**The Avatamsaka Sutra**

**CHAPTER8**

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

**Explanation by VM. Hua**

**The Four Holy Truths**

**INTRODUCTION**

This is the chapter on the Four Truths, also known as the Four Noble Truths. It is the Dharma which the Buddha explained to the five Bhikshus when he first accomplished the Way. Within the Four Holy Truths are included all dharmas. It’s sad to say however, that there are people who claim to understand the Buddhadharma and yet who question whether there really are Four Holy Truths. How pathetic!

They don’t even know whether the Four Holy Truths exist or not; however, they still travel everywhere lecturing on Buddhism. What do you think? Wouldn’t you say that is pitiful?

THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS

* The Truth of Suffering.
* The Truth of Accumulation.
* The Truth of Extinction.
* The Truth of the way.

The first of the Buddha’s disciples to become enlightened to the Four Truths was the Bhikshu Ajnatakaundinya. When he heard the Buddha speak the Four Holy Truths, he became enlightened. The Buddha spoke the Dharma of the Four Holy Truths to cross over the Five Bhikshus. He spoke Three Turnings of the Four Holy Truths.

THE FIRST TURNINGS OF THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS

* This is suffering; its nature is oppression.
* This is accumulation; its nature is enticement.
* This is the Way; its nature can be cultivated.
* This is extinction; its nature can be certified to.

THE SECOND TURNINGS OF THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS

* This is suffering; you should understand it.
* This is accumulation; you should cut it off.
* This is the Way; you should cultivate it.
* This is extinction; you should certify to it.

THE THIRD TURNINGS OF THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS

* This is suffering; I already understand it, and I don’t need to know any more about it.
* This is accumulation; I have already cut it off, and I don’t need to further cut it off.
* This is the Way; I have already cultivated it, and I don’t need to cultivate it more.
* This is extinction; I have already certified to it and I don’t need to further certify to it.

This is called the Triple Turning Dharma Wheel of the Four Holy Truths. As soon as the Buddha explained this Dharma, Ajnatakaundinya immediately certified to the fruit.

At that time, Shakyamuni Buddha took a handful of leaves and some grass and asked all his disciples, “Are there more grass and leaves in my hand or in the rest of the world?”

His disciples answered, “Of course the amount of grass and leaves in the rest of the world is more. There is no way to calculate the amount—much more than what is in the Buddha’s hand. Basically there is no comparison.”

Then the Buddha said, “The Dharma that I have already spoken is comparable to the leaves and grass in my hand. And the Dharma that I have not spoken is comparable to all the rest of leaves and grass in the entire world. There is that much Dharma that I have not spoken yet.”

At that time Manjushri Bodhisattva asked, “Is all the Dharma which the Buddha hasn’t spoken yet included within the Four Holy Truths? If it is included within the Four Holy Truths then the Buddha has already spoken it. If it is not included within the Four Holy Truths then there needs to be a fifth.”

Then he Buddha said, “Although the Four Holy Truths include all dharmas, there are still many principles within the Four Holy Truths that I haven’t explained yet —as many as the grass and leaves on the entire earth. So though I have spoken of the Four Holy Truths, I have only spoken a very minute part of their entire meaning. I haven’t spoken very much.” And so, the Buddhadharma is inconceivable, for though the Buddha had spoken the Four Holy Truths, he only spoke a small part.

The Saha world is a conglomeration of millions of sufferings. There is no way to know how many there really are. They are limitless and boundless. But because of a single thought of ignorance, people of the world become confused. Because they are confused, they turn on the wheel of the Six Paths. People are born and then die, die and then are born. They turn around and around in this wheel and never get out of it. They take suffering to be happiness. They spin around in the world and forget to return to their source. They linger in the world and don’t remember to come back, just like water that flows out and is unable to return to its source. How many kinds of suffering are there? Basically there are boundless and limitless sufferings, but according to the Yogachara Shastra, there are 110 kinds of suffering.

THE 110 KINDS OF SUFFERING ACCORDING TO THE YOGACHARA SHASTRA

ONE KIND OF SUFFERING: Relying on and revolving in non-differentiating karma.

TWO KINDS OF SUFFEREING: 1) desire; 2) stupidity.

THREE KINDS OF SUFFERING: 1) Suffering within suffering; 2) Suffering of decay; 3) Suffering of process.

FOUR KINDS OF SUFFERING: 1) birth, 2) old age, 3) sickness, and 4) death.

FIVE KINDS OF SUFFERING:

* birth, old age, sickness, and death
* being apart from the ones you love.
* coming together with the ones you hate.
* not getting what you want.
* the scorching blaze of the five skandhas.

In addition there are:

SIX KINDS OF SUFFERING,  
SEVEN KINDS OF SUFFERING,   
EIGHT KINDS OF SUFFERING,   
NINE KINDS OF SUFFERING,   
TEN KINDS OF SUFFERING.

That makes a total of fifty-five kinds of suffering. Add to that:

NINE CLASSES OF SUFFERING

ALL-PERVASIVE SUFFERING, which opens up into two kinds: a) suffering from past lives b) suffering from present conditions, that is, one’s present life.

* VAST SUFFERING, which further divides into three kinds.
* THE SUFFERING OF ALL DOORS, which further divides into four kinds.
* THE SUFFERING OF DEVIANT PRACTICES, which further divides into five kinds.
* THE SUFFERING OF FLOWING AND TURNING, which further divides into six kinds.
* THE SUFFERING OF THINGS NOT BEING IN ACCORD WITH ONE’S WISHES, which further divides into seven kinds.
* THE SUFFERING OF OPPOSITION AND HARMING, which further divides into eight kinds.
* THE SUFFERING OF CONTINUAL PURSUIT OF THINGS, which further divides into nine kinds.
* THE SUFFERING OF THE SUFFERING OF ALL MODES, which further divides into ten kinds.

A total of fifty-five kinds of suffering.

110 kinds of suffering.

That is the suffering of relying on and revolving in non-differentiating karma? It means that one has no control over one’s own karma. One doesn’t know where one is going. One just bobs up and down in the great seas and where one is floating to, one doesn’t know. It’s not just one living being who endures this kind of suffering. All beings with sentience – every single one of them – floats indecisively in the sea of karma. They float back and forth in the sea, suddenly up, suddenly down, suddenly east, and suddenly west. They run off everywhere in the ten directions but they’re not in control over this running around. They are revolving in their karmic retribution which they have no control over, and so they are compelled by it. They undergo this kind of suffering, and it’s very difficult to put an end to. This is the first suffering of non-differentiating karma whereby one is not in control of and therefore gets caught up in karmic retribution.

The second suffering has two aspects. The first is the suffering of desire, and the second is the suffering of stupidity. Desire is the basic root of all the myriad sufferings. Those who are greedy to be rich have a desire for wealth. Those who are greedy for sex have a desire for sex. Those who are greedy for high positions have a desire for high positions. Those who are greedy for fame have a desire for fame. Those who are greedy to be leaders have that kind of desire. Whatever one is greedy for is the kind of desire one has. If one is greedy for food, then one has a desire for food. If one is greedy for clothes, then one has a desire for clothes. If one is greedy for sleep, then one has a desire for sleep. These thoughts of desire control one to the point that one is totally upside down, mixed up, and muddled. For example, why do some people become thieves? It’s because thieves have a desire that they can’t fulfill and so they have to break the law in order to fulfill their desire. Why do some people like to gamble? It’s because of desire. Why do people dislike following the rules? It’s because of desire. And why is it that people consider things that are not really freedom to be freedom? It’s all because of desire. Desire is the basic root of all suffering. Why does desire arise? Because of ignorance – because of a single unenlightened thought. After that it turns into desire.

A single unenlighteded thought produces the three subtle marks.  
Based on circumstances, the six coarse marks arise.

Once there is desire, then you go out to do all kinds of muddled and mixed up things. So desire is extreme suffering. Once there is desire, love arises – the love between men and women.

But Sages cut off the desire. They have no greed. Why does greed arise? It’s because of desire. As soon as one has desire, then the greed never stops. No matter what one is greedy for, it is still desire. If one wants to drink wine, one has desire. If one wants to eat fine food, one has desire. If one wants to drink good, rich drinks with vitamins in them, one has desire. One is being controlled by desire. One thinks that being able to do all of these things is freedom, but actually all of these cravings are examples of being controlled by desire, to the point that they’ll drive one totally upside down. One thinks, “I’d really like a treat,” or “I’d really like to have a drink of this.” Perhaps one thinks, “I would like to buy a nice car,” or “I would like to buy a boat,” or “I would like to buy an airplane. If I have an airplane of my own then I’ll be able to fly wherever I want to go. This is wonderful beyond words.” However, it’s still desire. It’s all just a case of being controlled by desire. If one didn’t have any desire, then these questions wouldn’t arise.

Once desire arises, then there is love. But eventually, the things one loves will change or to bad, and then it turns into suffering. For example, one buys a car and as soon as one starts driving it around, one gets into an accident, and people get hurt. Now would you say that is suffering or not? The car changed and went bad, and so it caused suffering – this is the problem with cars. Now as for the problems with airplanes and yachts, the problem of desire. That is the primary problem.

