaking about the unspeakable. So what am I talking about? I’m just babbling nonsense.

**They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from a** precious **net of mani jewels.** Don’t think this is true. It’s all false. Why? Even if it were true, if you don’t cultivate, it becomes false. If you cultivate according to the sutra, then it’s true. If you don’t, then it’s false. No matter what sutra it is, if you study and recite the sutra but don’t actually cultivate according to it, then the sutra is false for you. In that case not a single sutra is true. If they are true, why can’t you practice them? If you don’t cultivate, then no matter how well you lecture on the sutras, it’s of no use. If you cultivate, then even if you don’t know how to lecture, you’ll still gain some benefit.

**They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from the adornments of all the magnificent Buddhalands. They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from all sublime fragrances. They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from all adornments** —the adornments of Buddhalands as well as those of the lands of beings.

When I said earlier that all sutras are false, someone disagreed. “All the sutras are true,” he insisted. If they are true but you can’t apply them, of what use are they? If they are false but you can use them, then they become true. If they are true but no one uses them, they become false. Consider the analogy of food. If you eat it, it can cure your hunger. If you don’t, then the food is food and you are you—the food doesn’t do you any good. Therefore, once you understand the principles, you have to diligently cultivate. Don’t be casual. Don’t say, “I know.” What do you know? You have nothing to say.

**Sutra:**

**They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from the transformations of all Buddhas. They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from the flowers of myriad beautiful trees. They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from all kinds of vajra. They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from mani jewels that expounded boundless Bodhisattva practices. They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from lamps of pearl.**

**Effulgent clouds such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the upper direction, each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne from a profusion of lotuses, which issued the sounds and light of the Buddhas, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**In this way, in seas of worlds as numerous as the dustmotes in a billion Buddhalands, there were Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas as numerous as the dustmotes in a billion Buddhalands, each surrounded by a gathering of Bodhisattvas as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**Commentary:**

**They further displayed ten** …Actually it wasn’t just ten, but limitlessly many, as numberless as the grains of sand in the Ganges. Generally speaking, ten are mentioned to represent infinitely many layers of **effulgent clouds made from the transformations of all Buddhas.** These effulgent clouds were magically created by the Buddhas. **They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from the flowers of myriad beautiful trees.** There were many varieties of bodhi trees, trees of mani jewels, and chandana trees. All of these wonderful trees were adorned with flowers and fruits. Since they were blossoming trees, they also bore fruit.

**They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from all kinds of vajra. They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from mani jewels that expounded boundless Bodhisattva practices.** The practices cultivated by all Bodhisattvas are aimed at benefitting, enlightening, and liberating themselves as well as others. Bodhisattvas cultivate the Six Perfections and myriad practices. The perfections are used to benefit, teach, and enlighten beings, and to lead them to make the resolve for bodhi. Bodhisattvas cultivate the Bodhisattva Path, aiming to take all beings to Buddhahood before they themselves become Buddhas. **They further displayed ten effulgent clouds made from lamps of pearl.** Lamps represent the esteemed quality of wisdom.

**Effulgent clouds such as those, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, completely filled the air and did not disperse.** From the point of view of an ordinary person, you might say, “If one cloud fills all of space, how could the other clouds fill space as well?” Each and every cloud pervaded space without obstructing the others. They certainly didn’t interfere with or destroy one another. They all remained intact. Ordinary people find this state hard to understand. Let’s not talk about so many kinds of effulgent clouds. Let’s just consider light. Lights can blend together and shine upon one another. For example, the electric lamps in this Buddha hall each illuminate the entire hall, yet there is no conflict among them. The lamps don’t fight and say, “Keep your light away from me. Don’t shine over here, and I won’t shine over there.” The lights all shine together. One light doesn’t obliterate another one. They enhance their brightness with each others’ light. These effulgent clouds are the same way. They all pervade the Dharma Realm, and yet remain distinct from one another. **Having displayed those clouds, the Bodhisattvas bowed** respectfully **to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the upper direction,** above the Flower Treasury sea of worlds, **each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne from a profusion of lotuses, which issued the sounds and light of the Buddhas, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture** and cultivated his own samadhi.

**In this way, in seas of worlds as numerous as the dustmotes in a billion Buddhalands** as described above**, there were Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas as numerous as the dustmotes in a billion Buddhalands, each surrounded by a gathering of Bodhisattvas as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.** If you asked me how many Bodhisattvas there were, I wouldn’t know. They all came to the great Dharma assembly where Shakyamuni Buddha was expounding the Great Flower Adornment Sutra after his enlightenment under the bodhi tree.

**Sutra:**

**Each of those Bodhisattvas displayed clouds of offerings of all kinds of adornments, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, which completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those clouds, they bowed to the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the direction from which he had come, each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne adorned with all kinds of jewels, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.**

**Commentary:**

This passage describes the state of the Flower Adornment, in which Bodhisattvas manifest various lights, and each light manifests infinite numbers of Bodhisattvas. These limitless Bodhisattvas then universally enter into innumerable motes of dust. Each mote of dust in turn displays an infinite number of vast Buddhalands. In each land, a Buddha is speaking Dharma and Bodhisattvas make offerings to the Buddha and assist him in propagating the Dharma and benefiting beings. That’s the essential meaning of this passage of text.

**Each of those** great **Bodhisattvas displayed clouds of offerings of all kinds of** supremely fine **adornments, as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds, which completely filled the air and did not disperse. Having displayed those** various **clouds** of offerings**, they** reverently **bowedto the Buddha and offered them to him. Then, in the direction from which he had come,** in whichever of the ten directions they came from, **each Bodhisattva created a lion’s throne adorned with all kinds of jewels, and seated himself upon that throne in full lotus posture.** Full lotus is the best posture for meditation.

III. Those summoned gather like clouds
B. Manifesting the functions of their self-mastery

**Sutra:**

**Having seated themselves, all of the Bodhisattvas, from each and every pore on their bodies, displayed lights of various colors from all jewels, as numerous as the dustmotes in ten seas of worlds. Within each light appeared Bodhisattvas as numerous as the dustmotes in ten seas of worlds, all seated upon lion thrones made from a profusion of lotuses.**

**All of those Bodhisattvas were able to pervasively enter into all the dustmotes in the oceans of arrangements of Dharma realms. Each dustmote contained vast lands as numerous as the dustmotes in ten Buddha worlds. In each land there dwelt the Buddhas, World Honored Ones, of the three periods of time. Those Bodhisattvas were all able to draw near to these Buddhas and make offerings to them.**

**Commentary:**

**Having seated themselves** in full lotus**, all of the Bodhisattvas** displayed their spiritual powers. **From each and every pore on their bodies,** they **displayed lights of various colors from all jewels, as numerous as the dustmotes in ten seas of worlds.** Innumerable jewels emitted multi-colored rays of light. **Within each light appeared Bodhisattvas as numerous as the dustmotes in ten seas of worlds, all seated upon lion thrones made from a profusion of lotuses.**

**All of those Bodhisattvas** mentioned earlier **were** great Bodhisattvas with inconceivable spiritual powers and transformations. Their wisdom is even more inconceivable. And so they were **able to pervasively enter into all the dustmotes in the oceans of all arrangements**—referring to how the Dharma realms were created and formed—**of Dharma realms. Each dustmote contained vast** Buddha**lands as numerous as the dustmotes in ten Buddha worlds** of infinite proportions. **In each land there dwelt the Buddhas, World Honored Ones, of the three periods of time.** In each Buddhaland, the Buddhas of the past, present, and future were speaking Dharma and turning the great Dharma wheel. Although there were innumerably many Buddhalands, **those** great **Bodhisattvas were all able to** create as many division bodies to **draw near to these Buddhas and make offerings to them.**

**Sutra:**

**In every thought, by using the method of manifesting freely in dreams, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds. In every thought, by using the method of manifesting the death and birth of all gods, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**Commentary:**

What are Bodhisattvas? They are enlightened beings who enlighten other sentient beings. Having themselves become enlightened, they teach other beings to become enlightened based upon the principle of their own enlightenment.

**In every thought,** in thought after thought without interruption, **by using the method of manifesting freely** and spontaneously **in dreams, theyenlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.** What is meant by “manifesting spontaneously in dreams”? Some beings will not believe the Dharma you speak for them. Wishing to teach those beings, Bodhisattvas appear in their dreams and use all kinds of expedient methods to speak Dharma for them. Beings may be very stubborn and skeptical when they are awake, but often they will believe the Dharma when they hear it in their dream. And so Bodhisattvas use dreams to teach beings.

Our entire life is itself a dream. There is a verse that says:

Life is but a dream;
Death, a dream as well.
Dreaming, we enjoy wealth and glory;
Upon awakening, we’re back in poverty.
Every day we dream on, unaware that
The dream passes in less time than a simple meal.
If we don’t wake up from this one,
We’ve dreamt it all in vain.

We don’t know how we got here, and we don’t know how we will leave. That’s why we say life is just a dream. In the dream, we may strike it rich, become a high official, and enjoy wealth and honor. Our life may be really fine, and we become attached to the dream. We can’t renounce our family, our country, or ourselves. But when we wake up from the dream, we’re still our old selves, with nothing at all. There’s nothing much to say. Yet we keep on dreaming and never wake up.

If you tell people that life is just a dream, they won’t believe you. Since they haven’t woken up, they don’t realize that they are dreaming. In their dream, they might make a fortune, become a government official, or even become an emperor and get to enjoy all the concubines, nobility, wealth, and power of that position. Suppose you say to them, “You think you’re a powerful emperor, but it’s not for real. You’re just having a dream.” They will say, “I don’t believe you. This is all real. How can you say it’s a dream?” When they wake up, without having to be told they will know, “Oh, I had such a good dream last night. I dreamed I was an emperor. But it was only a dream.”

Life is also like a dream. Before a person is enlightened, if you tell him that life is just like a dream, he won’t believe it. But after he becomes enlightened, he will realize, “Ah, everything that happened in the past was just like a dream. There’s nothing worth clinging to or hankering after.” Bodhisattvas use all sorts of expedient means to teach beings; sometimes they appear in beings’ dreams. They manifest freely in dreams to teach beings who are not free, to help beings as countless as dustmotes in a sea of worlds to understand the truth and become enlightened.

**In every thought, by using the method of manifesting the death and birth of all gods, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.** In their every thought, Bodhisattvas never calculate on their own behalf, thinking, “I will teach beings only if I can obtain such and such benefits from doing so.” They are public-spirited and unselfish, fair and unbiased. They will even forsake their own lives in order to teach beings. In every thought—in the thoughts of the past, present, and future—there is not a single thought in which they are not teaching beings. They “manifest” the death and birth of all gods, which means it’s not for real; it’s a creation of the spiritual powers of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. They show how gods are born in the heavens, and how they pass away from the heavens.

How can one be born in the heavens? One must perform the ten good deeds. And how do they pass away? Their death is preceded by the Five Signs of Decay.

The Five Signs of Decay

1. Their floral crowns wilt. The gods wear crowns made of beautiful flowers on their heads, and they look very magnificent. But when the Five Signs of Decay occur, the flowers wilt.

2. Their clothes become dirty. Unlike human beings, who have to do laundry at least once every two weeks or so, the gods’ clothes remain clean all the time. But when the Five Signs of Decay occur, their clothes start to get dirty.

3. Their armpits start to sweat. The gods never perspire no matter how hot it is; instead, they emit fragrance. But when the Five Signs of Decay occur, their armpits start to sweat.

4. Their bodies start to stink. The gods’ bodies always give off a fragrance. When the Five Signs of Decay occur, not only are their bodies not fragrant, they start to smell.

5. They cannot sit still. The gods are in a constant state of concentration. They always meditate and cultivate dhyana-samadhi. But when the Five Signs of Decay occur, they become restless and cannot sit still. They stand up, then sit down, then stand up again, never at ease. They are just like frolicking monkeys that pick up one thing and then drop it and pick up something else.

When the Five Signs of Decay appear, with a single thought of ignorance, they fall from the heavens. When they were born in the heavens, they enjoyed comfort and ease. When they die, if their wholesome karma ripens, they may become asuras or human beings. If their evil karma ripens, it’s not certain whether they will fall into the hells, become hungry ghosts, or turn into animals.

The Bodhisattvas show beings how the gods are born into the heavens and how they die, so that when they see these states, they will wake up and realize, “Oh, the heavens are also characterized by suffering, emptiness, and impermanence, and have no independent existence. We don’t want to be reborn in the heavens. Let’s study the Buddhadharma and seek rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss instead.” Those Bodhisattvas manifest this Dharma and enlighten beings as numerous as dustmotes in countless worlds, leading them to make the resolve for bodhi and to seek the unsurpassed Way, so that they will eventually attain bodhi.

**Sutra:**

**In every thought, by using the method of expounding the practices of Bodhisattvas, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**In every thought, by using the method of universally quaking all lands in order to praise the meritorious virtues and spiritual transformations of the Buddhas, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**Commentary:**

**In every thought, by using the method of expounding the practices of all Bodhisattvas, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.** When Bodhisattvas practice the Bodhisattva Path, in every thought they expound the practices cultivated by Bodhisattvas. What are these practices?