The second aspect of the second kind of suffering is the suffering of stupidity. Being stupid is extremely suffering. People who are stupid take what really isn’t good to be good. They don’t recognize the truly good things. They are confused and inverted and they do upside-down things. Though they might not undergo retribution now, in lives to come they’ll have to undergo bitter retribution. Because of the things that they have done wrong, they will receive a delayed – if not an immediate – retribution. They may do a wrong or crazy act today, and in a few years get it back in one way or another. Or maybe they have to wait until next life to pay it back. Maybe they will have to wait two lives before they receive the retribution. That is delayed retribution, not an immediate retribution. Often, stupidity brings this kind of delayed suffering.

Stupid people form attachments to things and people. They get attached to something and say, “This is mine, everything is mine. All of these things belong to me.” When one gives rise to attachment, one is displaying stupidity. When one is stupid, one doesn’t understand things, and one curses heaven and earth, or curses people for what happens to one. One says things like, “Everyone else is at fault. They have all done me wrong.” As a result, one is always worried and upset, and has to undergo two kinds of intensely unpleasant feelings. The first is pain of the body. It feels just as is someone were stabbing one. The second is pain of the heart – deep pain and distress within one’s heart. This is the principle of the two kinds of suffering.

There are also three kinds of suffering:

* Suffering within suffering
* Suffering of decay
* Suffering of process

1) The suffering within suffering means that within all the suffering that already exists, there is more suffering: suffering on top of suffering. What does this mean? For example, one maybe very poor, so that all one owns is a small shack. Then a big storm comes and destroys one’s little house. Originally one was poor but now, one doesn’t even have a house to live in. That is suffering within suffering.

2) Second is the suffering of decay, which means, in the beginning, everything was really fine. But the good goes bad and turns sour. This is a kind of suffering experienced by rich people. Originally, they were wealthy, but circumstances cause them to lose their fortunes.

3) Third is the suffering of process. This refers to the continual process of going from birth to death. First one is young, and one grows up and then from growing up, one grows old and from growing old, one dies. This process continues without cease. This is also suffering. So even if you don’t have the suffering of adversity and poverty, and you don’t have the suffering of losing your wealth and position, nonetheless, no one can escape the suffering of process.

There are also the four kinds of suffering, that is, birth, old age, sickness, and death. Then there are the five kinds of suffering, also the six kinds of suffering, seven kinds of suffering, eight kinds of suffering, nine kinds of suffering, and the ten kinds of suffering. If you add them all together, there are a total of fifty-five kinds of suffering.

Besides these, there are another nine classes of suffering, that further divide into another fifty-five kinds.

THE NINE CLASSES OF SUFFERING

All pervasive suffering: Absolutely everything in the world is suffering. This further opens up into two kinds of suffering: suffering as a result from past causes, that is, past lives and the suffering from present conditions, that is, circumstances from this very life.

Vast suffering: This does not only refer to the suffering endured by a single individual, but also to the suffering undergone by the citizens of all countries, en masse, for example, citizens of an entire country going through the same types of adversities at the same time, such as epidemics, inflation, and so forth. This further opens up into four kinds of suffering.

The suffering of all doors: This is suffering undergone in each individual family; every family has its unique set of headaches. This opens up into four kinds of suffering.

The suffering of deviant practices: Deviant practices are cultivated by adherents of externalist ways. Harboring improper knowledge and views is also a kind of suffering. This further divides into five types of suffering.

The suffering of flowing and turning: This refers to the revolving wheel of the six paths–spinning around and around in an endless vicious cycle. This suffering further opens up into six kinds of suffering.

The suffering of things not being in accord with one’s wishes: It is suffering when one does not get what one wants. This further divides into seven kinds of suffering.

The suffering of opposition and harming: Here, not only does one not get what one wants, one further attracts harm and injury to oneself. This further divides into eight kinds of suffering.

The suffering of continual pursuit of things: People, lacking intelligence, run after their desires, mistaking this for freedom, whereas actually it is just a lot of pain. This further divides into nine kinds of suffering.

The suffering of the suffering of all modes: Absolutely everything in the world is suffering. There is nothing which is not suffering. This further divides into ten kinds of suffering.

Altogether, these nine classes of suffering and their implications come up to fifty-five kinds of suffering. Add these to the previous list already discussed (also fifty-five), and there is a total of 110 kinds of suffering.

Now basically, there are millions upon millions of suffering, and there is no way to speak about them to the end. But now, to facilitate your understanding, let up just briefly discuss the Eight Sufferings, which are

1) The suffering of Birth

2) The suffering of Old Age

3) The suffering of Sickness

4) The suffering of Death

5) The suffering of Being Apart from Those one Loves.

6) The suffering of Coming together with those one Hates.

7) The suffering of not Getting what one Seeks.

8) The suffering of the Scorching Blaze of the Five Skandhas.

1) The Suffering of Birth: The experience of birth is like the experience of a turtle when its shell is ripped off. If you had a live turtle and ripped its shell right off, now what do you think, wouldn’t the turtle experience a lot of suffering? That’s what being born is like. At the moment of birth when one’s skin comes in contact with the air for the first time, it is as painful as if being cut by a sharp knife. That’s why babies cry.

2) The Suffering of Old Age: What’s the suffering of being old? One’s eyes get blurry, one’s ears get deaf, one’s teeth fall out, and one’s hands and feet can’t function properly anymore. So there is a saying:

Don’t wait until you are old to cultivate the Way.  
The lonely graves are those of young people.

When you get old, the things you eat don’t seem to have any flavor. When you try to walk, your legs don’t want to cooperate. You try to pick up things and your hands don’t listen to you. You are tottering and in the decline of old age. So the ancients had a poem about old age:

Your skin is wrinkled up like a chicken, and your hair has turned crane-white.  
See how you limp and hobble along?  
Gold and jade fill your entire house,  
And yet you can’t put off the ailments of old age which make you decrepit.  
Despite thousands upon thousands of pleasures,  
Impermanence finally arrives.  
Therefore, the only path of cultivation  
Is to recite “Amitabha Buddha!” all the time!

When you age, your skin gradually becomes all wrinkled up like chicken skin and your hair turns the color of the white crane. You’re feeble and senile and can’t even walk straight. Your gait becomes unsteady and wobbly. At this time, even if you have storehouses full of gold, jade, and precious stones, you can’t stave off the advancing of old age and sickness. You just waste away and invites you to have a drink with King Yama. Therefore, the suffering of old age is very bitter.

3) The Suffering of Sickness: Being sick is even more suffering! There are many kinds of sickness, but no matter what kind of sickness it is, it is difficult to endure. Even heaven and earth get sick. For instance, when there is a very heavy rainstorm, or lightning and thunder, that’s heaven and earth getting angry. Heaven and earth get angry, too, and sometimes as a result, humankind is destroyed in the process.

Sometimes there are earthquakes, which means that the planet is sick. Sometimes there are huge typhoons and tornadoes, which indicate that there is too much hatred around. The ancients said that hurricanes are the result of too much anger and hatred. Now scientists have their own explanation for the existence of hurricanes. But if you have your eyes open, you can see that in the center of a hurricane there are ghosts or spirits or demons who are whipping up the wind. They are whipping up the wind to such velocities that it kills people and in the process destroys the trees, homes, and buildings. And all the while, these ghosts are having a grand old time. “Wow, this is a riot! This is fantastic amusement!” They kill people as casually as people would kill a mosquito or a fly. For those malevolent beings it seems there’s no problem at all, nothing wrong about it. That’s because these strange demons and weird ghosts like to harm people and tear them apart. But up to the present, people haven’t believed these kinds of principles. They have said it isn’t true that malevolent beings instigate storms. Instead they say that hurricanes are precipitated due to a special kind of atmosphere inversion. How often does this sudden atmospheric inversion happen? Out of nowhere, all of a sudden there are clouds and stormy weather. And although science has its own explanation, it is not complete or fully substantiated.

Now suffering in sickness is still not the utmost suffering. The most extreme suffering is the suffering of death.

4) The Suffering of Death: When it comes time to die, you’ll feel like a calf whose skin is being ripped off. Think about it, if there’s a cow and you flay it while it is still alive, how much would it hurt? So, it is very difficult to die. If you don’t believe it, you can try it out yourself. You can die and see what it is like. But if you believe, then don’t try it out. It isn’t like science where they run experiments on everything. You won’t want to experiment with dying. To this day, nobody has yet come up with a method that delivers us from sickness and death and ensures us eternal life.

Even the Buddha did not invent such a method. But out of great compassion he left us with eighty-four thousand Dharma doors, to teach us how to cultivate. But if you don’t cultivate, even the Buddha will have no way to help you.

5) The Suffering of Being Apart from Those you Loves. “Love” is the feeling you have toward someone or something you like. When you love someone or something, you want to be together with that person or object all the time. You never want to part from them. However, sometimes circumstances arise in which people must be parted from those that they love and this brings on an acute kind of suffering.

6) The Suffering of Being Together with Those you Hate: For example, there is a person whom you absolutely can’t stand; you find it so hard to be around such a person that you want to leave him. However, when you deliberately go to another place to be away from him, you run into another person who is exactly like the person whom you couldn’t stand. So that’s the suffering of being together with those you hate.

7) The Suffering of Not Obtaining What you Seeks: Suppose there is something you really want, but circumstances prevent you from getting it for your own. You want it, but you don’t get it. No matter what you do, there is no way to fulfill your own wishes. That is the suffering of not obtaining what you seek.

8) The Suffering of the Scorching Blaze of the Five Skandhas: The Skandhas are form, feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness. They tie you up so you have no freedom. The Five Skandhas are as severe as a huge blaze. They consume you to the point that you burn to death. So this is also suffering.

Now, everyone should “know suffering.” If you know suffering you can bring forth the resolve for Bodhi, and end birth and death.

SUTRA:

THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS, CHAPTER EIGHT.

COMMENTARY:

CHAPTER EIGHT of the Flower Adornment Sutra is about the FOUR HOLY TRUTHS. Why are they called “Holy” or Sagely truths? Because they are a method people can rely upon to certify to the sagely fruition. One can enter the flow of the sages by means of these Truths, and thereby leave suffering and obtain bliss.

Previously, we’ve discussed the First Holy Truth, that of Suffering. So now, we are going to explain the Second Holy Truth – the Truth of Accumulation. Accumulation means amassing, piling up; it means accumulating afflictions. But accumulation is beckoned by our own self-nature, and so it is said, “Accumulation becons by nature.” If there is a filthy place, then a lot of flies come. But if everything is clean and pure, then the flies won’t come. So absolutely everything is called in by your self-nature.

The Third Holy Truth is the Truth of Extinction. It is the position of the still quiescence of the unconditioned. The Fourth and last Holy Truth is that of The Way. The Way is cultivated. So it says,

Know Suffering,  
Cut off Accumulation,  
Aspire toward Extinction,  
Cultivate the Way.

First of all, you have to truly recognize suffering for what it is. Then you should cut off the accumulation of afflictions. Next, aim at still extinction, the cessation of all suffering, and cultivate the Way. This has been a general discussion of the Four Holy Truths. Now, the Sutra text goes on to describe the various names and characteristics of each of the Four Holy Truths in great detail.

Top of Form

SUTRA:

THE SAHA WORLD

AT THAT TIME, MANJUSHRI BODHISATTVA MAHASATTVA TOLD ALL THE BODHISATTVAS: “ALL OF YOU DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THIS SAHA WORLD, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED OFFENSES, PERHAPS CALLED OPPRESSION, PERHAPS CALLED FLUX AND CHANGE, PERHAPS CALLED GRABBING ONTO CONDITIONS, PERHAPS CALLED CONGLOMERATION, PERHAPS CALLED THORNS, PERHAPS CALLED RELYING ON THE ROOT, PERHAPS CALLED VAIN AND DECEPTIVE, PERHAPS CALLED CARBUNCLES AND SORES, PERHAPS CALLED THE CONDUCTS OF STUPID PEOPLE.

COMMENTARY:

AT THAT TIME, MANJUSHRI BODHISATTVA MAHASATTVA, also called “Wonderfully Auspicious” Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva of great wisdom, speaks. Since he is a great Bodhisattva, he acts as the leader of other Bodhisattvas. This means that his practices have surpassed all the other Bodhisattva’s sattvas’. It doesn’t mean that he fought to be leader; rather, all the Buddhas permitted him to be the leader of the Bodhisattvas. It wasn’t the case that he himself was arrogant and hollered, “Now al of you Bodhisattvas should pay attention to me! You should protect me, since I am your leader.” It’s not that way. It’s not a position he pushed for. He was not like the leaders of the countries of today who fight and jostle to be on top. It’s not because of virtue that they get to rule over others but because of their insatiable craving for power. If you want to rule people by means of virtue you won’t need to fight. So why is our world going bad? It’s because rulers are trying to subdue people by force, not by virtue. It’s because no one in this world yields, everybody strives and nobody can be patient with anyone else. The world leaders are always wanting more power. They want to be number one. The more they fight, the worse it will get, to the extent that heaven and earth become topsy-turvy. That’s just the appearance of living beings’ upside-down thinking.

So people who cultivate the Way shouldn’t be jockeying for position, fame, or power. Instead they should be patient and vigorous. They should want to have dhyana samadhi, they should want to hold precepts. Whoever cultivates is number one. If you are number one in not following the rules, you’ll never get to be a leader of the Bodhisattvas.

At that time, Manjushri Bodhisattva TOLD ALL THE BODHISATTVAS: “ALL OF YOU DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, I will now tell you about the Sagely Truth of Suffering. In the Saha world, there are many other names for it, and I will tell you all these different names.”

What is going to happen is that Manjushri Bodhisattvas is going to give ten names for each truth in each of ten world systems. That adds up to four hundred names in all. In this first case, regarding the Truth of Suffering in the Saha world, you should recognize that all of these names are different names of suffering all belonging to the Holy Truth of Suffering. If you can easily recognize suffering, then you can cultivate. In the Saha world, that is, our world, we endure suffering. “Saha” is Sanskrit; translated it means “able to endure.” The name implies that we are capable of enduring all the suffering here.

Manjushri Bodhisattva says, “In this world, happiness is the root cause of suffering.”

IN THIS SAHA WORLD, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED OFFENSES. Because you have offenses, you have suffering. If you don’t have any offenses, you won’t suffer. And if you don’t suffer, you don’t have offenses. So another name for suffering is “offenses.”

PERHAPS it is CALLED OPPRESSION. It oppresses your body and mind. PERHAPS it is CALLED FLUX AND CHANGE. This flux and change refers to the process of decay. PERHAPS it is CALLED GRABBING ONTO CONDITIONS. The motto of Gold Mountain Monastery and The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas is, “Freezing to death, we don’t climb on conditions,” which is to say, even if we were freezing to death, we wouldn’t create offenses by seeking advantage from people. The suffering of freezing to death is not as severe as creating offenses. Being opportunistic is also a form of suffering.

PERHAPS it is CALLED CONGLOMERATION. This means the aggregation of your offense karma. Here it doesn’t mean piling up your virtuous practices; it means piling up all of our offense karma. PERHAPS it is CALLED THORNS. Sometimes, suffering is called thorns. When you’re pierced by it, it hurts. PERHAPS it is CALLED RELYING ON THE ROOT, relying on the root of offenses. PERHAPS it is CALLED VAIN AND DECEPTIVE. You do a lot of empty and false things to cheat people. PERHAPS it is CALLED CARBUNCLES AND SORES. This is like when your body breaks out in sores and starts to ooze blood and pus. Your precious energy leaks out through the sores and your body loses its health and vitality. Likewise, when you experience suf-fering, it takes away all your energy. The more suffering and abuse you go through, the more your self-nature loses its light and suffers a beating. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE CONDUCTS OF STUPID PEOPLE. Stupid people are those without wisdom. Because of a lack of wisdom, everything they do is offense karma. With offense karma, there is suffering.

The above are ten names for suffering. Al-though the names are different, the underlying principle is the same. We should take each one of these names and ponder over them deeply, and in that way open up a far-reaching understanding and wisdom.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THIS SAHA WORLD, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED BEING BOUND UP, PERHAPS CALLED DECAY AND RUIN, PERHAPS CALLED THE MEANING OF LOVE AND ATTACHMENT, PERHAPS CALLED FALSE ENLIGHTENMENT AND THOUGHTS, PERHAPS CALLED TENDING TOWARD AND ENTERING, PERHAPS CALLED DECISIVE, PERHAPS CALLED NET, PERHAPS CALLED IDLE SPECULATION, PERHAPS CALLED FOLLOWING ALONG, PERHAPS CALLED THE ROOT OF INVERSION.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva, afraid that they are not paying attention, calls out to the Buddha’s disciples again. He says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUD-DHA, IN THIS SAHA WORLD, THE HOLY TRUT OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED BEING BOUND UP. This refers to either being tied up and suspended in mid air, or fettered to a stump. People get bound up or fettered when they fall in love. Love is an accumulation of suffering. PERHAPS this suffering is CALLED DECAY AND RUIN. When your happiness is ruined, of course there is suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE MEANING OF LOVE AND ATTACHMENT. When you love something or someone, and are unable to give that person or thing up, there is attachment. PERHAPS it is CALLED FALSE ENLIGHTENMENT AND THOUGHTS. It means you enlighten to the wrong thing. You work under an erroneous assumption. PERHAPS it is CALLED TENDING TOWARD AND ENTERING. One tends toward the places of affliction, like stepping into quicksand or a mire and then being unable to get out. PERHAPS it is CALLED DECISIVE. What are you de-cisive about? You’re decisive about having afflic-tions! And yet you yourself don’t understand it. PERHAPS it is CALLED NET. You’re caught in a net, unable to get freed. This is like fish which swim about in the sea or the rivers, quite free and at ease, but if they are snared by a fisherman’s net, then they might lose their lives. PERHAPS it is CALLED IDLE SPECULATION. The words that one says are not true and actual; they are like playful speculations of casual jokes. PERHAPS it is CALLED FOLLOWING ALONG. You follow along with the conduct of afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE ROOT OF INVERSION. Accumulation is the very root of being upside down.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THIS SAHA WORLD, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED NON-CONTENTION, PERHAPS CALLED LEAVING FILTH, PERHAPS CALLED STILL QUIESCENCE, PERHAPS CALLED MARKLESS, PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT DEMISE, PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT A SELF-NATURE, PERHAPS CALLED FREEDOM FROM IMPEDIMENTS, PERHAPS CALLED EXTINCTION, PERHAPS CALLED TRUE AND ACTUAL SUBSTANCE, PERHAPS CALLED ABIDING IN THE SELF-NATURE.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out again: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THIS SAHA WORLD, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING is known by many names. PERHAPS it is CALLED NON-CONTENTION, that is, it is without fighting or strife. PERHAPS it is CALLED LEAVING FILTH. One separates far from the wearisome dust. PERHAPS it is CALLED STILL QUIESCENCE. To be apart from vexation is “stillness,” to cut off all agony and disasters is “quiescence.” PERHAPS it is CALLED MARKLESS, that is, the state where one sweeps away all dharmas and separates from all marks. PERHAPS it is CALLED WITHOUT DEMISE. One never falls, or suffers ruin. PERHAPS it is CALLED WITHOUT A SELF-NATURE. All dharmas are without a self-nature. PERHAPS it is CALLED FREEDOM FROM IMPEDIMENTS. This means there is no obstacle of afflictions and no obstacle of what is known. PERHAPS it is CALLED EXTINCTION – extinction of all afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED TRUE AND ACTUAL SUBSTANCE. One reaches the original substance of true reality. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABIDING IN THE SELF-NATURE. Since this is the extinction of suffering, one dwells in the self-nature.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THIS SAHA WORLD, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED THE ONE VEHICLE, PERHAPS CALLED INCLINING TOWARD STILLNESS, PERHAPS CALLED INSTRUCTING AND GUIDING, PERHAPS CALLED ULTIMATELY WITHOUT DIFFERENCE, PERHAPS CALLED LEVEL EQUALITY, PERHAPS CALLED RENOUNCING ONE’S BURDEN, PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT TENDENCIES, PERHAPS CALLED ACCORDING WITH THE SAGELY INTENT, PERHAPS CALLED THE CONDUCT OF IMMORTALS, PERHAPS CALLED TEN TREASURIES.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva again calls out; DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THIS SAHA WORLD, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING is known by different names. In brief, there are ten names in all. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE ONE VEHICLE. As the Dharma Flower (Lotus) Sutra says:

There is only one Buddha Vehicle;  
There are no other vehicles.

There is only one Buddha Way, and there are no other ways that could be cultivated.

PERHAPS it is CALLED INCLINING TOWARD STILLNESS. One tends toward the state of still tranquility. PERHAPS it is CALLED INSTRUCTING AND GUIDING. This truth leads living beings to the Buddha’s country. PERHAPS it is CALLED ULTIMATELY WITHOUT DIFFERENCE. When you arrive at the ultimate place, what discrimination could there be? PERHAPS it is CALLED LEVEL EQUALITY – there is no high or low. Everything is level and impartial. PERHAPS it is CALLED RENOUNCING ONE’S BURDEN. You give up your heavy load, all the things that tie you down. PERHAPS it is CALLED WITHOUT TENDENCIES. You walk on a bright, broad, path that doesn’t veer off on tangents. PERHAPS it is CALLED ACCORDING WITH THE SAGELY INTENT. You follow along the path that all sages walk. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE CONDUCT OF IMMORTALS. You practice the path that the Great Immortal – the Buddha – trod, which is the Bodhi path. PERHAPS it is CALLED TEN TREASURIES. The Ten Treasuries are the Treasuries of:

* faith
* precepts
* shame
* remorse
* learning
* giving
* wisdom
* mindfulness
* upholding
* eloquence

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THIS SAHA WORLD, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS CAN BE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out again: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THIS SAHA WORLD, there are the forty names of THE FORU HOLY TRUTHS we have just discussed. They further expand from those forty to four hundred, then to four thousand, forty thousand, four hundred thousand, four million, four billion and so forth, all the way up so that they can be DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUB-DUED. When living beings hear these names, their bodies and minds are compliant and subdued. They bring forth the Bodhi mind and accomplish the Un-surpassed Way.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD, IN THE WORLD CALLED SECRET INSTRUCTIONS, IS PERHAPS CALLED ROOT OF SEEKING AND SEARCHING, PERHAPS CALLED NOT GETTING OUT, PERHAPS CALLED THE ROOT OF BONDS AND FETTERS, PERHAPS CALLED DOING WHAT SHOULD NOT BE DONE, PERHAPS CALLED UNIVERSAL STRIFE AND CONTENTION, PERHAPS CALLED LACKING POWER TO DISCRIMINATE AND ANALYZE, PERHAPS CALLED THAT ON WHICH ACTIVITIES RELY, PERHAPS CALLED EXTREME AGONY, PERHAPS CALLED AGITATED MOVEMENT, PERHAPS CALLED OBJECTS WITH SHAPE AND FORM.

COMMENTARY:

DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, Manjushri Bodhisat-tva says, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD, is known by various names. And IN THE WORLD CALLED SECRET INSTRUCTIONS, that is, the world to the east, it is also known by many names. In general there are ten. PERHAPS it is CALLED ROOT OF SEEKING AND SEARCHIN. This means people exhaust their means to go outside and “climb on conditions,” seeking advantage from this place and that. What do they seek? They seek ig-norance. Ignorance is just not understanding. Because of not understanding, they go out and seek and this is the root of suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED NOT GETTING OUT. They do not want to get out of the Three Realms; instead they are willing to stay in the “burning house.” PERHAPS it is CALLED THE ROOT OF BONDS AND FETTERS. By suffer-ing they are bound, so they do not arrive at the source of liberation. PERHAPS it is CALLED DOING WHAT SHOULD NOT BE DONE. Because living beings do what they shouldn’t do, they create offenses. With offenses there is suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED UNIVERSAL STRIFE AND CONTENTION. Everywhere there is fighting. People fight with peo-ple, families strive with families, nations war with nations. This is the Dharma Ending Age and everyone is strong in contention. Therefore, living beings who are stubborn and hard to subdue, day and night steep themselves in contention. What is the reason behind this? It is because Asuras are being born into this world, fanning he fires everywhere, stirring up waves. Their only talent is to instigate contention. They contend, so that what is good turns to bad, what is bad gets even worse. They contend so that the rich are reduced to poverty, and the poor are forced to die. And even after they die, their flesh and bones are turned into fertilizer – how cruel! Those who like o contend are all transformations of asuras. When here is no contention in the world, then the world will receive some peace.

PERHAPS this Truth of Suffering is CALLED LACKING POWER TO DISCRIMINATE AND ANALYZE. One does not have the strength to discern good from evil. PERHAPS it is CALLED THAT ON WHICH ACTIVITIES RELY. One bases one’s offenses upon suffering. One’s actions are built upon suffering. PER-HAPS it is CALLED EXTREME AGONY. This is misery to the extreme. PERHAPS it is CALLED AGITATED MOVEMENT. One has a violent temper which flares up at any moment and is totally unpredictable. PERHAPS it is CALLED OBJECTS WITH SHAPE AND FORM. Sometimes one feels as if one’s heart is constricted with something so that one can’t breath freely. This is another trick of afflictions and ignorance.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THAT WORLD CALLED SECRET INSTRUCTIONS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED FLOWING ALONG WITH BIRTH AND DEATH, PERHAPS CALLED DEFILED ATTACHMENT, PERHAPS CALLED BURNING, PERHAPS CALLED FLOWING AND TURNING, PERHAPS CALLED THE ROOT OF DECAY AND RUIN, PERHAPS CALLED CONTINUATION OF ALL REALMS OF EXISTENCE, PERHAPS CALLED EVIL PRACTICE, PERHAPS CALLED LOVE AND FIXATION, PERHAPS CALLED THE SOURCE OF ILLNESS, PERHAPS CALLED SHARE AND MEASURE.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THAT WORLD CALLED SECRET INSTRUCTION, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING is known by many names. PERHAPS it is CALLED FLOWING ALONG WITH BIRTH AND DEATH. Living beings flow along with samsara without cease. PERHAPS it is CALLED DEFILED ATTACHMENT; Their attachment is corrupt and not pure. PERHAPS it is CALLED BURNING. This suffering is as if one were burnt by a roaring fire. PERHAPS it is CALLED FLOWING AND TURNING. Living beings turn and flow in the six paths, unable to get out. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE ROOT OF DECAY AND RUIN. This is the very root that destroys all good practices. PERHAPS it is CALLED CONTINUATION OF ALL REALMS OF EXISTENCE. There are twenty-five realms of existence within the Triple World. In brief, they are summarized in the following verse:

There are four continents, four evil places, Brahma King and the Six Desire Heavens.  
The Heaven of No-Thought and the Five Heavens of No-return,  
Also the four stations of emptiness, and the four dhyanas.