1. Giving. They constantly give and are not stingy. They don’t say, “I won’t give you my money, but you should give me yours.” Rather, they give away all their inner and outer wealth. They give away what other people cannot give away and do what others cannot do, practicing the dharma door of giving.

2. Holding precepts. Bodhisattvas refrain from all evil and practice all good deeds. If they have faults, they change them. If they have no faults, they strive to be ever more vigorous.

3. Patience. This isn’t something you just talk about. You really have to practice it. For example, if you’re cultivating patience, then you feel happy when people scold you, and you don’t get angry when they hit you. Even when someone wants to kill you, you patiently allow yourself to be killed. This is what Bodhisattvas cultivate.

4. Vigor. Bodhisattvas should be vigorous at all times, and never retreat.

5. Dhyana concentration. Bodhisattvas should at all times concentrate their minds and watch over their thoughts, so as not to let them get scattered.

6. Prajna. Bodhisattvas always cultivate prajna-paramita, the perfection of wisdom. Once they have cultivated the first five perfections, they will have wisdom and be able to advance with vigor.

Bodhisattvas cultivate the above Six Perfections, and they also cultivate many, many other practices, which would take a long time to describe in full. They cannot be spoken in a sentence. They cultivate these practices in order to enlighten beings as numerous as dustmotes in a sea of worlds.

**In every thought,** including this thought, the last thought, and the next thought, **by using the method of universally quaking all** seas of **lands in order to praise the meritorious virtues and spiritual transformations of the Buddhas, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.** Although they made all the seas of lands quake, there was no danger. The Bodhisattvas did this as a way of praising the Buddhas’ merit and virtue, spiritual powers, and transformations.

**Sutra:**

**In every thought, by using the method of adorning and purifying all Buddhas’ lands and displaying the sea of all great vows, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**In every thought, by using the method of universally gathering the words spoken by beings and the sounds made by all Buddhas, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**In every thought, by using the method of raining down clouds of all Buddhadharmas, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**In every thought, by using the method of shining light everywhere across the lands of the ten directions, pervading the Dharma Realm and displaying spiritual transformations, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**In every thought, by using the method of manifesting bodies of Buddhas everywhere throughout the Dharma Realm using the Thus Come Ones’ power of liberation, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**Commentary:**

Bodhisattvas who practice the Bodhisattva Way are mindful of beings in every thought; they never forget about beings.

**In every thought, by using the method of adorning and purifying all Buddhas’ lands and displaying the sea of all** their **great vows, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**In every thought, by using** and proclaiming **the method of universally gathering the words** and languages **spoken by beings and the sounds made by all Buddhas, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**In every thought, by using the method of raining down clouds of all Buddhadharmas,** the Dharma clouds of the Buddhas, **they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**In every thought, by using the method of shining light everywhere across lands in the ten directions, pervading the Dharma Realm and displaying** all kinds of **spiritual transformations, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**In every thought, by using the method of manifesting bodies of Buddhas everywhere throughout the Dharma Realm using the Thus Come Ones’ power of liberation, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**Sutra:**

**In every thought, by using Universal Worthy Bodhisattva’s method of establishing the oceans of all assemblies and bodhimandas, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**Practicing thus throughout all dharma realms, they accorded with the minds of all beings and led them all to enlightenment.**

**In every thought and in every land, they each enabled beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru who had fallen into evil paths to forever leave their sufferings; they each enabled beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru who were abiding in improper samadhis to enter proper samadhis.**

**Commentary:**

**In every thought** of the past, present, and future**, by using Universal Worthy Bodhisattva’s method**—his ten great kings of vows—**ofestablishing the oceans of all assemblies and bodhimandas, they enlightened beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds.**

**Practicing thus throughout all dharma realms** with the Dharma-doors they proclaimed, **they accorded with the** thoughts in the **minds of all beings and led them all to enlightenment.**

**In every thought and in every land, they each enabled beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru who had fallen into evil paths to forever leave their sufferings** and attain happiness; **they each enabled beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru who were abiding in improper samadhis to enter proper samadhis.** They led beings with wrong views and wrong understanding to attain right concentration and right perception.

**Sutra:**

**They each enabled beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to be born in the heavens according to their wishes. They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to dwell in the positions of Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas. They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to serve good teachers and to amass blessings. They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to make the resolve for supreme bodhi.**

**Commentary:**

All those Bodhisattvas never forgot to benefit others. And so the text says: **They each enabled beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to be born in the heavens according to their wishes.** Beings all have their own individual dispositions. Some like to study the Buddhadharma. Others like to study teachings that seek outside. No matter what they like, Bodhisattvas use all kinds of expedient teachings in accord with their inclinations to enable those who lack good roots to plant them, those who have planted them to develop them, and those who have developed them to bring them to maturity and attain liberation. Basically, birth in the heavens is not ultimate, because when one’s heavenly blessings come to an end, one falls from the heavens. However, it is one step upward in the gradual sequence of cultivation.

**They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to dwell in the positions of Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas.** After enabling them to be born in the heavens, the Bodhisattvas lead beings to abide in the fruition of Hearers, those who awaken to the Way upon hearing the Buddha’s sound. Pratyekabuddhas are Those Enlightened to Conditions. If born when there is no Buddha in the world, they are known as Solitarily Enlightened Ones.

**They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to serve good teachers and to amass blessings.** It is essential for cultivators to associate with good teachers and to stay away from unwholesome teachers. Good teachers help you to advance in your cultivation and to destroy your karmic hindrances. Inept teachers ruin your cultivation and increase your karmic hindrances. Therefore a good teacher is essential for cultivation. Externally speaking, one must amass blessings. Internally, one should cultivate wisdom. One cultivates blessings by benefitting beings, and cultivates wisdom by diligently studying prajna. With diligent study of prajna, one’s wisdom increases day by day. And one’s blessings also increase daily as one benefits beings.

One respectfully serves a good teacher in order to seek the Unsurpassed Way. One must be willing to offer up to one’s teacher all of one’s inner and outer wealth. Only in this way can one amass blessings and be replete with blessings.

**They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to make the** great **resolve for supreme bodhi.**

**Sutra:**

**They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to advance toward the Bodhisattvas’ position of nonretreat.**

**They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to attain the eye of pure knowledge and to perceive the equality of all dharmas as perceived by the Thus Come Ones.**

**They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to abide in the ocean of all powers and vows and, with expedients of infinite wisdom, to purify all Buddhalands.**

**They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to reside in the Vairochana’s ocean of vast vows and to be born in the family of the Thus Come One.**

**Commentary:**

**They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to advance toward the Bodhisattvas’ position of nonretreat.** Since they themselves had realized the fruition of a Bodhisattva and were practicing the Bodhisattva Way, they wanted to help all beings attain the same benefit and practice the Bodhisattva Way together with them. At the Bodhisattvas’ position, one cannot retreat from anuttarasamyaksambodhi. There are three kinds of nonretreat: nonretreat in thought, nonretreat in practice, and nonretreat in position.

Nonretreat in position means they don’t retreat to the Two Vehicles of Hearers and Those Enlightened to Conditions. They cultivate the Six Perfections and myriad practices of the Great Vehicle.

Nonretreat in thought means they never retreat from the resolve for bodhi. They maintain their aspiration for bodhi at all times. In bringing forth the bodhi resolve, they practice what is difficult to practice, endure what is difficult to endure, and are able to do what they don’t like to do. For example, although many people do not like to make prostrations, all of you enjoy doing it. You are outstanding among your peers. After you leave the home-life, you do the morning and evening ceremonies even when you don’t feel like it. That’s also a case of being able to do what others don’t want to do. Bodhisattvas do what other people don’t like to do. If you want to practice the Bodhisattva Way, you have to be different from others. Don’t be a lazy bug who sleeps the day away, thinking it’s a way of entering samadhi. If you never do any work all day long, you’ll never come to anything. Such people are always thinking of retreating, always acting superficially.

Nonretreat means making progress in cultivation day after day. If we are bowing to a sutra, for example, we don’t bow for one day and then rest for two. We can’t take one step forward and three steps back.

**They,** these Bodhisattvas**, each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to attain the eye of pure knowledge**, the Buddha eye, **and to perceive the equality of all dharmas as perceived by the Thus Come Ones.** The Buddhas impartially regard all beings as Buddhas. If one becomes a Buddha, one sees other beings as Buddhas. If one becomes a demon, one sees other beings as demons.

**They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to abide in the ocean of all powers** , namely the Ten Powers of the Buddha, **and** the **vows** made by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas **and, with expedient** teachings **of infinite wisdom**, which are adapted to the needs of beings, **to** adorn and **purify all Buddhalands.**

**They each led beings as numerous as the dustmotes in a Mount Sumeru to reside in the Vairochana** Buddha’s **ocean of vast vows and to be born in the family of the Thus Come One**, that is, to become a Dharma Prince.

III. Those summoned gather like clouds
C. Speaking from amidst the light

**Sutra:**

**Then all the Bodhisattvas, from amid st the light, simultaneously spoke the following verse.**

**From amidst the lights came wondrous sounds,
Reaching all lands throughout the ten directions.
These sounds proclaimed all merit and virtue,
So the Buddha’s disciples could enter the wondrous bodhi path.**

**Commentary:**

**Then**, at that time, **all the** limitless multitudes of **Bodhisattvas, from amid st the light** that they emitted, **simultaneously spoke the following verse** of Dharma.

**From amidst the lights** emitted by countless Bodhisattvas **came wondrous**,inconceivable Dharma **sounds, / Reaching alllands throughout the ten directions. / These sounds** of Dharma could be heard in all Buddhalands throughout the Dharma Realm. They **proclaimed all merit and virtue, / So the Buddha’s disciples could enter the wondrous bodhi path.** Those sounds proclaimed all kinds of Dharma for the disciples of the Buddha, showing them how to cultivate merit and virtue. Hearing such Dharma sounds, all beings realized the path to enlightenment.

**Sutra:**

**Cultivating for oceans of eons without fatigue,
They led suffering beings to liberation.
With minds neither inferior nor wearied,
The Buddha’s disciples skillfully entered such expedients.**

**They cultivated expedients for oceans of eons—
Measureless and boundless—never slacking off.
There was no dharma door they failed to enter.
Constantly, they expounded the nature of quiescence.**

**All the vows of Buddhas of the three periods of time
They cultivated and practiced to perfection,
Thereby benefiting all beings
And creating pure karma for themselves.**

**They traveled throughout the ten directions,
Attending the assemblies of all Buddhas.
With deeply profound, ocean-like wisdom,
They entered the Thus Come One’s Dharma of quiescence.**

**Commentary:**

**Cultivating for oceans of eons without fatigue. “** Oceans of eons” means a great length of time. Every Buddha takes a very long time to achieve Buddhahood. For example, Shakyamuni Buddha,

Cultivated blessings and wisdom for three asamkhyeyasAnd planted the causes for the hallmarks and characteristics for a hundred kalpas.

Three asamkhyeyas refers to three great asamkhyeya kalpas. Asamkhyeya means uncountable. For a hundred kalpas, he cultivated the causes for the Thirty-two Hallmarks and Eighty Subsidiary Characteristics of a Buddha.

Although it was such a long period of time, they cultivated without fatigue, unlike ordinary people, who cultivate for a few days and then get tired and want to quit. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas cultivate for oceans of kalpas without retreating. They only know how to advance. They don’t say, “I’ve cultivated for many years,” perhaps three or five years, “but I haven’t achieved anything.” Well, what achievement would you have if you didn’t cultivate? Ask yourself. Some people say, “I’ve been at Gold Mountain Monastery for three or five years, but I still haven’t become a Buddha. All my effort has been in vain.” What did you expect to get? These are foolish thoughts. This shows that you are not as patient and tireless as the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

**They led suffering beings to liberation.** The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas don’t cultivate for their own sakes, and we shouldn’t cultivate for our own sakes either. We shouldn’t be selfish and think about ourselves all the time. We should vow to liberate all suffering beings. Suffering beings refers to beings that are confused and afflicted. To liberate them means to help them leave suffering and attain happiness.

**With minds neither inferior nor wearied.** Don’t have an inferiority complex and think of yourself as being worse than others. Don’t regard yourself as being lowly, vulgar, and worthless. A mind that is not inferior is one without thoughts of selfish desire. With a mind that is not wearied, one does not cultivate for a while and then think one has done enough. One doesn’t recite the Buddha’s name and then think, “I’ve recited a lot already, so I’m going to quit.” Nor does one recite a sutra for a while and then think, “That’s enough. I’m really tired.” One doesn’t grow weary of cultivating.

**The Buddha’s disciples skillfully entered such expedients** , such expedient dharma doors.

**They cultivated expedients for oceans of eons— / Measureless and boundless—they never slacked off.** They cultivated for oceans of kalpas, not fearing that the time was too long. They cultivated until the longest time was used up and gone. Although the time was long, they didn’t feel it was long. Their cultivation took measureless and boundless eons, during which there was no time when they were not cultivating.