PERHAPS this suffering is CALLED EVIL PRACTICE – very vile actions. PERHAPS it is CALLED LOVE AND FIXATION. One craves and is obsessed with the five desires. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE SOURCE OF ILLNESS. Illness stems from afflictions. If there are no afflictions, then the roots of illness will dry up. PERHAPS it is CALLED SHARE AND MEASURE. Every person has his share and measure of afflictions.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED SECRET INSTRUCTIONS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED THE FOREMOST MEANING, PERHAPS CALLED ESCAPE, PERHAPS CALLED DESERVING PRAISE, PERHAPS CALLED PEACE AND SECUR-ITY, PERHAPS CALLED WHOLESOME TENDENCIES, PERHAPS CALLED TAMING AND SUBDUING, PERHAPS CALLED ONE SHARE, PERHAPS CALLED FREE FROM OFFENSE, PERHAPS CALLED SEPARATING FROM GREED, PERHAPS CALLED DECISIVENESS.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva CALLS OUT AGAIN: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED SECRET INSTRUCTIONS, this HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING has different names. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE FOREMOST MEANING, which is just the dharma of still quiescence. As it is said, “All dharmas from the beginning are naturally still and quiet in character. PERHAPS it is CALLED ESCAPE – escape from the Three Realms, in order to head for the Pure Land of Eternal Stillness and Light. PERHAPS it is CALLED DESERVING PRAISE. This dharma of extinction merits praise and exaltation. PERHAPS CALLED PEACE AND SECURITY. There is no strife or contention, so there is harmony and peace. PERHAPS it is CALLED WHOLESOME TENDENCIES. One is killed at tending toward proper enlightenment. PERHAPS it is CALLED TAMING AND SUBDUING. One can tame and subdue stubborn living beings and influence them to become gentle and compliant, to change from the evil and go toward the good and to repent of all their evil offenses. PERHAPS it is CALLED ONE SHARE. Every one has on share of this. PERHAPS it is CALLED FREE FROM OFFENSE. Once we eradicate our offenses then we have no more afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED SEPARATING FROM GREED. One is apart from all craving and greed. PERHAPS it is CALLED DECISIVENESS. One definitely wants to leave the suffering of the Three Realms and attain the bliss of Nirvana.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THAT WORLD CALLED SECRET INSTRUCTIONS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED VALIANT GENERAL, PERHAPS CALLED SUPERIOR CONDUCT, PERHAPS CALLED TRANSCENDENCE, PERHAPS CALLED POSSESSING EXPEDIENTS, PERHAPS CALLED LEVEL EYES, PERHAPS CALLED APART FROM EXTREMES, PERHAPS CALLED UNDERSTANDING AND ENLIGHTENMENT, PERHAPS CALLED GATHERING IN, PERHAPS CALLED MOST SUPREME EYES, PERHAPS CALLED CONTEMPLATING THE DIRECTIONS.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out again: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THAT WORLD CALLED SECRET INSTRUCTIONS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING is known by various different names. PERHAPS it is CALLED VALIANT GENERAL, who wins at every battle. PERHAPS it is CALLED TRANSCENDENCE. One transcends the sea of suffering. As it is said, “The sea of suffering is boundless, a turn of the head is the other shore.” PERHAPS it is CALLED POSSESSING EXPEDIENTS. One has the skill-in-means to cultivate. PERHAPS it is CALLED LEVEL EYES. One universally contemplates all living beings and considers them all as level and equal. PERHAPS it is CALLED APART FROM EXTREMES. One separates from the extremities of existence and emptiness, and abides in the Middle Way. PERHAPS it is CALLED UNDERSTANDING AND ENLIGHTENMENT. One cultivates this path and be-comes enlightened. PERHAPS it is CALLED GATHERING IN. One gathers in living beings to go to the Pure Land of Eternal Stillness and Light. PERHAPS it is CALLED MOST SUPREME EYES, the most supreme Dharma Eye. PERHAPS it is CALLED CONTEMPLATING THE DIRECTIONS. One universally contemplates the four directions. The four directions refers to the Four Holy Truths. The contemplation of the Four Holy Truths is just the Turth of the Way.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED SECRET INSTRUCTIONS, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE DESCIBED BY FORTY TRILLIONS NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out again: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED SECRET INSTRUCTIONS, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE DESCIBED BY FORTY TRILLIONS NAMES SUCH AS THESE. Although the names are different, the principle behind them is the same. They are names WHICH BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED and to obtain benefit.

SUTRA:

III. THE WORLD MOST VICTORIOUS

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD, IN THE WORLD CALLED MOST VICTORIOUS IS PERHAPS CALLED TERRIFYING, PERHAPS CALLED SHARE-SECTION, PERHAPS CALLED LOATHSOME, PERHAPS CALLED DEMANDING ATTENTION, PERHAPS CALLED CHANGE, PERHAPS CALLED RESENTMENT THAT BECKONS, PERHAPS CALLED DECEPTION AND USURPATION, PERHAPS CALLED DIFFICULT TO WORK TOGETHER, PERHAPS CALLED FALSE DISCRIMINATION, PERHAPS CALLED POSSESSING STRENGTH.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out again: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD, is known by many different names. IN THE WORLD CALLED MOST VICTORIOUS, it is also known by many names. PERHAPS it is CALLED TERRIFYING. When one’s heart is terri-fied, one suffers. PERHAPS it is CALLED SHARE-SECTION. Every living being has his own share, his own body and lifespan. Therefore, the suffering of share-section comes into existence. PERHAPS it is CALLED LOATHESOME. This suffering is repulsive; it is CALLED DEMANDING ATTENTION. One has to patiently undergo this type of suffering and not com-plain. As it is said,

To undergo suffering is to end suffering.  
To enjoy blessing is to end blessing.

PERHAPS it is CALLED CHANGE. Things change from good to bad. This is also suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED RESENTMENT THAT BECKONS. All enmity and grudges are brought about because of beckoning. You asked for it and you have to undergo it yourself. PERHAPS it is CALLED DECEPTION AND USURPATION. This kind of suffering deceives living beings and usurps their joy. PERHAPS it is CALLED DIFFICULT TO WORK TOGETHER. It is very hard to handle this kind of suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED FALSE DISCRIMINATION. The discriminations are false and ungrounded, not based on truth. PERHAPS it is CALLED POSSESSING STRENGTH. This type of suffering has great power, it can manipulate everything.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THAT WORLD CALLED MOST VICTORIOUS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED DECAY AND DESTRUCTION, PERHAPS CALLED THE ROOT OF STUPIDITY, PERHAPS CALLED GREAT RESENTMENT, PERHAPS CALLED SHARP BLADE, PERHAPS CALLED DESTROYING FLAVOR, PERHAPS CALLED ENMITY, PERHAPS CALLED THAT WHICH DOES NOT BELONG TO YOU, PERHAPS CALLED EVIL GUIDE, PERHAPS CALLED INCREASING DARKNESS, PERHAPS CALLED RUINING WHOLESOME BENEFITS.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out again: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THAT WORLD CALLED MOST VICTORIOUS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS known by differnt names. PERHAPS it is CALLED DECAY AND DESTRUCTION. Because of the accumulation of afflictions, there is decay, and everything goes bad. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE ROOT OF STUPIDITY. Originally everyone has his own share of the Bodhisattvas’ wisdom and virtuous practices, but because they abuse it, they become stupid. If you light an oil lamp every day, the amount of oil is bound to decrease, and the light will grow dimmer until there is total darkness. Darkness is ignorance. When people have ignorance, every day they strike up false thinking. False thinking is the root of stupidity. PERHAPS it is CALLED GREAT RESENTMENT. If you resent this and resent that, eventually you’ll end up with a big resentment. PERHAPS it is CALLED SHARP BLADE. The accumulation of suffering is the sharjpest blade; it can realy harm. Therefore, in the Sutra of Forty-Two sections it says of desire:

People who cannot renounce wealth and sex are like small children who, not sat-isfied with one delicious helping, lick the honey off the blade of the knife and so cut their tongues.

PERHAPS it is CALLED DESTROYING FLAVOR. When you are troubled, even the food you eat doesn’t have any taste. PERHAPS it is CALLED ENMITY. When you are faced with an enemy, you are consumed with rage. The two of you can’t stand face to face, and a life and death struggle ensues. Why is there this type of deep hatred? Perhaps in the past you killed his father, or maybe he robbed you of your wife. PERHAPS it is CALLED THAT WHICH DOES NOT BELONG TO YOU. Afflictions are basically not inherent in your nature; they come from outside. PERHAPS it is CALLED EVIL GUIDE. Evil advisors take you to dangerous places. PERHAPS it is CALLED INCREASING DARKNESS. When darkness takes over, there is no light, which is another way of saying there is a lack of wisdom. PERHAPS it is CALLED RUINING WHOLESOME BENEFITS. It ruins wholesome benefits that should be coming to you. Therefore, this accumulation of suffering is reall an evil thing.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED MOST VICTORIOUS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED GREAT MEANING, PERHAPS CALLED BENEFITTING, PERHAPS CALLED MEANING WITH MEANING, PERHAPS CALLED LIMITLESS, PERHAPS CALLED THAT WHICH SHOULD BE SEEN, PERHAPS CALLED APART FROM DISCRIMINATION, PERHAPS CALLED MOST SUPERIOR TAMING AND SUBDUING, PERHAPS CALLED FOREVER LEVEL AND EQUAL, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO LIVE TOGETHER, PERHAPS CALLED UNCONDITIONED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out again: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED MOST VICTORIOUS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED GREAT MEANING. Its purport is most extensive and vast. PERHAPS it is CALLED BENEFITTING. It can help living beings instead of harm them. PERHAPS it is CALLED MEANING WITH MEANING. The meaning within meaning is the most subtle, wonderful type of Dharma. PERHAPS it is CALLED LIMITLESS. It embodies measureless principles. PERHAPS it is CALLED THAT WHICH SOULD BE SEEN. This truth of extinction is something that should be brought to light and seen. PERHAPS it is CALLED APART FROM DISCRIMINATION. If one can separate from discrimination, then one can arrive at the nature of all Buddhas. PERHAPS CALLED MOST SUPERIOR TAMING AND SUBDUING. This is an unsurpassed method that can tame living beings. PERHAPS it is CALLED FOREVER LEVEL AND EQUAL. It is constantly impartial, without any bias. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABLE TO LIVE TOGETHER. One can co-exist within this truth and not feel hampered. PERHAPS it is CALLED UNCONDITIONED. There is no contrivance or activity. It is able to cut off all evil and bring forth all good. That is, one “desists from all evil, and offers up all good acts.” This is also a state of not acting and yet getting everything done.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED MOST VICTORIOUS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED BURNING, PERHAPS CALLED MOST SUPERIOR GRADE, PERHAPS CALLED DECISIVENESS, PERHAPS CALLED INVINCIBLE, PERHAPS CALLED PROFOUND EXPEDIENTS, PERHAPS CALLED ESCAPE, PERHAPS CALLED NOT VULGAR, PERHAPS CALLED PENETRATION, PERHAPS CALLED NATURE OF LIBERATION, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO RESCUE AND SET FREE.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva again says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED MOST VICTORIOUS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED BURNING. It burns up all afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED MOST SUPERIOR GRADE. It is the path of the highest order, and so you should vigorously cultivate it. PERHAPS it is CALLED DECISIVENESS. One decides to cultivate this path, and doesn’t give rise to any doubt. PERHAPS it is CALLED INVINCIBLE. Nothing can smash this path; it is as solid as vajra. PERHAPS it is CALLED PROFOUND EXPEDIENTS. This is an ultimate skillful means. PERHAPS it is CALLED ESCAPE. One leaves the jail of the Three Realms. PERHAPS it is CALLED NOT VULGAR. Cultivators should have lofty personalities and pure thoughts. They sould not have low and vulgar thinking or conduct. PERHAPS it is CALLED PENETRATION. This path penetrates all directions, even other universes. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE NATURE OF LIBERATION. Practiced to perfection, this path embodies the nature of liberation, so that all of one’s actions are without impediment. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABLE TO RESCUE AND SET FREE. One can go to the other shore. One travels from this shore of birth and death across the mid-current of afflictions and arrives at the other shore of Nirvana.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED MOST VICTORIOUS, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS CAN BE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva, having expounded the names of the Four Holy Truths, calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED MOST VICTORIOUS, I have described fory names of THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS, but these forty eventually transform into FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED. When living beings hear these names, according to their own dispositions, they all understand and attain advantage. They can leave suffering and attain bliss, and cast off birth and death.

SUTRA:

IV. THE WORLD LEAVING FILTH

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD, IN THE WORLD CALLED LEAVING FILTH IS PERHAPS CALLED REGRET AND HATE, PERHAPS CALLED WAITING, PERHAPS CALLED REVOLVING, PERHAPS CALLED CITY, PERHAPS CALLED ONE FLAVOR, PERHAPS CALLED ILLEGAL, PERHAPS CALLED HABITAT, PERHAPS CALLED LOCATION OF FALSE ATTACHMENT, PERHAPS CALLED FALSE AND VAIN VIEWS, PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT NUMBER.

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD LEAVING FILTH, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED THING WHICH HAS NO ACTUALITY, PERHAPS CALLED ONLY WORDS, PERHAPS CALLED NOT PURE AND PRISTINE, PERHAPS CALLED GROUND OF PRODUCTION, PERHAPS CALLED OBSESSION AND GRASPING, PERHAPS CALLED VULGAR AND LOW, PERHAPS CALLED INCREASE AND GROWTH, PERHAPS CALLED HEAVY LOAD, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO PRODUCE, PERHAPS CALLED COARSE AND ROUGH.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD is known by many names, IN THE WORLD CALLED LEAVING FILTH – the Western World – it is also known by different names. It is PERHAPS CALLED REGRET AND HATE. To “regret” means to be sorry for having made a certain move. To “hate” means to feel a resentment that goes deep into the bones. PERHAPS it is CALLED WAITING. This suffering is just there waiting for you to undergo it. PERHAPS it is CALLED REVOLVING, living beings revolve in the six paths without stopping. PERHAPS it is CALLED CITY. This is the city of suffering wherein living beings dwell. PERHAPS it is CALLED ONE FLAVOR. When you come right down to it, suffering is just a single flavor. PERHAPS it is CALLED ILLEGAL. Things that oppose the law and go against the Dharma will bring on suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED HABITAT. If living beings dwell in the “burning house” then they will experience only suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED LOCATION OF FALSE ATTACHMENT. Living beings hang on to their false obsessions and thereby undergo suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED FALSE AND VAIN VIEWS. Their views are not proper and upright, they are erroneous. PERHAPS it is CALLED WITHOUT NUMBER. The sufferings undergone are so many that there is no way to ascertain their actual number.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LEAVING FILTH, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT EQUAL, PERHAPS CALLED UNIVERSAL CASTING OUT, PERHAPS CALLED LEAVING FILTH, PERHAPS CALLED MOST SUBLIME FACULTIES, PERHAPS CALLED RENOWNED ASSEMBLY, PERHAPS CALLED NO WAITING, PERHAPS CALLED DESTROYING DELUSION, PERHAPS CALLED UPPERMOST, PERHAPS CALLED ULTIMATE, PERHAPS CALLED SMASHING THE EGG.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out again: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LEAVING FILTH, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT EQUAL. There is nothing that can compare to it. PERHAPS it is CALLED UNIVERSAL CASTING OUT. It completely eradicates all afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED LEAVING FILTH. One is removed from all defilement. PERHAPS it is CALLED MOST SUBLIME FACULTIES. This is the most supreme foundation. PERHAPS it is CALLED RENOWNED ASSEMBLY. This is an assembly in which we extol and praise the Buddhas. PERHAPS it is CALLED NO WAITING. You do not have to aid it or wait upon it. PERHAPS it is CALLED DESTROYING DELUSIONS. It smashes all delusions and doubts. PERHAPS it is CALLED UPPERMOST. This is the most high, most incomparable dharma. PERHAPS it is CALLED ULTIMATE. When you reach the level of ultimate extinction, you leap over birth and death. PERHAPS it is CALLED SMASHING THE EGG. The first five skandhas have been destroyed; the next five skandhas have not yet arisen.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LEAVING FILTH, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED SOLID THING, PERHAPS CALLED SHARE OF EXPEDIENTS, PERHAPS CALLED BASIS OF LIBERATION, PERHAPS CALLED ORIGINAL NATURE WHICH IS SOLID, PERHAPS CALLED THAT WHICH DEFIES SLANDER, PERHAPS CALLED MOST PURE, PERHAPS CALLED THE LIMIT OF ALL EXISTENCE, PERHAPS CALLED SECURE ENTRUSTMENT, PERHAPS CALLED DEEDS THAT REACH THE ULTIMATE, PERHAPS CALLED PURE DISCRIMINATION.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out again: DISCI-PLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LEAVING FILTH, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED SOLID THING. There is nothing more solid and resolute than this path. It is like vajra. PERHAPS it is CALLED SHARE OF EXPEDIENTS. Everyone has a share in this type of skillful expedient means. Whoever cultivates will come to success. PERHAPS it is CALLED BASIS OF LIBERATION. If you can cultivate the Way, you can become liberated. It is CALLED ORIGINAL NATURE WHICH IS SOLID. The fundamental nature of the Tao is actual and solid, not false. PERHAPS it is CALLED THAT WHICH DEFIES SLANDER. There is no way you can malign or argue about this Tao. PERHAPS it is CALLED MOST PURE. When culti-vators cut off their own false thinking, they can attain the most pure, wonderful Dharma. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE LIMIT OF ALL EXISTENCE. One departs from the twenty-five realms of existence in the Triple World; one reaches the very border of these realms. PERHAPS it is CALLED SECURE ENTRUSTMENT. Whoever relies on or entrusts his faith to this path, will find protection and security. They won’t suffer any loss. PERHAPS it is CALLED DEEDS THAT REACH THE ULTIMATE. It is pursued to the ultimate point. PERHAPS it is CALLED PURE DISCRIMINATION. Pure discrimination means making no discriminations.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LEAVING FILTH, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, do you know how many names there are for the Four Holy Truths? IN THE WORLD CALLED LEAVING FILTH, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE. The original forty that I have elucidated for you multiply into forty trillion, WHICH BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED. Living beings’ bodies and minds are subdued. They bring forth the Bodhi resolve, and they quickly accomplish the Buddha Way.

SUTRA:

V. THE WORLD ABUNDANCE

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD, IN THE WORLD CALLED ABUNDANCE IS PERHAPS CALLED PLACE OF LOVE AND DEFILEMENT, PERHAPS CALLED ROOT OF TREACHERY AND HARM, PERHAPS CALLED SHARE IN THE SEA OF EXISTENCE, PERHAPS CALLED BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH ACCUMULATION, PERHAPS CALLED ROOT OF DIFFERENTIATION, PERHAPS CALLED INCREASE AND GROWTH, PERHAPS CALLED PRODUCTION AND EXTINCTION, PERHAPS CALLED OBSTRUCTIONS, PERHAPS CALLED THE BASIS OF KNIVES AND BLADES, PERHAPS CALLED BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH MULTIPLICITY.