**There was no dharma door failed to enter.** They cultivated every single one of the Buddha’s 84,000 dharma doors. **Constantly, they expounded** and proclaimed **the nature of quiescence.**

All dharmas, at their source,
Are characterized by eternal quiescence.

All dharmas, all phenomena, are basically quiescent and do not have any form or appearance.

**All the vows of the Buddhas of the three periods of time / They cultivated and practiced to perfection.** They wanted to make the same vows that the Buddhas of the past, present, and future make, and cultivate them to perfection. **Thereby benefiting all beings / And cultivating pure karma for themselves.** Through the power of those vows, they benefited beings and cultivated pure and wholesome karma.

**They traveled throughout the ten directions, / Attending the assemblies of all Buddhas.** They attended the Dharma assemblies of all Buddhas everywhere. In those Dharma assemblies, **with deeply profound, ocean-like wisdom, / They entered the Thus Come One’s Dharma of quiescence.** They attained the wondrous Dharma of quiescence spoken by the Buddha.

**Sutra:**

**With no bounds whatsoever, each and every light
Enters inconceivable numbers of lands.
The eye of pure knowledge perceives it all.
This is the realm of the Bodhisattvas’ practice.**

**Commentary:**

**With no bounds whatsoever, each and every light / Enters inconceivable numbers of lands.** Each Bodhisattva emitted boundless light, which pervasively entered inconceivable numbers of Buddhalands. **The eye of pure knowledge discerns it all.** This is the Buddha eye of wisdom that can see all beings as they are illuminated by the light. **This is the realm of the Bodhisattvas’ practice.**

**Sutra:**

**The Bodhisattva can dwell on the tip of a hair
And make the lands of the ten directions quake,
Without frightening any of the beings there.
They have that level of pure expedients.**

**With limitless bodies in every mote of dust,
They display countless exquis ite lands.
They can die or take birth in a single thought, seen by all.
They have realized unimpeded wisdom and adornments.**

**In a single instant, they manifest
All eons of the three periods of time,
To help all beings realize how ephemeral the body is,
As proven by the nonobstruction of the Dharma nature.**

**All may enter Universal Worthy’s supreme practices,
Which cause all beings to delight in beholding him.
Disciples of the Buddha can dwell in this dharma door.
A great roar issues forth from the lights.**

**Commentary:**

**The Bodhisattva can dwell on the tip of a hair.** Each Bodhisattva can appear on the tip of a hair, and each hair tip can manifest a Bodhisattva. The great appears within the small; the small appears within the great. Small and great are mutually unobstructed. Although the Bodhisattva dwells on the tip of a hair, he can **make** all **the** Buddhalands **of the ten directions quake, / Without frightening any of the beings there.** Although they make all the lands quake, they make sure not to alarm any of the beings. **They have that level of pure expedients.**

**With limitless bodies in every mote of dust, / They display countless exquisite lands.** A Bodhisattva has infinite numbers of bodies hidden in every dustmote. Inside a mote of dust, they manifest adorned Buddhalands. **They can die or take birth in a single thought, seen by all. / They have realized unimpeded wisdom and adornments.** They obtain bodies adorned with the fine marks and characteristics, which all beings can see.

**In a single instant, they manifest / All eons of the three periods of time** —the eons of the past, present, and future. In a brief instant, they can display the past, present, and future, **to help all beings realize how ephemeral the body is,** that it is false and has no real substance, a**s proven by the nonobstruction of the Dharma nature.**

**All may enter Universal Worthy’s supreme practices.** All beings can enter Universal Worthy Bodhisattva’s special practices, **which cause all beings to delight in beholding him. / Disciples of the Buddha can dwell in this dharma door. / A great roar issues from the lights.**

IV. Auspicious portents herald the Dharma
A. Light indicates the Dharma Host

**Sutra:**

**At that time, wishing to enable all the Bodhisattvas and others in the assembly to attain the Thus Come One’s boundless realm and spiritual powers, the World Honored One emitted light from between his brows. This light was called Light of All Bodhisattvas’ Wisdom Universally Illuminating the Treasury of the Ten Directions. In the form of a cloud of jewel-hued lamps, it shone upon all Buddhalands throughout the ten directions. The light revealed all the lands and beings within its illumination, and caused the network of all worlds to quake. It further manifested countless Buddhas in every mote of dust.**

**In accordance with the differing natures and desires of beings, the light showered everywhere clouds of wheels of wondrous Dharma spoken by all Buddhas of the three periods of time, and displayed the Thus Come One’s ocean of paramitas. Then it rained down limitless, transcendent clouds that eternally liberated beings from birth and death. It further rained down clouds of the great vows of all Buddhas, which revealed the assemblies in Universal Worthy Bodhisattva’s bodhimandas in the worlds of the ten directions.**

**Commentary:**

**At that time, wishing to enable all the Bodhisattvas and others in the** great **assembly to attain the Thus Come One’s boundless realm and spiritual powers, the World Honored One,** the Buddha, **emitted light from between his brows. This light was called Light of All Bodhisattvas’ Wisdom Universally Illuminating the Treasury of the Ten Directions. In the form of a cloud of jewel-hued lamps, it shone upon all Buddhalands throughout the ten directions.**

**The light clearly revealed all the** Buddha**lands and beings within its illumination, and caused the network of all worlds to quake.** The great number of worlds made it seems like a net. **It further manifested countless Buddhas in every mote of dust.**

**In accordance with the differing natures and desires of beings,** the Buddha contemplates their differing inclinations. **The light showered** like rain **everywhere clouds of wheels of wondrous Dharma spoken by all Buddhas of the three periods of time.And** these clouds clearly **displayed the Thus Come One’s ocean of paramitas**, or dharmas for reaching the other shore. **Then it rained down limitless, transcendent clouds,** clouds for leaving suffering and attaining happiness **that eternally liberated beings from birth and death. It further rained down clouds of the great vows of all Buddhas, which revealed the assemblies in Universal Worthy Bodhisattva’s bodhimandas in the worlds of the ten directions.**

IV.B. The appearance of a lotus represents the principle

**Sutra:**

**Having done these deeds, the light circled to the right around the Buddha and went in under his feet. Suddenly, an immense lotus appeared before the Buddha. Surpassing all other lotuses, the flower had ten kinds of adornments.**

**Commentary:**

**Having done these deeds, the light circled to the right around the Buddha and went in under his feet.** The Buddha emitted light from between his brows, which illuminated Buddhalands in countless seas of worlds, revealing all the beings, Bodhisattvas, and clouds of jewels therein. From within the clouds of jewels, Dharma was spoken to teach all beings, and the assemblies in Universal Worthy’s bodhimandas were displayed. After all of these inconceivable things had happened, the light circled the Buddha to the right and re-entered the Buddha’s body from under his feet.

**Suddenly, an immense lotus appeared before the Buddha. Surpassing all other lotuses, the** precious lotus **flower had ten kinds of** sublime **adornments.** Ordinary lotuses could not match the radiance and adornment of this giant lotus.

**Sutra:**

**That is to say, it had a stem of assorted jewels, a seedpod of supreme mani gems, petals made of all the jewels of the Dharma Realm, pistils of fragrant mani, and a base ornamented with jambunada gold. Beautiful nets shaded it from above, and its hues were luminous and pure.**

**In the space of a thought, it manifested the boundless spiritual transformations of all Buddhas. It could produce every type of sound. Its supreme mani gems reflected the Buddha’s body. Its sounds proclaimed the practices and vows cultivated by all Bodhisattvas.**

**Commentary:**

As mentioned above, the lotus had ten kinds of adornments. **That is to say, it had a stem of assorted jewels** from all worlds**, a seedpod of supreme mani gems, petals made of all the jewels of the Dharma Realm, pistils of fragrant mani, and a base adorned with jambunada gold**, the most precious kind of gold. **Beautiful nets shaded it from above, and its hues were luminous and pure.** The light and color of the lotus and the nets above it were extremely pure, undefiled by a single speck of dust.

**In** the briefest instant, **the space of a** single **thought, it manifested the boundless spiritual transformations of all Buddhas. It could produce every type of sound. Its supreme mani jewels reflected the Buddha’s body. Its sounds proclaimed the** various **practices and vows cultivated by allBodhisattvas**, all the various dharma doors they practiced and the various vows they made.

IV.C. The appearance of a multitude represents the teaching

Sutra:

Instantly, when this flower had sprung up, there appeared in the Thus Come One’s white hair-mark curl a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Supreme Sound of All Dharmas, along with a multitude of Bodhisattvas as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds. They all came forth and circled to the right around the Thus Come One an infinite number of times, then bowed at the Buddha’s feet.

**Commentary:**

**Instantly,** in the space of a thought, **when this** lotus **flower had sprung up, there appeared in the Thus Come One’s white hair-mark curl** between his eyebrows, **a Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Supreme Sound of All Dharmas, along with a multitude of Bodhisattvas as numerous as the dustmotes in a sea of worlds. They all came forth and circled to the right around the Thus Come One an infinite number of times.** We always circumambulate to the right around the Buddha. For example, the person who offers incense should walk clockwise around the bowing cushions. We usually circumambulate only three times around the Buddha, but it is fine to circumambulate any number of times. **Then** they **bowed at the Buddha’s feet.** They bowed in the most respectful manner, prostrating themselves and holding their hands out as if to hold the Buddha’s feet.

**Sutra:**

**The Bodhisattva Supreme Sound seated himself upon the base of the lotus, and the multitude of Bodhisattvas seated themselves on the lotus pistils, arranging themselves in order.**

**The Bodhisattva Supreme Sound of All Dharmas, having understood the profound Dharma Realm, felt tremendous joy. He entered the practice of the Buddhas. Nothing could impede his wisdom. He entered the unfathomable sea of the Buddha’s Dharma body, and visited the Thus Come Ones in all lands. Every pore of his body displayed spiritual powers. In every thought he contemplated all dharma realms. The Buddhas in the ten directions bestowed their powers upon him, enabling him to abide in all samadhis. To the ends of time, he can always see the Buddhas’ boundless Dharma Realm body with its ocean of merit and virtue, as well as all their samadhis, liberations, spiritual powers, and transformations.**

**Commentary:**

After all the Bodhisattvas had bowed to the Buddha, **the Bodhisattva Supreme Sound seated himself upon the base of the lotus, and the multitude of Bodhisattvas seated themselves on the pistils of the lotus, arranging themselves in order.** They sat down in a very orderly manner.

**The Bodhisattva Supreme Sound of All Dharmas, having understood the** Dharma of the **profound Dharma Realm, felt tremendous joy.** He was elated. **He entered the practice of the Buddhas. Nothing could impede his wisdom.** He could do what the Buddhas did, and cultivate the dharma doors they practiced. His wisdom was such that he had not the slightest doubt about the Buddhadharma. His mastery of the Buddhadharma was thorough and unobstructed. **He entered the unfathomable**, inconceivable **sea of the Buddha’s Dharma body, and visited the** bodhimandas of all **Thus Come Ones in all lands. Every pore of his body displayed** different kinds of **spiritual powers. In every thought**, past thought, present thought, and future thought, **he contemplated all dharma realms** and all the Buddhas in the ten directions. **The Buddhas in the ten directions bestowed their powers upon him,** so that he had the same Ten Powers that the Buddhas have, **enabling him** and all Buddhas **to abide in all samadhis. To the ends of time, he can always see the Buddhas’ boundless Dharma Realm body with its ocean of merit and virtue, as well as all their samadhis, liberations, spiritual powers, and transformations.** He had all the same samadhis, liberations, and transformations of spiritual powers as the Buddhas.

V. Acclamation of the Buddhas’ virtues
A. Supreme Sound Bodhisattva (from the Buddha’s brow) speaks in praise

**Sutra:**

**In the assembly’s midst, he received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions and spoke verses.**

**The Buddha’s body fills the Dharma Realm;
Universally it appears before all beings.
Responding to conditions, it reaches everywhere,
Yet constantly remains at this bodhi seat.**

**In each of the Thus Come One’s pores
Sit Buddhas as numerous as the dustmotes in all lands.
Surrounded by assemblies of Bodhisattvas,
They proclaim the supreme practices of Universal Worthy.**

**As the Thus Come One sits on the seat of enlightenment,
In a single pore appear numerous seas of lands.
So, too, is it in each and every pore,
Extending throughout the entire Dharma Realm.**

**In every land the Buddha sits serenely.
His presence pervades each and every country.
Bodhisattvas from the ten directions gather like clouds.
None fail to come to the bodhimanda.**

**Commentary:**

**From within the assembly** of Bodhisattvas**, by relying onthe Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, he contemplated the** beings throughout the **ten directions** of the Dharma Realm **and spoke verses.**

**The Buddha’s body fills the Dharma realm.** The Buddha’s Dharma body is nowhere and yet everywhere, so it is said to fill the Dharma Realm. **Universally it appears before all beings.** Every being is face-to-face with the Buddha. **Responding to conditions, it reaches everywhere.** The Buddha responds to all beings with whom he has affinities, being sensitive to their causes and conditions. His responses penetrate everywhere, and he answers every prayer. **Yet** he **constantly remains at this bodhi seat** beneath the bodhi tree.