COMMENTARY:

Once again, Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD is known by various names. IN THE WORLD CALLED ABUNDANCE, the world to the north, it is also known by different names. It is PERHAPS CALLED PLACE OF LOVE AND DEFILEMENT. With love there is defilement; with defilement there is suffering. For example, there is the suffering of separating from the things or people that you love. So take heed; do not fall into the whirlpool of love and defilement. It’s very hard to get out. PERHAPS it is CALLED ROOT OF TREACHERY AND HARM. Where there is love, there is treachery; with treachery there is harm. So we say that suffering is the root of treachery and harm. PERHAPS it is CALLED SHARE IN THE SEA OF EXISTENCE. Everyone has a share in this sea of suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH ACCUMULATION. Suffering is brought about through the amassing of afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED ROOT OF DIFFERENTIATION. Everyone thinks only of his or her own benefit and starts to differentiate between this and that, yours and mine, and so forth. All of these distinctions are the roots of suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED INCREASE AND GROWTH in evil karma. When evil karma increases, your suffering also grows. PERHAPS it is CALLED PRODUCTION AND EXTINCTION. This suffering is pro-duced and then extinguished, produced and then ex-tinguished in a perpetual cycle that never stops. PERHAPS it is CALLED OBSTRUCTIONS. Suffering ham-pers and impedes you, creating myriad obstructions so you don’t bring forth the Bodhi resolve. It obstructs your accomplishing the Buddha Way. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE BASIS OF KNIVES AND BLADES. The source of weapons like sharp knives and swords is suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH MULTIPLICITY. Many many types of afflictions and ignorance bring about this type of suffering.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ABUNDANCE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED DISGUSTING, PERHAPS CALLED NAME, PERHAPS CALLED ENDLESS, PERHAPS CALLED SHARE AND NUMBERS, PERHAPS CALLED NOT DESERVING FONDNESS, PERHAPS CALLED ATTACK AND DEVOURING, PERHAPS CALLED VILE THING, PERHAPS CALLED CRAVING AND OBSESSION, PERHAPS CALLED UTENSIL, PERHAPS CALLED MOVEMENT.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out again: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ABUNDANCE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED DISGUSTING. It is really repulsive; nobody likes it. PERHAPS it is CALLED NAME. This accumulation has no true and actual principle; it is just a false name. PERHAPS it is CALLED ENDLESS. The afflictions that accumulate are endless and boundless. PERHAPS it is CALLED SHARE AND NUMBERS. Each of the twenty-five realms of existence has a share in this accumulation of suffering. The phrase “numbers” refers to conditioned dharmas that can be counted and which have a measure. PERHAPS it is CALLED NOT DESERVING FONDNESS. One can’t possibly be greedy for or fond of this accumulation. PERHAPS it is CALLED ATTACK AND DEVOURING. It preys upon living beings just like wild beasts prey upon smaller animals. It devours your very wisdom life and your treasures. That’s what afflictions and worry do. PERHAPS it is CALLED VILE THING. It is very coarse, low, and undesirable. PERHAPS it is CALLED CRAVING AND OBSESSION. All living beings are enamored of this accumulation; they are obsessed with it and crave it at all times. PERHAPS it is CALLED UTENSIL. It is a vessel that carries afflictions, a vessel that carries ignorance. PERHAPS it is CALLED MOVEMENT. Its nature is unstable and there is a lot of motion as it brings afflictions together.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ABUNDANCE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED SEVERING THE PERPETUATION, PERHAPS CALLED REVEALING AND DISCLOSING, PERHAPS CALLED NO WORDS, PERHAPS CALLED NOTHING TO BE CULTIVATED, PERHAPS CALLED NOTHING TO BE SEEN, PERHAPS CALLED NOTHING TO BE DONE, PERHAPS CALLED STILL QUIESCENCE, PERHAPS CALLED COMPLETELY BURNED, PERHAPS CALLED RELINQUISHING A HEAVY LOAD, PERHAPS CALLED ALREADY CAST OUT THE BAD.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ABUNDANCE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED SEVERING THE PERPETUATION. It is the perpetual flow of birth and death that is severed. PERHAPS it is CALLED REVEALING AND DISCLOSING. It opens up the true and actual principle so that people can understand. PERHAPS it is CALLED NO WORDS. This is the Dharma Door of the True Mark. Therefore it cannot be expressed through words. PERHAPS it is CALLED NOTHING TO BE CULTIVATED. When one has cultivated to the extreme point, then there is nothing more to cultivate. As it is said,

Having done all there is to do,  
One does not undergo futher ex-istence.

After one accomplished one’s task and perfects it, one need not undergo further existence. One need not be reborn again. PERHAPS it is CALLED NOTHING TO BE SEEN. Because afflictions have been destroyed and do not arise again, they can no longer be seen. PERHAPS it is CALLED NOTHING TO BE DONE. After one has accomplished one’s task, there is nothing more to be acted upon. PERHAPS it is CALLED STILL QUIESCENCE. One is apart from afflictions. One is without any more suffering and thereby reaches the state of still quiescence. PERHAPS it is CALLED COMPLETELY BURNED. All afflictions have been consumed; there are none left whatsoever. PERHAPS it is CALLED RELINQUISHING A HEAVY LOAD. One puts down and renounces the heavy load of obstacles of afflictions, the obstacles of karma, and the obstacles of retribution. PERHAPS it is CALLED ALREADY CAST OUT THE BAD. The bad has already been thrown out; only the good remains.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ABUNDANCE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING, IS PERHAPS CALLED STILL AND QUIET PRACTICE, PERHAPS CALLED CONDUCT OF ESCAPE, PERHAPS CALLED DILIGENT CULTIVATION AND CERTIFICATION, PERHAPS CALLED PEACEFUL AND SECURE JOURNEY, PERHAPS CALLED LIMITLESS LIFESPAN, PERHAPS CALLED SKILLED AT UNDERSTANDING AND KNOWING, PERHAPS CALLED ULTIMATE PATH, PERHAPS CALLED HARD TO CULTIVATE AND PRACTICE, PERHAPS CALLED ARRIVING AT THE OTHER SHORE, PERHAPS CALLED UNRIVALLED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ABUNDANCE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUF-FERING, IS PERHAPS CALLED STILL AND QUIET PRACTICE. When you accomplish your Way karma, you reach the state of still quietude. PERHAPS it is CALLED CON-DUCT OF ESCAPE. You cultivate the way that leads to escape from the Three Realms. PERHAPS it is CALLED DILIGENT CULTIVATION AND CERTIFICATION. You can be certified to this path. PERHAPS it is CALLED PEACEFUL AND SECURE JOURNEY. You peacefully travel toward the fruition of the sage. PERHAPS it is CALLED LIMITLESS LIFESPAN. This is a bright way that leads to rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, where Amitabha Buddha – also called the Buddha of Limitless Life – abides. PERHAPS it is CALLED SKILLED AT UNDERSTANDING AND KNOWING. You are skilled at comprehending the true mark of all dharmas. PERHAPS it is CALLED ULTIMATE PATH. In cultivating this path, you reach the ultimate place, Nirvana. PERHAPS it is CALLED HARD TO CULTIVATE AND PRACTICE. This is not an easy road to practice, but although it’s difficult, don’t be afraid. If you can apply yourself diligently, you will certainly be successful. As it is said;

Below heaven there is nothing that difficult. It’s only to be feared that your mind is not concentrated.

If you can single-mindedly apply your skill in your cultivation, then no matter how difficult the path, you will always find a way. PERHAPS it is CALLED ARRIVING AT THE OTHER SHORE. This is the way that leads to the other shore – the state where there is no more production or destruction. PERHAPS it is CALLED UNRIVALLED. Nothing can surpass or excel this Dharma.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD ABUNDANCE, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS CAN BE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD ABUNDANCE, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS have many names. I have elucidated forty names for you, but those forty expand and CAN BE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS – complying with what they like to hear -- CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED. These names can inspire living beings to become resolved on the Buddha Way.

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ON LECTURING SUTRAS

Some people say, “You can’t lecture Sutras, because if you make a mistake, you will commit offenses.” There is another saying, “To interpret the Sutras incorrectly is like breaking your very bones.” If you do not lecture the principles cor-rectly, it’s as dangerous as if your very bones were smashed! Moreover, others say, “By relying on the text in explaining the meaning, you wrong all the Buddhas of the three periods of time.” That is even a more severe statement! It implies that if you rely on the Sutra text to explain its meanings, then you’ll become the mortal enemy of the Buddhas of the three periods of time.

Well, what should we do? You should understand that people who mouth those aphorisms are usually those who are ignorant and lack wisdom. They do not understand the Buddha’s intent or the state of the Buddha’s wisdom. Could it be the case that the Buddha spoke the Sutras just so that people could commit limitless offenses by lecturing them? That is totall irrational! Saying that you aren’t supposed to lecture Sutras for fear that you’ll make a mistake is taking much too harsh a view of things. Why did the Buddhas speak the Sutras in the first place? Is it really the case that they did it in order to increase the offenses of living beings? Of course not! One who maintains that living beings commit offenses just by lecturing the Sutras is 80,000 miles away from the Buddha’s original intent. It is a completely ridiculous theory!