**In each of the Thus Come One’s pores / Sit Buddhas as numerous as the dustmotes in all lands.** In every one of the Buddha’s pores, innumerable Buddhas are seated in their bodhimandas. **Surrounded by assemblies of Bodhisattvas, / They proclaim the supreme practices of Universal Worthy** Bodhisattva.

**As the Thus Come One sits on the seat of enlightenment** beneath the bodhi tree, **in a single pore appear numerous** and limitless **seas of lands. / So, too, is it in each and every pore, / Extending throughout the entire Dharma Realm.** This situation appears not just in one pore, but in every pore.

**In every land the Buddha sits serenely. / His presence pervades each and every country.** In every Buddhaland, there is a Buddha sitting at ease in his bodhimanda under the bodhi tree, speaking the Dharma. **Bodhisattvas from the ten directions gather like clouds / None fail to come to the bodhimanda.** No Bodhisattva fails to make it to the Buddha’s bodhimanda.

**Sutra:**

**Numerous as the dustmotes in all lands,
The oceans of Bodhisattvas with their merit and radiance
Universally appear in the assemblies of Thus Come Ones,
Filling up the entire Dharma Realm.**

**Commentary:**

**Numerous as the dustmotes in all lands.** With so many lands, there are also many Bodhisattvas and Buddhas—as many as motes of dust. **The oceans of Bodhisattvas with their merit and radiance.** All of these Bodhisattvas have great merit and virtue and great wisdom, so they shine with great radiance. They **universally appear in the assemblies of Thus Come Ones,** in bodhimandas under bodhi trees in all the lands throughout the ten directions, **filling up the entire Dharma Realm.** Throughout space and the Dharma Realm, there is no place not filled with the meritorious virtue and the light of these Bodhisattvas.

**Sutra:**

**In lands as numerous as the Dharma Realm’s dustmotes,
He appears in every assembly.
Such division bodies are enabled by states of wisdom
Achieved through the practices of Universal Worthy.**

**In the assemblies of all Buddhas,
The Bodhisattva Sublime Knowledge sits upright.
Each one listens to the Dharma with happiness.
They cultivate for immeasurable eons in every place.**

**Having entered the vast vows of Universal Worthy,
Each one gives rise to all Buddhadharmas.
In the Vairochana’s Dharma Ocean,
They cultivate and certify to the Thus Come One’s position.**

**Those enlightened by Universal Worthy Bodhisattva
Receive the joyful praise of all Thus Come Ones.
Gaining the Buddhas’ great spiritual powers,
They roam everywhere throughout the Dharma Realm.**

**All lands, numerous as dustmotes,
Are filled with constantly appearing clouds of bodies.
Shining brilliant rays for the sake of all beings,
Every cloud sprinkles the Dharma rain, fulfilling their wishes.**

**Commentary:**

**In lands as numerous as the Dharma Realm’s dustmotes, / He appears in every assembly.** The dustmotes in one world are already uncountable, but there are even more dustmotes in the entire Dharma realm. Imagine that each dustmote represents a Buddhaland, each of those Buddhalands has an infinite number of dustmotes, and each of those dustmotes contains assemblies of beings in which appear Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

**Such** boundless numbers of **division bodies** of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas **are enabled by states of wisdom** involving spiritual powers and transformations, **achieved through the practices of Universal Worthy** Bodhisattva.

**In the** sea-like **assemblies of all Buddhas, / The Bodhisattva Sublime Knowledge**, together with other Bodhisattvas, **sits upright. / Each one listens to the Dharma with happiness.** Upon hearing the Dharma spoken within the light, they rejoice jubilantly. **They cultivate for immeasurable eons in every place.** In life after life, in all places and at all times, they cultivate for boundlessly many eons.

**Having entered the vast vows of Universal Worthy, / Each one gives rise to all Buddhadharmas.** The Bodhisattva Sublime Knowledge has attained to Universal Worthy Bodhisattva’s sea of great, vast vows. **In Vairochana** Buddha’s **Dharma Ocean** of vows, / **They cultivate and certify to the Thus Come One’s position**, the position of Buddhahood.

**Those** Bodhisattvas **enlightened byUniversal Worthy Bodhisattva**, through his cultivation of the kings of vows, **receive the joyful praise of all Thus Come Ones.** All the Buddhas of the ten directions in the three periods of time joyfully praise those Bodhisattvas.

**Gaining the Buddhas’ great spiritual powers, / They roam everywhere throughout the Dharma Realm.** The Bodhisattva Supreme Sound, having obtained the Buddha’s great spiritual powers, teaches beings and helps the Buddha propagate the Dharma throughout the Dharma Realm. There is no place he fails to go.

**All lands, numerous as dustmotes, / Are filled with constantly appearing clouds of bodies.** Supreme Sound Bodhisattva constantly manifests clouds of bodies that fill worlds as numerous as dustmotes. **Shining brilliant rays for the sake of all beings, / Every cloud sprinkles the Dharma rain, fulfilling their wishes.** He goes to all the Buddhalands in order to teach beings and emit brilliant light. Then he sends down just the right amount of Dharma rain in accord with the needs of each being. The rain is neither too much nor too little.

V. Acclamation of the Buddhas’ virtues
B. Bodhisattvas of the ten directions speak in praise
Lotus Contemplating All Supreme Dharmas Bodhisattva of the East

**Sutra:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named King of Lotus Light Wisdom Contemplating All Supreme Dharmas received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**The Thus Come One’s profound wisdom
Pervasively enters the Dharma Realm.
Turning the wheel in the three periods of time,
He serves as a bright guide for the world.**

**All Buddhas, sharing a common Dharma body,
Are independent, yet undifferentiated.
According with the mentalities of beings,
They lead them to see the Buddhas’ forms.**

**Commentary:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva** among the assembly of Bodhisattvas who had come from the ten directions to gather in the bodhimanda, **named King of Lotus Light Wisdom Contemplating All Supreme Dharmas received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**The Thus Come One’s profound** , wondrous **wisdom / Pervasively enters the Dharma Realm** and manifests before all beings. **Turning [the wheel] in the three periods of time,** turning the great Dharma wheel to teach beings in the past, present, and future, **he serves as a bright guide for the world.** For beings in all worlds, he is the guiding teacher with the clearest understanding.

**All Buddhas, sharing a common Dharma body, / Are independent, yet undifferentiated.** The Buddhas of the three periods of time and the ten directions all share the same Dharma body. They are one. There is no real difference between them. One Buddha doesn’t depend upon another. Although they don’t mutually depend on each other, they don’t differentiate among themselves either. Since there is no mutual dependence, there is no discrimination between them. And since there is no mutual discrimination, there is also no interdependence. **According with the mentalities of beings, / They lead them to see the Buddhas’ forms.**

**Sutra:**

**Possessed of All-Wisdom,
Buddhas universally understand all dharmas.
Throughout all lands,
There is nowhere they fail to manifest.**

**A Buddha’s body and its radiant aura
Are inconceivable in color and form.
Beings with faith and joy
Are able to see as they should.**

**The body of one Buddha
Can transform into limitless Buddhas.
His thundering voice fills all lands,
Proclaiming Dharma as deep as the sea.**

**Commentary:**

**Possessed of All-Wisdom,** there is nothing the Buddhas do not know or see. Since they are all-wise, **Buddhas universally understand all dharmas**. They know that all dharmas are created by the mind. **Throughout all lands, / There is nowhere they fail to manifest.** Beings in every land see the Buddha appear before them.

**The Buddha’s body and its radiant aura** , the light emitted by his Dharma body, **are inconceivable in color and form.** Within the light, one sees various colors and various marks, such as the Thirty-two Hallmarks and Eighty Subsidiary Characteristics. These are inconceivable states that beings have never seen or heard of before.

**Beings with faith and joy** in the Buddha, **are able to see as they should.** They obtain a response in the Way and get to see the Buddha. Although the Buddha himself is impartial, only beings with good roots can see him. Beings lacking good roots may want to see the Buddha, but their conditions are insufficient. Only those who are meant to see the Buddha can see him. Those who are not meant to see the Buddha can also see him, but only at a later time.

**The body of one Buddha / Can transform into limitless** and boundlessly many **Buddhas.**

**His thundering voice fills all lands, / Proclaiming Dharma as deep as the sea.** The Buddha’s speaking of Dharma resembles the roar of thunder. All beings can hear it. The Buddha speaks Dharma that is vast and profound, subtle and inconceivable, like a great sea.

**Sutra:**

**Light shines forth from each and every pore
Forming a radiant net across the ten directions.
It broadcasts the Buddhas’ wonderful sounds,
Taming those who are difficult to tame.**

**The Thus Come One’s radiance
Pours forth constant sounds of deep wonder,
Extolling the Buddhas’ ocean of merit and virtue
And the practices of Bodhisattvas.**

**Commentary:**

**Light shines forth from each and every pore, / Forming a radiant net across the ten directions.** The light that emanates from each one of the Buddha’s pores forms a net in space, a brilliant net that illumine the worlds of the ten directions. **It broadcasts the Buddhas’ wonderful sounds** of Dharma. Within the light the Dharma is spoken, leading beings from confusion to enlightenment, from suffering to happiness. These Dharna sounds are equivalent to the Buddha’s voice, **taming those who are difficult to tame.** The Buddha speaks Dharma in order to teach and transform beings. Since beings are stubborn and hard to subdue, they must be taught with wonderful sounds. Those wonderful sounds influence all stubborn beings to renounce their evil ways and become good, and to make the bodhi resolve.

**The Thus Come One’s radiance / Pours forth constant sounds of deep wonder, Extolling the Buddhas’ ocean merit and virtue, / And the practices of Bodhisattvas.** Within the light emanating from the Buddha, one constantly hears inconceivable sounds of wonderful Dharma, which praise the merit and virtue cultivated by the Buddhas. The sounds from the light also praise the Buddhas, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the Bodhisattvas who practice what is difficult to practice.

**Sutra:**

**The Buddha turns the wheel of Proper Dharma,
Which surpasses all measures and bounds.
Without equal, the Dharma that he speaks
Cannot be fathomed by those of shallow wisdom.**

**In each and every world,
A Buddha appears and realizes proper enlightenment.
Each performs spiritual transformations,
Completely filling the Dharma Realm.**

**Each body of the Thus Come One
Manifests further Buddhas equal to the number of beings.
In lands as numerous as dustmotes,
Buddhas universally display their spiritual powers.**

**Commentary:**

Within the light that praises the Buddhas, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the Bodhisattvas who practice difficult dharma doors, **the Buddha turns the wheel of Proper Dharma,** leading beings to develop proper knowledge and views. The Proper Dharma differs from deviant dharma. Deviant dharma is selfish and self-benefiting, while the Proper Dharma teaches one to benefit others. It is public-spirited and unselfish, and it is that **which surpasses all measures and bounds. / Without equal** is **the Dharma that he speaks**. The teachings of other religions cannot compare to it. The Buddha’s Dharma surpasses the teachings of all the heterodox sects. It **cannot be fathomed by those of shallow wisdom.** Ignorant people cannot understand the Buddha’s Dharma, nor can they practice it.

**In each and every world** throughout the ten directions, **a Buddha appears**—manifesting as a Buddha—**and realizes proper enlightenment.** / **Each performs spiritual transformations, / Completely filling the Dharma realm.** Each Buddha possesses spiritual powers and the ability to transform himself. With their spiritual powers and transformations, they pervade the Dharma Realm, enabling all beings to hear the Dharma.

**Each** division **body of the Thus Come One / Manifest s further Buddhas** seated in bodhimandas, **equal to the number of beings.** However many beings there are, the Buddha manifests that many bodies to teach them. **In lands as numerous as dustmotes, / They universally display their spiritual powers.**

V.B. 2. Luminous Wisdom of Rejoicing in Dharma Bodhisattva of the South

**Sutra:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Luminous Wisdom of Rejoicing in Dharma received the Buddhas’ awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**The Buddha’s body frequently appears,
Filling the entire Dharma Realm.
With a great voice, he constantly proclaims,
Causing the lands of the ten directions to tremble.**

**Commentary:**

**Then in the** great, sea-like **assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Luminous Wisdom of Rejoicing in Dharma, received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.** Upon hearing the Dharma, this Bodhisattva would rejoice and give rise to the light of wisdom.

**The Buddha’s** Dharma **body frequently appears** before beings, and in their minds. **Filling the entire Dharma realm.** There is no place in the Dharma realm where the Buddha does not appear. **With a great voice, he constantly proclaims, / Causing the lands of the ten directions to tremble.** The Buddha is always speaking magnificent Dharma, universally awakening the beings in the lands of the ten directions.

**Sutra** :

**The Thus Come One manifests everywhere,
Making his presence felt in all worlds.
In accordance with beings’ joys and desires,
He displays the strength of spiritual powers.**

**Based upon the thoughts of beings,
The Buddha appears before them all.
Beings see what they see
By virtue of the Buddha’s spiritual power.**

**Boundless is his light,
Measureless the Dharma he speaks.
Following his wisdom, disciples of the Buddha
May enter and contemplate.**

**The Buddha’s body is beyond birth,
Yet he manifests being born.**
**Akin to space, the Dharma nature
Is where all Buddhas dwell.**

**Neither staying nor departing,
The Buddha is seen in all places.
His illumination reaches everywhere,
And his name is heard afar.**

**Commentary:**

**The Thus Come One manifests everywhere.** The Thus Come One’s body is neither great nor small, and it neither comes nor goes. If you say, “It’s this big,” it’s even bigger. If you say, “It’s that small,” it’s even smaller. It’s as great as the Dharma realm, and as small as a mote of dust. If you say the Buddha is manifesting, when did he manifest? If you say the Buddha has disappeared, when did he disappear? He is all-pervasive, manifesting nowhere and yet everywhere, neither coming nor going. **Making his presence felt in all worlds.** He fills the entire Dharma Realm. **In accordance with beings’ joys and desires, / He displays the strength of spiritual powers.** The Buddha constantly complies with the wishes of beings, and manifests whatever they like to see. The Buddha uses his great spiritual powers to bestow blessings upon beings.

**Based upon the thoughts of beings,** responding to their wishes and inclinations, **the Buddha appears before them all. / Beings see what they see / By virtue of the Buddha’s spiritual power.** It is the Buddha’s spiritual powers and transformations that allow beings to see the Buddha.

**Boundless is his light, / Limitless the Dharma he speaks.** There is no limit to the Buddha’s light. The Buddha’s main duty is to speak Dharma. He speaks it constantly, and there is no way to know how much Dharma he has spoken. **Following his wisdom, disciples of the Buddha / May enter and contemplate.** Following the Buddha’s wisdom, they are able to enter the treasury of all the Dharma. They deeply enter the treasury of sutras and have wisdom like the sea. They fully achieve the wisdom of wonderful contemplation.

**The Buddha’s body is beyond birth, / Yet he** manifest**s being born.** The Buddha’s body neither comes into being nor passes out of existence. Yet, to accord with the state of mind of beings, he manifests birth. **Akin to space, the** Buddha’s **Dharma nature / Is where all Buddhas dwell.** They dwell in the Dharma nature, which is like dwelling in space.

**Neither staying** , coming, **nor departing, / The Buddha is seen everywhere.** The Buddha is seen in every place, turning the Dharma wheel and teaching beings. **His illumination reaches everywhere, / And his name is heard afar.** The Buddha’s light is omnipresent, and his reputation is known everywhere.

**Sutra:**

**Lacking substance and location,
Not coming into being,
Devoid of shape or form,
All manifestations are but shadows.**

**The Buddha, in accordance with beings’ minds,
Creates great Dharma clouds for them.
With sundry expedient methods,
He instructs, enlightens, and tames them.**

**In the midst of every world,
A Buddha is seen sitting in a bodhimanda.Surrounded by a great assembly,
He illumines the lands of the ten directions.**

**The bodies of all Buddhas
Possess infinite hallmarks.
Limitless are their manifestations,
Yet their own physical form never perishes.**

**Commentary:**

**Lacking substance and location, / Not coming into being, / Devoid of shape or form, / All manifestations are but shadows.** The Buddha’s Dharma-body has no substance or form. Since it has no form, it does not dwell anywhere. Things with form have a location, while formless things have no location. Since it is formless, like empty space, it neither comes into being nor ceases to exist. What the Buddha manifests is just like a bubble or a shadow. Bubbles and shadows are unreal, but the Buddha’s Dharma body is not. There actually is a Dharma body.

**The Buddha, in accordance with beings’ minds, / Creates great Dharma clouds for them. / With sundry expedient methods, / He instructs, enlightens, and tames them.** He uses various skill-in-means to regulate and subdue obstinate beings.

**In the midst of every world** throughout the ten directions, **a Buddha is seen** by all beings **sitting in a bodhimanda. / Surrounded by a great assembly** of Bodhisattvas and sages from the ten directions, **he illumines the lands of the ten directions** with his light.

**The bodies of all Buddhas** of the past, present, and future, **possess infinite** and inexhaustible numbers of radiant **hallmarks. / Limitless are their manifestations, / Yettheir own physical form never perishes.** Although the Buddha manifests innumerable bodies, his original reward body does not cease to exist.

V.B.3. Fragrant Effulgence of Universally Bright Wisdom Bodhisattva of the West

**Sutra:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Fragrant Effulgence of Universally Bright Wisdom received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**All the Bodhisattvas in this gathering
Have entered the Buddhas’ inconceivable realm.
Each of them can observe
The spiritual powers of all Buddhas.**

**His wisdom body can pervasively enter
Lands as numerous as dustmotes.
Seeing his body appear among them,
Beings can behold all Buddhas.**

**Commentary:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva** , another great Bodhisattva, **named Fragrant Effulgence of Universally Bright Wisdom received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions** of the Dharma Realm, **and spoke a verse** to elaborate on the principles.

**All the** great **Bodhisattvas in this** Dharma **gathering / Have entered the Buddhas’ inconceivable realm.** They have all attained the Buddhas’ position, which is hard to conceive of. **Each of them can observe / The spiritual powers of all Buddhas.**

**His**, theBuddha’s, prajna-**wisdom body can pervasively enter** into the minds of all beings in **lands as numerous as dustmotes. /Seeing his body appear among them, / Beings can behold all Buddhas.** Each being can see the Buddha appear in his own world. They come face-to-face with the Buddha and hear him speak the Dharma for them.

**Sutra:**

**Like a shadow his body appears in every land,
In the place of every Thus Come One.
In the midst of all beings,
It manifests feats of spiritual powers.**

**Universal Worthy’s conduct and vows
Have been cultivated to gleaming purity.
In every land, one observes universally
The Buddha’s spiritual transformations.**

**His body dwells everywhere,
Completely impartial towards all.
The wise can practice in this way
And enter the state of the Buddhas.**

**Having realized the Thus Come One’s wisdom,
They shine equally throughout the Dharma Realm,
Entering every pore of the Buddha
And every ocean of lands.**

**In every Buddha’s land,
They manifest spiritual powers.
Appearing in various bodies,
They assume various names.**

**In the space of a single thought,
They display all spiritual transformations.
In the bodhimanda, they realize proper enlightenment
And turn the wonderful Dharma wheel.**

**All lands vast and great,
And inconceivable billions of eons—
Bodhisattvas, in samadhi,Can manifest in a single thought.**

**In every Buddhaland,
All the Bodhisattvas,
Boundless and without end,
Can enter into the Buddha’s body.**

**Commentary:**

**Like a shadow his body appears in every land, / In the place of every Thus Come One.** The Buddha’s Dharma-body, like a shadow, appears in the bodhimandas of all Buddhas. **In the midst of all beings, / It manifests feats of spiritual powers** to teach them.

**Universal Worthy’s conduct and vows,** the ten great kings of vows he made and all the various practices he cultivated, **have been cultivated to gleaming purity.** The Bodhisattvas have all cultivated them to perfection and purity. **In every** Buddha**land, one observes universally / The Buddha’s spiritual power**s and **transformations.**

**His body dwells everywhere / Completely impartial towards all.** The Buddha’s body is in all places, and all beings equally receive the universal illumination of the Buddha’s light. **The wise can practice in this way.** All Bodhisattvas, with the Buddha’s wisdom, can cultivate in this way, teach beings, **and enter the state of the Buddhas.**

**Having realized the Thus Come One’s wisdom, / They** , the Bodhisattvas, **shine equally throughout** space and **the Dharma Realm, / Entering every pore of the Buddha / And every** dustmote in an **ocean of lands.**

**In every Buddha’s land, / They manifest spiritual powers, / Appearing in various bodies / They** , the Buddhas, **assume various names.**

**In the space of a single thought, / They display all spiritual transformations, /**

**In the bodhimanda, they realize proper enlightenment / And turn the wonderful Dharma wheel.** Seated under the bodhi tree, the Buddha realized the unsurpassed proper and equal, right enlightenment, and then turned the wheel of wonderful Dharma.

**All lands** , limitless, **vast and great, / And inconceivable billions of eons, / Bodhisattvas, in samadhi, / Can manifest in a single thought.** All the samadhis, or concentrations, that the Bodhisattvas should attain, are manifested in the space of a single thought.

**In every Buddhaland, / All the Bodhisattvas, / Boundless and without end, / Can enter into the** pores on the **Buddha’s body.** How many Bodhisattvas are there? An infinite number.

V.B.4. Lion-Sprint Wisdom Light Bodhisattva of the North

**Sutra:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Lion-Sprint Wisdom Light received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**The Buddha Vairochana
Can turn the wheel of Proper Dharma.
Cloud-like, his presence pervades
All lands of the Dharma Realm.**

**In the great seas of worlds
Throughout the ten directions,
By the Buddha’s spiritual powers and vows
The Dharma wheel everywhere turns.**

**In each and every land,
Amidst vast assemblies,
Buddhas, their names each different,
Proclaim the wondrous Dharma as appropriate.**

**The Thus Come One achieved his awesome power
Through Universal Worthy’s vows.
In every land and country,
His wondrous voice is heard.**

**Commentary:**

**Then in the** Dharma **assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Lion-Sprint Wisdom Light received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated** everywhere in **the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**The Buddha Vairochana / Can turn the wheel of Proper Dharma.** Vairochana Buddha is the one who is truly able to propagate the Proper Dharma. **Cloud-like, his presence pervades / All lands of the Dharma Realm.** The Buddha resembles a cloud spreading through all Buddhalands.

**In the great seas of worlds / Throughout the ten directions.** All the worlds in the ten directions are brought into being **by** the power of **the Buddha’s spiritual powers and** the **vows** he made in his past cultivation. **The Dharma wheel everywhere turns.** In every place there is a Buddha turning the Dharma wheel to teach beings.

**In each and every** Buddha**land,amidst vast** Dharma **assemblies** of limitless beings, **Buddhas, their nameseach different, / Proclaim the wondrous Dharma as appropriate**, in accord with beings’ conditions.

**The Thus Come One achieved his awesome power / Through Universal Worthy’s vows. / In every land and country / His wondrous voice is heard.** The Buddha’s subtly wonderful sound pervades every land.

**Sutra:**

**The Buddha’s bodies, numerous as dustmotes in lands,
Everywhere send down the rain of Dharma.
Beyond birth and discrimination,
He appears in all worlds.**

**Through countless billions of eons,
In lands as numerous as dustmotes,
All the past deeds of the Buddha
Are told in full with wondrous sound.**

**Lands many as dustmotes in the ten directions
Are completely suffused with radiant nets.
Every luminous ray reveals a Buddha
Teaching all sentient beings.**

**The Buddha’s body, undifferentiated,
Fills the entire Dharma Realm,
Beings who see his physical form
Are skillfully subdued according to their capacities.**

**In all lands throughout the three periods of time,
The guiding teachers of beings,
Their names various and unique,
Speak for them and enable them to see.**

**The wondrous Dharma wheel
Turned by all Thus Come Ones
Of the past, present, and future
Can be heard in this assembly.**

**Commentary:**

**The Buddha’s bodies, numerous as dustmotes in lands, / Everywhere send down the rain of Dharma.** The manifestations of the Buddha’s Dharma body are as numerous as the dustmotes in countless Buddhalands. In order to teach and transform beings, the Buddha sends down the great Dharma rain everywhere. **Beyond birth and discrimination, / He appears in all worlds.** The Buddha is unborn and undying, and does not make any discriminations. He appears everywhere in the worlds of the ten directions.

**Through countless billions of** oceans of **eons, / In lands as numerous as dustmotes, / All the past deeds of the Buddha**, all the states of the Buddha’s past cultivation, **are told in full with wondrous** Dharma **sound**, in a great shower of Dharma rain.

**Lands many as dustmotes in the ten directions / Are completely suffused with radiant nets** . The light put forth by the Buddhas pervades all Buddhalands. **Every luminous ray reveals a Buddha** appearing and **teaching all sentient beings.**

**The Buddha’s body, undifferentiated, / Fills the entire Dharma Realm.** The Buddha has only a single, nondual Dharma body, yet it fills the Dharma Realm. **Beings who see his physical form / Are skillfully subdued according to their capacities.** Through expedient and skillful means, the Buddha tames and subdues obstinate and unruly beings.

**In all lands throughout the three periods of time** —the past, present, and future, **the guiding teachers of beings**—the Buddhas are the guiding teachers of beings—**their names various and unique, / Speak** Dharma **for them and enable them to see** the Buddha’s wondrous physical form.

**The wondrous Dharma wheel / Turned by all the Thus Come Ones / Of the past, future, and present / Can be heard in this assembly.** The inconceivably wonderful Dharma wheel turned by the Buddhas of the three periods of time and the ten directions can be heard by all those gathered around Shakyamuni Buddha in the bodhimanda beneath the bodhi tree.

V.B.5. Dharma Sea Wisdom Bodhisattva of the Northeast

**Sutra:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Meritorious Treasury of Dharma Sea Wisdom received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**The disciples of the Buddha in this assembly
Skillfully cultivate multi-faceted wisdom.
These individuals can already enter
Expedient means such as these.**

**In every country and land,
They proclaim with mighty voices.
The Buddha’s practices of which they speak
Are heard widely in the lands of the ten directions.**

**In each thought of their minds,
They contemplate all dharmas.
Dwelling fast in true thusness,
They comprehend the ocean of all dharmas.**

**Commentary:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Meritorious Treasury of Dharma Sea Wisdom received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated** the beings in **the ten directions** of the Dharma Realm, **and spoke a verse** about this dharma door.

**The disciples of the Buddha in this assembly** beneath the bodhi tree **skillfully cultivate the myriad kinds of wisdom.** They are very good at cultivating the dharma door of Prajnaparamita, the perfection of wisdom. **These individuals can already enter** the door of wisdom. They all understand **doors of** wisdom and **expedient means such as these**.

**In every country and land** where a Buddha teaches beings, **they proclaim with** inconceivably **mighty voices, / The Buddha’s practices of which they speak,** how the Buddha cultivated, made vows, and attained to Buddhahood, **are heard widely**, all over the place, **in the** Buddha**lands of the ten directions.**

**In each thought of their minds** and of each being’s mind, **they contemplate** and understand **all dharmas. / Dwelling fast in** the **true thusness** of the Dharma nature, **they comprehend the ocean of all dharmas**, the sea of the reality of all dharmas.

**Sutra:**

**The Buddha, in each and every body,
Spanning inconceivable billions of eons,
Cultivated the paramitas,
And adorned and purified lands.**

**In each fine mote of dust,
He certified to all dharmas.
In this way, unimpeded,
He traveled the lands of the ten directions.**

**He went to every Buddhaland,
Missing not a single one.
Observing the Buddhas’ spiritual powers,
He entered their practices.**

**The Buddhas’ magnificent voice
Is heard throughout the Dharma Realm.
Bodhisattvas can know and understand,
And skillfully enter the ocean of sounds.**

**For oceans of eons, he utters wondrous sounds,
His voice impartial and undiscriminating.
Those whose wisdom penetrates the three periods
Enter the realm of his sound.**

**Commentary:**

**The Buddha, in each and every body** manifests infinite numbers of Buddhalands in every pore, **spanning inconceivable billions of eons.** The Buddha cultivated inconceivable practices in the past, is speaking inconceivably wonderful Dharma in the present, and will liberate inconceivable numbers of beings in the future. He **cultivated the paramitas, / And adorned and purified lands.** In his past lives, the Buddha cultivated limitless paramitas and boundless practices, such as making offerings to the Buddhas and adorning Buddhalands.

**In each fine mote of dust,** manifesting the small within the great, **he certified to all dharmas** and was able to expound all Buddhadharmas. **In this way, unimpeded,** in this unobstructed realm, which is beyond the understanding of ordinary people, **he traveled the lands of the ten directions** to teach beings.

**He went to each Buddhaland** to teach beings, **missing not a single one. / Observing the Buddhas’ spiritual powers, / He entered their practices**, the dharma doors cultivated by the Buddhas.

**The Buddhas’ magnificent voice / Is heard throughout the Dharma Realm.** The Buddha doesn’t need to use a microphone, because his voice carries throughout the Dharma Realm, and all beings can hear him speaking Dharma. **Bodhisattvas can know and understand** the realm of the Buddhas, **and skillfully enter the ocean of sounds.** They can understand and accept the wondrous Dharma that the Buddhas speak.

**For oceans of eons, he utters wondrous sounds,** / **His voice impartial and undiscriminating.** For limitless ages, the Buddha continuously proclaims the wonderful Dharma. His speaking of Dharma is impartial and undiscriminating, like rain falling from the skies and moistening all beings, allowing them to each receive as much rain as they need. **Those whose wisdom penetrates the three periods**, who understand why the past is past, the present is present, and the future is future, **enter the realm of his sound.** Those whose wisdom penetrates the past, present, and future without obstruction can enter the state of the Dharma spoken by the Buddha.

What is the daily work of all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Hearers, and Those Enlightened to Conditions? First of all, they constantly dwell in and cultivate samadhi. Secondly, they always recite sutras in order to cultivate wisdom. “Do Buddhas still have to cultivate samadhi and wisdom?” you ask. Although the Buddhas have basically perfected their samadhi and wisdom, they still increase them a little bit daily. The Buddhas enter into samadhi in every place throughout space and the Dharma Realm, and they recite the sutras and mantras at all times. For example, Buddhas as many as the sands in ninety-nine hundred million Ganges rivers attained Buddhahood through cultivating the dharma door of the Great Compassion Mantra. Now we are also cultivating it. Eighty-four thousand Vajra Treasury Bodhisattvas made vows to protect the Shurangama Mantra. And all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas recite it constantly.

When Buddhism first spread to China, there were some people with “wild wisdom” who were so “smart” that they didn’t recite the Buddha’s name or any mantras. They didn’t do ceremonies or bow to the Buddha, either. They were just like certain people nowadays who say, “What’s the use of reciting sutras or bowing to the Buddha?” They considered these useless. They mixed up good and evil, saying, “What’s wrong with falling into the hells? I don’t want to go to the heavens anyways. I don’t want to become a Buddha. I’d rather be a hungry ghost. Being a hungry ghost and being a Buddha are just the same.” Since they harbored wrong views of that sort, none of them went to the Buddha Hall to do the ceremonies. They were lazy bums who ended up in the hells, as hungry ghosts, and as animals. Some clear-sighted wise advisors, seeing what was going on, thought, “This is too dangerous. We can’t let this go on.” And so they set forth the morning and evening ceremonies as the minimum requirements for cultivation. That’s how the morning and evening ceremonies came to be.

Now there are some misguided people who are telling people in America that it’s not necessary to do the morning and evening ceremonies. They say, “All you have to do each day is eat and sleep. Now don’t you think it’s wonderful?” You should realize that if you have it wonderful now, it won’t be so wonderful in the future.

**Sutra:**

**Every sound that beings make
And the Buddhas’ sovereign sound—
One can understand them all,
Upon gaining the wisdom of sound,**

**From one ground one attains to the next,
Until one dwells in the ground of the powers.
Diligently cultivating for billions of eons,
One obtains dharmas such as these.**

**Commentary:**

**Every sound that beings make, / And the Buddhas’ sovereign sound.** The Buddha speaks the Dharma with a single voice, and beings understand it according to their kind. When the Buddha speaks Dharma in every being’s language, every being can understand it. That is to say, the Buddha can speak the languages of all beings. The sound of the Buddha speaking Dharma is a sound of self-mastery. Every being, no matter what kind of being it is, hears it and obtains self-mastery. **One can understand them all,/ Upon gaining the wisdom of sound.** Upon hearing the sound of the Buddha’s Dharma, beings attain wisdom with regard to languages. With the wisdom of languages, all beings can understand and deeply enter the Dharma that the Buddha speaks.

**From one ground one attains to the next.** From the First Ground, one can attain to the states of all the rest of the grounds, **until one dwells on the ground of the powers**—the ground of the Buddha’s Ten Powers, which is the position of Buddhahood. **Diligently cultivating for billions of eons,** cultivating at all times without getting lazy or retreating, **one obtains dharmas such as these.** Diligently cultivating the Way for such a long time, one is able to understand all dharmas and attain All-Wisdom. One obtains the inconceivable dharmas described previously.

V.B.6. Wisdom’s Lamp Universally Shining Bodhisattva of the Southeast

**Sutra:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Wisdom’s Lamp Universally Shining received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**All Thus Come Ones
Remain detached from appearances.
One who understands this Dharma
Sees the guiding teachers of the world.**

**Bodhisattvas in samadhi,
Their wisdom light shining everywhere,
Are capable of knowing all Buddhas’
Free and independent nature.**

**Commentary:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst,** in the assembly convened upon the enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha, **another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Wisdom’s Lamp Universally Shining received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions** of the Dharma Realm, **and spoke a verse.**

**All Thus Come Ones** of the past, present, and future **remain** far **detached from** the myriad **appearances.** For the Buddhas, there are no appearances, and yet nothing lacks an appearance. **One who understands this Dharma** / S**ees the guiding teachers of the world.** One who understands the state of the Buddhas will truly see the World Honored Ones.

**Bodhisattvas in samadhi,** abiding in proper concentration, **their wisdom light shining everywhere** throughout all worlds, **are capable of knowing all Buddhas’** states and their **free and independent nature.** They know that the Buddhas, who have attained great self-mastery, firmly abide in reality.

**Sutra:**

**Seeing the Buddha’s true body,
One awakens to the profound Dharma.
Contemplating all dharma realms,
One takes birth wherever one wishes.**

**Born from the ocean of blessings,
He dwells upon the ground of wisdom.
Observing all dharmas,
He cultivates the supreme Path.**

**In the lands of all Buddhas,
In the places of all Thus Come Ones,
Pervading the Dharma Realm,
One sees the true body.**

**In the great lands of the ten directions,
The Buddha practiced with vigor for billions of eons.
He roams in proper and universal knowledge
Across the ocean of all dharmas.**

**His unique, indestructible body
Can be seen in every mote of dust.
Beyond birth, devoid of form,
It yet appears in all lands.**

**Commentary:**

**Seeing the Buddha’s true body, / One awakens to the profound Dharma.** If you understand the Buddha’s true substance and appearance, which is free and at ease, neither possessing an appearance nor lacking one, you will comprehend the Buddha’s deeply profound Dharma. **Contemplating all dharma realms, / One takes birth wherever one wishes.** You can be born anywhere in the Dharma Realm, according to your vows.

**Born from the ocean of blessings, / He dwells upon the ground of wisdom.** The Buddha abides in the stage of wisdom. **Observing all dharmas, / He cultivates the supreme Path.** He cultivates the most superior dharma door.

**In the lands of all Buddhas** of the past, present, and future, **in the places**, thebodhimanda***s* of all Thus Come Ones, / Pervading the Dharma Realm, / One sees the true body** of the Buddha.

**In the great** Buddha**lands of the ten directions, / The Buddha practiced with vigor for billions of eons. / He roams in proper and universal knowledge / Across the ocean of all dharmas.** The Buddhas are called Ones of Proper and Universal Knowledge. There is nothing they do not know. They understand the ultimate reality of all phenomena.

**His unique, indestructible body / Can be seen in every mote of dust.** The Buddha’s durable vajra body can be seen in every dustmote of the Dharma Realm. **Beyond birth, devoid of form, / It yet appears in all lands.** The Buddha’s Dharma body is unborn and undying, and it has no form. Yet the Buddha’s true substance manifests in all lands. The Buddha establishes bodhimandas in all lands. **Sutra:**

**In accord with beings’ wishes,
The Buddha universally appears before them.
Taming and teaching them with various means,
He quickly sets them upon the Buddha Path.**

**By virtue of the Buddha’s awesome spirit,
All the Bodhisattvas can appear.
Aided by the Buddha’s power,
They behold all Thus Come Ones.**

**All the guiding teachers,
With limitless, awesome spiritual powers,
Enlighten all the Bodhisattvas,
Who then roam throughout the Dharma Realm.**

**Commentary:**

**In accord with beings’ wishes / The Buddha universally appears before them.** The Buddha manifests according to beings’ inclinations. Beings who have affinities can meet the Buddha, hear the Dharma, and see the Sangha. The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha all appear before them. **Taming and teaching them with various means, / He quickly sets them upon the Buddha Path.** The Buddha employs all kinds of skill-in-means to subdue and regulate beings, so that they can quickly understand the Dharma, cultivate it, and realize Buddhahood.

**By virtue of the Buddha’s awesome spirit, / All the Bodhisattvas can appear.** By means of the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, Bodhisattvas appear in the light streaming from the Buddha’s pores. **Aided by the Buddha’s power, / They behold all Thus Come Ones.** The Buddha aids those Bodhisattvas with his Ten Powers, so that they can all see the Buddhas.

**All the guiding teachers** of beings, all Buddhas, **with limitless, awesome spiritual powers,** aid and **enlighten the Bodhisattvas, / Who then roam throughout the Dharma Realm** to propagate the Buddhadharma and teach beings.

V.B.7. Exquisitely Blazing Cowl Bodhisattva of the Southwest

**Sutra:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Exquisitely Blazing Cowl of Universally Bright Wisdom received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**Each and every land
Echoes with wondrous sounds.
Lauding the Buddhas’ merit and virtue,
They permeate the Dharma Realm.**

**The Dharma is the Buddha’s body,
Pure and clear like space.
All the colors and forms appearing therein
Cause beings to enter this Dharma.**

**Commentary:**

**Then in the** sea-vast **assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva**, a great Bodhisattva among the Bodhisattvas, **named Exquisitely Blazing Cowl of Universally Bright Wisdom received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the** worlds in the **ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**Each and every land / Echoes with wondrous sounds** of inconceivable Dharma. **Lauding the Buddhas’ merit and virtue, / They permeate the Dharma Realm.** Every place in the Dharma Realm is filled with the sound of praises for the Buddhas’ merit and virtue.

**The Dharma is the Buddha’s body.** The Buddha has three kinds of bodies:

1. The pure, clear Dharma body
2. The perfect reward body
3. The hundred billion transformation bodies.

Vairochana Buddha takes the Dharma as his body. The Dharma body is **pure and clear, like space**, yet containing the myriad phenomena. **All the colors and forms appearing therein** speak the Dharma for beings and **cause beings to enter this Dharma**, so that they can also attain the pure Dharma body, the perfect reward body, and the hundred billion transformation bodies.

**Sutra:**

**Those who rejoice in deep faith
Will be guided by the Buddha.
Such people, you should know,
Will understand the Buddha’s wisdom in this very life.**

**Those of scanty wisdom
Cannot know this Dharma.
Only pure ones with the wisdom eye
Are capable of such perception.**

**With the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power,
They can contemplate all dharmas.
Whether engaged in contemplation or not,
They comprehend all that they see.**

**Among all the dharmas that there are,
dharma doors are boundless
For realizing All-Wisdom, and
Entering the deep Dharma ocean.**

**Commentary:**

**Those rejoicing in deep faith** , beings who give rise to great faith and delight in the Buddhadharma, and who have affinities with the Buddha, **will be guided by the Buddha. / Such people, you should know, / Will understand the Buddha’s wisdom in this very life.** They will be able to comprehend the Buddha’s wisdom in this present life.

**Those of scanty wisdom** , ignorant people, **cannot know this Dharma. / Only pure ones with the wisdom eye / Are capable of such perception.** People who are intelligent and pure can understand this kind of principle.

**With the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, / They can contemplate all dharmas.**

**Whether engaged in contemplation** of all dharmas **or not, / They comprehend all that they see**, whatever dharmas they encounter.

**Among all the dharmas that there are, / dharma doors are boundless /For realizing All-Wisdom / And entering the deep Dharma ocean.** There are limitless methods to help beings realize All-Wisdom and enter the Dharma, which is like a great ocean.

**Sutra:**

**Dwelling in Buddhalands,
The Buddhamanifests everywhere
Yet neither goes nor comes.
The Dharma of all Buddhas is thus.**

**In the ocean of all beings,
The Buddha’s body appears, like a reflection.
According to their various understandings,
They perceive that guiding teacher.**

**In each and every pore,
The Buddha displays spiritual powers,
Leading beings to cultivate Universal Worthy’s vows.
Pure individuals can behold the Buddha.**

**The Buddha, in every single body,
Turns the Dharma wheel in all places.
Pervading the Dharma Realm,
He transcends thought and speech.**

**Commentary:**

**Dwelling in Buddhalands, / The Buddha manifests everywhere.** He gives rise to All-Wisdom. The Buddha uses all kinds of wisdom to teach beings. **Yet neither goes nor comes. / The Dharma of all Buddhas is thus.** The Buddha’s Dharma body neither comes nor goes.

**In the ocean of all beings, / The Buddha’s body appears, like a reflection.** All the beings that exist can be compared to a huge ocean. The Buddha’s body is reflected in the ocean of beings, just like sunlight. **According to their various understandings, / They see that guiding teacher.** Every being, in the light of his own understanding, sees the Buddha coming to teach him or her.

**In each and every pore,** the Buddha can make appear lands in the ten directions as numerous as dustmotes, and in these lands, Buddhas speak Dharma. **He displays spiritual powers.** In each pore, there are Buddhas manifesting their spiritual powers, **leading beings to cultivate Universal Worthy’s vows.** All beings are seen cultivating the vows made by Universal Worthy Bodhisattva. **Pure individuals can behold the Buddha.** Whoever evokes a response in the Way and brings his mind to a state of purity can see the Buddha.

**The Buddha, in every single body, / Turns the Dharma wheel in all places.** Each Buddha goes everywhere in his Dharma body, turning the great Dharma wheel and speaking Dharma to teach beings. Completely **pervading** every place in **the Dharma Realm, / He transcends thought and speech.** Beings cannot conceive of this in their thoughts or express it in words.

V.B.8. Awesome Virtue and Wisdom Bodhisattva of the Northwest

**Sutra:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Infinite Light of Awesome Virtue and Wisdom received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**In every Buddhaland,
A Buddha sits in a bodhimanda.
The multitudes gather ‘round,
And all demon armies are subdued.**

**Light streams from the Buddha’s body,
Suffusing the ten directions.
In response to beings, he manifests
Various forms, not just a single kind.**

**Within every mote of dust,
Glowing with luminous radiance,
A panorama of ten directions’ lands are seen,
Their qualities and features each unique.**

**The ten directions’ oceans of lands
Contain lands, infinite and various.
All are level and pristine,
Formed and constituted of sapphires.**

**They may be overturned, or sideways,
Or resemble a closed lotus bud.
They may be circular or rectangular,
Or of other sorts of shapes and forms.**

**Commentary:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst,** in the sea-like assembly of Shakyamuni Buddha, there was **another Bodhisattva Mahasattva**, a great Bodhisattva among the Bodhisattvas, **named Infinite Light of Awesome Virtue and Wisdom**. There was no end to this Bodhisattva’s light. He **received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated** the causes and conditions throughout **the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**In every Buddhaland, / A Buddha sits in a bodhimanda.** In every Buddhaland, a Buddha sits under the bodhi tree and turns the great Dharma wheel. **The multitudes gather ‘round.** When a Buddha is seated in his bodhimanda, the Bodhisattvas come to praise and surround him. **And all demon armies are subdued.** All the demon kings are vanquished.

**Light streams from the Buddha’s body, / Suffusing the ten directions.** The Buddha’s light fills the Dharma Realm. **In response to** being**s, he manifests / Various forms** of various causes and conditions, **not just a single kind.** Buddhas manifest in all kinds of bodies. They manifest in whatever kind of body is appropriate to speak the Dharma for beings and to guide them to liberation.

**Within every mote of dust** in every land, **glowing with luminous radiance./A panorama** in a single pore, **the ten directions’ lands** and the beings within them **are seen**,/ **Their qualities and features each unique.**

**The ten directions’ oceans of lands / Contains lands, infinite and various.** Each ocean of lands contains limitless oceans of lands. **All** the Buddhalands **are level and pristine, / Formed and constituted of sapphires.**

**They may be overturned, or sideways** , lying side by side with each other, **or resemble a closed lotus bud.** Some worlds resemble lotus buds that have not yet opened. **They may be circular or rectangular, / Or of other sorts of shapes and forms.**

**Sutra:**

**Through every land of the Dharma Realm,
They travel without hindrance.
At every gathering and assembly,
They ever turn the wondrous Dharma wheel.**

**Inconceivable, the Buddha’s body
Holds within it all lands.
He is present everywhere,
Guiding beings and teaching true Dharma.**

**He turns the wheel of wondrous Dharma.
The Dharma nature is free of discriminations.
In accordance with the one and only Truth,
He expounds the characteristics of all dharmas.**

**The Buddha, with perfect sound,
Clearly sets forth the principle of Truth.
Yet for beings with different understandings,
He reveals infinite dharma doors.**

**Somewhere in the midst of every land,
One can see a Buddha seated in a bodhimanda.
Like a reflection, the Buddha’s body
Is beyond all birth and death.**

**Commentary:**

**Through every land of the Dharma Realm, / They travel without hindrance.** The Buddha travels unhindered through every land, teaching beings. **At every gathering and assembly,** every Buddha’s assembly in every land, **they ever turn the wondrous** and inconceivable **Dharma wheel.**

**Inconceivable, the Buddha’s body / Holds within it all lands.** In every land, there is a Buddha speaking Dharma. **He is present everywhere, / Guiding beings and teaching true Dharma.** The Buddha is at every Dharma assembly, teaching beings and speaking the wonderful Dharma.

**He turns the wondrous Dharma wheel. / The** fundamental **Dharma nature is free of discriminations.** What is the fundamental Dharma nature? It is **in accordance with the one and only Truth.** Based on the only truth, **he expounds the** true **characteristics ofall dharmas.**

**The Buddha, with perfect sound,** with his perfect, wondrous voice, **clearly sets forth the principle of Truth. / Yet for beings withdifferent understandings, / He reveals infinite dharma doors.**

**Somewhere, in the midst of every** Buddha’s **land, / One can see a Buddha seated in a bodhimanda. / Like a reflection** of moonlight in water**, the Buddha’s body** appears. The Buddha is like the moon, and beings’ minds are like water. When their minds are pure, the moon is reflected in the water. The Buddha’s body **is beyond all birth and death.** It is unborn and undying, neither pure nor defiled, neither increasing nor decreasing.

V.B.9. Wisdom Universally Illumining the Dharma Realm Bodhisattva of the Nadir

**Sutra:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Wisdom Universally Illumining the Dharma Realm received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**The Thus Come One’s wondrous body
And his inconceivable physical form—
Bring joy to all who perceive them.
Faithful and reverent, those beings enjoy the Dharma.**

**Commentary:**

**Then** , after the previous Bodhisattva finished speaking his verse, **in the** sea-vast **assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Wisdom Universally Illumining the Dharma Realm received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.** Bodhisattvas are associated with the Great Vehicle [Mahayana] , while Arhats belong to the Ther a vada. The first stage of Arhatship is called the Position of Seeing the Way. One must eradicate eighty-eight categories of view delusions before one can realize the first stage of Arhatship. The second and third stages are the Position of Cultivating the Way. The fourth stage of Arhatship is the Position of Realizing the Way, and also the Stage beyond Study. Originally no division existed between Great Vehicle and Ther a vada Buddhism. The Dharma spoken by the Buddha is the One Vehicle, that is, the Buddha Vehicle. When the Buddha spoke the Flower Adornment Sutra, Bodhisattvas came flocking in from the ten directions to hear the Dharma. But the state of the Hearers and Those Enlightened to Conditions (the Two Vehicles) was not as high as that of the Bodhisattvas.

They had eyes, but could not see Nishyanda.
They had ears, but did not hear the perfect, sudden teaching.

Since they neither saw nor heard, they failed to realize the existence of the teaching. Those of the Ther a vada school work to better themselves, to enlighten themselves. They do not involve themselves in trying to better and enlighten others. Those of the Great Vehicle practice the dharmas of Bodhisattvas, benefiting, enlightening, and liberating themselves as well as others. Bodhisattvas make the resolve to benefit beings, while Arhats only resolve to better themselves. There is basically no boundary between the Great and Ther a vada; it all depends on how you think. If you think about benefiting others, then that is the Great Vehicle. If you are only concerned with bettering yourself and becoming an Arhat, then that’s the Ther a vada. The Flower Adornment Sutra talks about Bodhisattvas of the Great Vehicle, who benefit others. This Bodhisattva’s name is Wisdom Universally Illumining the Dharma Realm. Relying on Shakyamuni Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, he observed the causes and conditions of beings in the ten directions of the Dharma Realm, and then spoke the following verse.

**The Thus Come One’s wondrous body / And his inconceivable physical form.** The first line is praising the Buddha’s Dharma body. Not only is his Dharma body wondrous and inconceivable, but his physical body is also wondrous and inconceivable. **Beings see them and rejoice.** Any being, no matter what kind, is happy to see the Buddha, because the Buddha’s luminous virtue shines everywhere. **Faithful and reverent, those beings enjoy the Dharma.** In their happiness, beings venerate and make offerings to the Buddha. They have faith in the Buddha, and they delight in the Buddhadharma. Bearing reverence, offerings, and faith, they come to hear the Buddha speak the Dharma, and then they respectfully practice it.

**Sutra:**

**Every hallmark of the Buddha’s body
Reveals limitless Buddhas,
Who pervade the realms of the ten directions,
Entering every mote of dust.**

**In the ten directions’ oceans of lands,
Buddhas beyond count and measure
Display their spiritual powers
In thought after thought.**

**Bodhisattvas of great wisdom
Plumb the depths of the Dharma ocean.
Assisted by the Buddhas’ power,
They apprehend these expedients.**

**Commentary:**

**Every hallmark of the Buddha’s body,** every one of the Thirty-two Hallmarks of a great person and the Eighty Subsidiary Characteristics that adorn the Buddha’s body, **reveals limitless Buddhas.** Not only are there innumerable Buddhas in every hallmark, but there are limitlessly many lands in every pore. These innumerable Buddhas, **who pervade the** Dharma **realms of the ten directions, / Entering every mote of dust,** propagate the Buddhadharma and teach beings.

**In the ten directions’ oceans of lands** are **Buddhas beyond count and measure.** There is a Buddha in every land, teaching and transforming beings, and **displaying spiritual powers** / **In thought after thought**, teaching beings in every Buddhaland.

**Bodhisattvas of great wisdom / Plumb the depths of the Dharma ocean.** They can deeply enter the Sutra Treasury, and have wisdom like the sea. **Assisted by the Buddhas’ power, / They apprehend these expedients.**

**Sutra:**

**Those already well established
In Universal Worthy’s conduct and vows,
Will see all lands and countries
And all Buddhas’ spiritual powers.**

**People of faith and understanding,
Who have made great vows
And whose wisdom is profound
Will thoroughly know all dharmas.**

**If they observe the Buddhas’ body,
Contemplating each and every aspect,
Undistracted by form and sound,
They will understand all states of mind.**

**Commentary:**

**Those** beings who have made the resolve for bodhi, and who are **already well established / In Universal Worthy’s conduct and vows**, in the great vows cultivated by that Bodhisattva, **will see all lands and countries / And all Buddhas’ spiritual powers.**

**People of faith and understanding, / Who have made great vows.** In cultivation, the most important thing is to have faith. Once you have faith, you must make vows, and then carry out those vows. **And** if they are people **whose wisdom**, great prajna-wisdom, **is profound,** they **will thoroughly know all dharmas.**

**If they observe the Buddhas’** Dharma **body, / Contemplating each and every aspect,** they can discover how and why the Buddhas became Buddhas. If they are **undistracted by form and sound, / They will understand all** Buddhas’ **states of mind.**

**Sutra:**

**Bodhisattvas can emulate all Buddhas,
By abiding in their wisdom and practice.
They soon enter the Thus Come One’s position
And guide all beings in the Dharma Realm.**

**Bodhisattvas, in a single thought,
Can make appear in every mote of dust
Lands to the number
Of dustmotes in Buddhalands.**

**In a single land, they can manifest
All lands and countries,
As well as feats of spiritual powers.
Such are the Bodhisattvas’ powers.**

**Commentary:**

**Bodhisattvas can emulate all Buddhas, / By abiding in their wisdom and practice.** Having obtained the Buddhas’ wisdom and cultivation, **they** cause all beings to **soon enter the Thus Come One’s position** and realize Buddhahood. **And** they **guide** and teach **all beingsin the Dharma Realm**, leading them to Buddhahood.

**Bodhisattvas, in a single thought, / Can make appear in every mote of dust / Lands to the number / Of dustmotes in Buddhalands.** The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas can, in the space of a thought, make all Buddhalands appear in every dustmote, and all the Buddhalands in each dustmote appear in every Buddhaland.

**In a single** Buddha**land, they can manifest / All** Buddhas’ **lands and countries, / As well as** all Buddhas’ **feats of spiritual powers** and wonderful functionings—these inconceivable states**. Such are the Bodhisattvas’ powers.** Who can do this? All Bodhisattvas, receiving the aid of the Buddhas, can accomplish this.

V.B.10. Vigorous Power and Unimpeded Wisdom Bodhisattva of the Zenith

**Sutra:**

**Then in the assembly’s midst, another Bodhisattva Mahasattva named Vigorous Power and Unimpeded Wisdom received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.**

**The Buddha broadcasts a single wondrous sound,
Heard throughout the lands of the ten directions.
Carrying the myriad sounds,
The rain of Dharma falls everywhere.**

**Commentary:**

**Then** , after the previous verse was finished, **in the** sea-vast **assembly’s midst** at the bodhimanda, **another Bodhisattva Mahasattva**, a leader of Bodhisattvas, **named Vigorous Power and Unimpeded Wisdom received the Buddha’s awesome spiritual power, contemplated the ten directions, and spoke a verse.** Vigor refers to diligently cultivating precepts, samadhi, and wisdom; and eliminating greed, anger, and delusion. One advances in cultivation and grows more vigorous day by day. With such vigorous power, one does not retreat, but develops unimpeded wisdom. With unimpeded wisdom, one can understand all dharmas, cultivate all dharmas, and realize the substance of all dharmas.

Relying on Shakyamuni Buddha’s awesome virtue, spiritual powers, transformations, and wisdom, this Bodhisattva contemplated the ten directions. His contemplation was not sloppy and casual. He contemplated very attentively and in detail, not only in one direction, but in all ten directions of the Dharma Realm. He didn’t contemplate just the Dharma Realm itself, but the beings within it. He wanted to ascertain the causes and conditions, so he could decide what Dharma to speak. Then he spoke the following verse.

**The Buddha broadcasts a single wondrous sound.** This refers to Shakyamuni Buddha, but it also refers to the Buddhas of the three periods of times and in the ten directions. Each Buddha is:

Perfect in the three kinds of enlightenment, and
Replete with the ten thousand virtues.

Those who have heard the sutras explained know the meaning of the word Buddha. Others, who have not heard the sutras explained before, say they believe in the Buddha, but they do not know what the word means. The Buddha possesses three kinds of enlightenment:

1. Enlightenment of self
2. Enlightenment of others
3. Perfection of enlightenment and practices

Ordinary, deluded beings are unenlightened. Followers of the Two Vehicles (of the Theravada) enlighten themselves. They understand how to cultivate the Dharma of the Four Noble Truths (suffering, accumulation, cessation, and the Way) and the Twelve Links of Conditioned Causation, and so they become enlightened themselves. However, their goal is not to enlighten others. Having gained understanding themselves, their attitude is:

Mahasattvas, don’t look after others;
Amitabha Buddha takes care of himself.

They don’t bring forth the resolve of a Bodhisattva. Bodhisattvas of the Great Vehicle enlighten themselves, and they also enlighten others. Having enlightened themselves, they don’t wish to enjoy the benefits alone. They want to help all beings to become enlightened and share the same benefits. In wishing to enlighten others, they differ from those of the Two Vehicles, who are concerned about their own practice. Bodhisattvas want to help everyone realize Buddhahood together.

When the Buddha first began teaching, he did not dare to say that all beings could become Buddhas. He was afraid that if he spoke such Dharma, he would scare everyone away. Beings are not aware of their own potential for Buddhahood. If you tell them, they will run off in disbelief.

When the Buddha spoke the Flower Adornment Sutra, ordinary people did not hear it. He then spoke the agama sutras, what now constitute the Theravada teachings, followed by the vaipulya sutras, and then the prajna sutras. During this time, he never mentioned that everyone had the potential for Buddhahood. It was only at the very end, when he spoke the Lotus Sutra, setting aside expedient dharmas to speak the true Dharma, that he told all beings that they could become Buddhas. He said, “Not only can I become a Buddha, all people can become Buddhas. Not only can all people become Buddhas, but all beings can, too.” When he said this, five thousand Bhikshus left the assembly. They thought, “Buddha, you never said before that everyone could become a Buddha. This is what you’re saying now, but which is right?” Take a look. When Shakyamuni Buddha was speaking the Dharma, five thousand Bhikshus disbelieved him. The inconceivably wonderful Great Vehicle Dharma was simply too difficult for those people to believe.

Even in the Buddha’s time, there were five thousand Bhikshus who got up and left. Nowadays, it is inevitable that there are some people who don’t believe in the Great Vehicle Dharma. For example, in Burma, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and other Buddhist countries, the practice of Buddhism is not bad, but they restrict themselves and refuse to study Great Vehicle (Mahayana) Buddhism. We could say that the Theravada is too conservative, and the Great Vehicle is too liberal. It would be good if the adherents of the Theravada and the Great Vehicle could learn from each other and renounce their attachments.

The Buddha proclaimed with a single wondrous sound, and beings understood it according to their kinds. Every being, whatever the kind, understood the Dharma the Buddha spoke.

The Buddha’s sound is **heard throughout the lands of the ten directions.** The Buddha’s sound is transmitted into the ears of all the beings in the ten directions of the Dharma Realm. And every being, upon hearing the perfect sound of Buddhadharma, understands it in his or her own way. **Carrying the myriad sounds, / The rain of Dharma falls everywhere** in the Dharma Realm. Every being is nourished by the Buddha’s Dharma rain and filled with the joy of Dharma.

**Sutra:**

**With oceans of words and phrases,
Sounds that communicate to every species,
In every land of Buddhas,
He turns the pristine Dharma wheel.**

**All beings in every land,
Behold the Buddha’s spiritual transformations
And hear the Buddha speaking Dharma.
Having heard it, they aspire towards bodhi.**

**Commentary:**

**With oceans words and phrases, / Sounds that communicate to every species.** People communicate in human language, birds communicate in bird language, and beasts communicate in their own languages. Human languages include Chinese, English, French, German, Russian, Japanese, and so on. There are so many languages in the world that no one could learn them all in one lifetime. Just when you have learned them all, it’s time to visit King Yama again. No one can completely master the ocean of the world’s languages. Yet the Buddha, with a single sound, can communicate with all the different kinds of beings so that they all understand him.

**In every land of Buddhas, / He turns the pristine Dharma wheel.** In every Buddhaland, the Buddha is speaking wonderful Dharma to teach beings.

**All beings in every land** in the ten directions can **behold the Buddha’s spiritual power**s and **transformations / And hear the Buddha speaking** wondrous **Dharma. Having heard it, they** resolve their minds on enlightenment and **aspire towards** the path to **bodhi.**

**Sutra:**

**Throughout the lands of the Dharma Realm,
In every single mote of dust,
The Thus Come One, by his power of liberation,
Universally manifests his body.**

**The Dharma body is the same as space,
Unhindered and lacking differentation.
The physical body resembles a reflection,
Assuming various images and forms.**

**The reflection, without a location,
Is insubstantial, like the void.
Only one of tremendous wisdom
Can fathom its impartial nature.**

**The Buddha’s body cannot be apprehended.
Unborn and uncreated,
It appears in response to all beings,
Yet remains impartial like the void.**

**All the Buddhas of the ten directions
Completely enter a single pore
And display spiritual powers.
The wisdom eye thus perceives.**

**Commentary:**

**Throughout the** Buddha**lands of the** ten directions of the **Dharma Realm, / In every single mote of dust, / The Thus Come One, by his** inconceivable **power of liberation / Universally manifests his body.** In each dustmote, he can make appear limitless lands with Buddhas speaking Dharma in them.

**The** Buddha’s **Dharma body is the same as space,** formless and invisible, **unhindered and lacking differentiation. / The physical body resembles a reflection** or shadow constantly following the body wherever it goes, **assuming various images and forms.**

**The reflection, without a location, / Is insubstantial, like the void.** The reflection has no fixed place. It appears in the minds of those beings that have affinities. The Buddha’s Dharma body is like space, with no form or substance of its own. **Only one of tremendous wisdom / Can fathom its impartial nature.** Only a Bodhisattva can understand the principle of level equality.

**The Buddha’s body cannot be apprehended. /Unborn and uncreated.** The Buddha’s body cannot be grasped, nor can it be renounced. It neither comes nor goes. It is not born, and does not die. It cannot be said to be new or old, and so it is uncreated. You can’t say, “Before there was an old one, and now we’re making a new one.” **It appears in response to all beings.** The Buddha manifests a body and teaches beings according to their type and their dispositions, **yet remains impartial like the void.** He treats all beings equally.

**All the Buddhas of the ten directions / Completely enter a single pore** of the Buddha, **and display spiritual powers— / The wisdom eye thus perceives.** Only a Bodhisattva with the wisdom eye can observe this kind of state.

**Sutra:**

**Vairochana Buddha’s vows
Pervade the Dharma Realm.
Perpetually, in all lands
He turns the unsurpassed wheel.**

**A single pore displays spiritual transformations
And all Buddhas speaking in unison.
Even passing through limitless eons,
None of this will reach its end.**

**Commentary:**

**Vairochana Buddha’s vows** . Vairochana is the pure Dharma body Buddha. His name means “Pervading All Places.” His vows **pervade the Dharma Realm.** Vairochana Buddha has the greatest vow power. There is not one place in the Dharma Realm that was not brought into being by the power of Vairochana Buddha’s vows. Beings with whom he has affinities will definitely be saved. **Perpetually, in all lands** in the ten directions of the Dharma Realm, **he turns the unsurpassed** Dharma **wheel.** He constantly speaks Dharma to teach beings.

**A single pore displays spiritual power** s and **transformations.** Although a pore is tiny, it can contain the entire Dharma Realm, **and all Buddhas speaking in unison.** All the Buddhas in the ten directions of the Dharma Realm are there, speaking Dharma at the same time. **Even passing through limitless eons / None of this will reach its end.** Even going through an immeasurable length of time, one could not know when they would finish speaking the Dharma.

VI. Concluding with the universal and infinite nature

**Sutra:**

**In the bodhimanda of this world of four continents, by the Buddha’s spiritual power, Bodhisattvas as numerous as the dustmotes in a hundred million seas of worlds came to gather from each of the ten directions. You should know that it was the same way in the bodhimandas in every world of four continents in all the seas of worlds.**

**Commentary:**

**In the bodhimanda of this world of four continents, by the Buddha’s spiritual power, Bodhisattvas as numerous as the dustmotes in a hundred million seas of worlds came to gather from each of the ten directions.** One world of four continents contains one sun, one moon, and one Mount Sumeru. On the four sides of Mount Sumeru are four continents, hence the term “world of four continents.” A bodhimanda is a place for cultivating the Way.

The ten directions are the upper and lower directions; the four cardinal directions—north, south, east, west; and the four intermediate directions—northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest.

All those Bodhisattvas, as numerous as the dustmotes in a hundred million seas of worlds, came to assemble at the bodhimanda of Shakyamuni Buddha. They all came to the Saha World to draw near Shakyamuni Buddha under the bodhi tree.

**You should know that it was the same way in the bodhimandas in every world of four continents in all the seas of worlds.** There are a hundred million seas of worlds in each of the ten directions, and each sea of worlds contains many, many worlds of four continents. In all the bodhimandas in every one of those worlds, Bodhisattvas as numerous as dustmotes went to gather.