Now the Dhyana School does not put much emphasis on speaking or writing. When someone from that school says “Do not rely on the text to explain the meaning,” he is speaking in a particular context in order to break people’s attachments. For instance, there was once an extremely arrogant Dharma Master who came to a Ch’an Hall. He was putting on airs and felt that investigating Ch’an had no meaning whatsoever. He said, “All of you sleepy ghosts are just sitting on your Ch’an benches like living dead people, doing nothing. What benefit is there is this?!”

When the old Ch’an Master heard this, he roared, “If you rely on the Sutras to explain the meaning, you have wronged the Buddhas of the three periods of time!” Those words scared the haughty Dharma Master out of his wits. He was so shocked that he didn’t dare say another word. He stood there petrified, not knowing whether to advance or retreat. Finally, feeling as if the wind had been taken out of his sails, he left the place.

From the above public record, you can see that this aphorism was spoken under a special set of causes and conditions. It shouldn’t be interpreted to mean that whatever the Buddha spoke is the law and that if you interpreted it in any way short of 100% correct you would commit an unpardonable offense. Now of course, if you can truly understand, then there is nothing, absolutely nothing.

Sweep away all dharmas,  
Separate from all marks.

But before you have reached that level of under-standing, you still have to cultivate and study according to the Sutras. And if you are to culti-vate and study according to the Sutras, you need to understand their meanings. If you are lecturing on the Sutras and you don’t explain the meanings of the text, what do you explain? Just now in the Sutra text it said, “Perhaps it is called nothing to be cultivated.” If you insist that this means “don’t cultivate, don’t cultivate!” because the Sutra says there is nothing to be cultivated, then you have made a mistake. On the other hand, if you insist that it means “you’ve got to cultivate, you’ve got to cultivate!” then you’ve also erred. Either proposition is going to an extreme. You should abide by the Middle Way. There is another saying that goes;

Relying on the Sutras to Explain the meaning,  
One wrongs the Buddhas of the three periods of time.  
Separate from the Sutras by just a single word,  
And that’s the same as the demons talking.

Here it says if you depart from the Sutras by just a single word, it’s as if the Demon King were speaking. How can we reach a place where we are not wronging the Buddhas, and yet not speaking for the Demon King? At the moment when you have completely cut off your love and desire, then, no matter what you say, it will be correct. Conversely, before you cut off your desire, whatever you say is always incorrect. To put it in a nutshell, those who have sexual desire, are ordinary people; those who cut off their sexual desire are sages. The purpose of cultivating the Way is to cut off love and desire. Then you can leave the Three Realms.

SUTRA:

VI. THE WORLD GATHERING IN

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD, IN THE WORLD CALLED GATHERING IN, IS PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO ROB AND PILLAGE, PERHAPS CALLED UNWHOLESOME FRIEND, PERHAPS CALLED MUCH TERROR, PERHAPS CALLED ALL KINDS OF PLAYFUL THEORIES, PERHAPS CALLED THE NATURE OF HELL, PERHAPS CALLED NON-FACTUAL MEANING, PERHAPS CALLED THE BURDEN OF GREED AND DESIRE, PERHAPS CALLED DEEP AND HEAVY ROOT, PERHAPS CALLED FLOWING AND TURNING WITH THE MIND, PERHAPS CALLED FUNDAMENTALLY EMPTY.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva CALLS OUT: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EX-PLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD is known by many names. IN THE WORLD CALLED GATHERING IN, the world to the northeast, it IS PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO ROB AND PILLAGE. Like a thief who robs people of their jewels, suffering robs people of their prajna wisdom. PERHAPS it is CALLED UNWHOLESOME FRIEND. It is not a decent friend, but an evil advisor. PERHAPS it is CALLED MUCH TERROR. This suffering instills fear and horror into living beings’ hearts. PERHAPS it is CALLED ALL KINDS OF PLAYFUL THEORIES. It spawns many kinds of devious and idle theories that are not true or principled. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE NATURE OF HELL. The nature of all hells is characterized by suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED NON-FACTUAL MEANING. Suffering has no ac-tual or true meaning. It is not true happiness. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE BURDEN OF GREED AND DESIRE. When you have greed and craving, your load of suffering keeps on getting heavier and heavier. PERHAPS it is CALLED DEEP AND HEAVY ROOT. Suffering is the deepest and most heavily rooted of all afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED FLOWING AND TURNING WITH THE MIND. Following along with living beings’ myriad thoughts, it turns and evolves into more and more suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED FUNDAMENTALLY EMPTY. If your wisdom is entirely emptied, then all that is left is suffering. Or you can interpret this line to mean: suffering’s nature is basically empty. It has no actual substance.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED GATHERING IN, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED GREED AND FIXATION, PERHAPS CALLED ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH EVIL, PERHAPS CALLED MISTAKES AND TRANSGRESSIONS, PERHAPS CALLED SPEEDY, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO ATTACH AND GRASP, PERHAPS CALLED THOUGHT, PERHAPS CALLED THE FRUIT OF EXISTENCE, PERHAPS CALLED CANNOT BE DESCRIBED, PERHAPS CALLED CANNOT BE GRASPED, PERHAPS CALLED FLOWING AND TURNING.

COMMENTARY:

DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED GATHERING IN, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED GREED AND FIXATION. People are greedy and attached to the bliss derived from the five desires, and the pleasure which occurs between men and women. PERHAPS it is CALLED ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH EVIL. Once actions have been accomplished through evil, then one is subject to the vicious cycle of rebirth. PERHAPS it is CALLED MISTAKES AND TRANSGRESSIONS. There are mistakes and faults. PERHAPS it is CALLED SPEEDY. This accumulation brings on a very quick retribution. You don’t have to wait until your next life to reap the retribution; it comes right in this very life. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABLE TO ATTACH AND GRASP. This accumulation is able to hold onto and grasp, which is another way of describing greed. PERHAPS it is CALLED THOUGHT. The accumulation of afflictions is the product of false thinking. Many thoughts make up this accumulation. PERHAPS it is CALLED FRUIT OF EXISTENCE. Having done the deeds of accumulation, one will have to undergo the fruit of retribution in the future. PERHAPS it is CALLED CANNOT BE DESCRIBED. There is nothing you can say about these afflictions. There are just too many of them. PERHAPS it is CALLED CANNOT BE GRASPED. There is nothing to be gotten from this. It is just a conglomeration of afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED FLOWING AND TURNING. One flows and re-volves in the wheel of the six paths without ceasing.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED GATHERING IN, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED NON-RETREATING, PERHAPS CALLED APART FROM LANGUAGE AND SPEECH, PERHAPS CALLED NO SHAPE, PERHAPS CALLED CAN BE DELIGHTED IN, PERHAPS CALLED SOLID AND FIRM, PERHAPS CALLED SUPERIOR AND WONDERFUL, PERHAPS CALLED APART FROM STUPIDITY, PERHAPS CALLED COMPLETE EXTINCTION, PERHAPS CALLED FAR REMOVED FROM EVIL, PERHAPS CALLED GETTING OUT.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED GATHERING IN, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED NON-RETREATING. Once you certify to the bliss of still extinction, you attain irreversibility. PERHAPS it is CALLED APART FROM LANGUAGE AND SPEECH. One leaves the mark of all words and speech so there is no language. PERHAPS it is CALLED NO SHAPE. This type of extinction has no shape or form. PERHAPS it is CALLED CAN BE DE-LIGHTED IN. This extinction is something worthy of joy and delight. PERHAPS it is CALLED FIRM AND SOLID. The truth of extinction is indestructible and adamantine like vajra. PERHAPS it is CALLED SUPERIOR AND WONDERFUL. It is also the most sublime and wondrous, unparalleled dharma. PERHAPS it is CALLED APART FROM STUPIDITY. One leaves stupidity and delustion far behind, and wisdom manifests. PERHAPS it is CALLED COMPLETE EXTINCTION. All afflictions are completely eradicated. PERHAPS it is CALLED FAR REMOVED FROM EVIL. One stays far away from all evil. PERHAPS it is CALLED GETTING OUT. It enables one to get out of the burning house of the Three Realms.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED GATHERING IN, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED APART FROM WORDS, PERHAPS CALLED NO CONTENTION, PERHAPS CALLED TEACHING AND GUIDING, PERHAPS CALLED WHOLESOME TRANSFERENCE, PERHAPS CALLED GREAT SKILLFUL MEANS, PERHAPS CALLED DIFFERENT EXPEDIENTS, PERHAPS CALLED LIKE EMPTY SPACE, PERHAPS CALLED STILL AND QUIET CONDUCT, PERHAPS CALLED VICTORIOUS WISDOM, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO UNDERSTAND MEANING.

COMMENTARY:

DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED GATHERING IN, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED APART FROM WORDS. There is no need for words or speech. PERHAPS it is CALLED NO CONTENTION. One certifies to the Samadhi of being Apart from Contention, and so there is no fighting or strife. PERHAPS it is CALLED TEACHING AND GUIDING. It teaches all living beings and guides them along the Bodhi Road. PERHAPS it is CALLED WHOLESOME TRANSFERENCE. One is skilled at making transferences; transferring from self to others, transferring from the small to the great, transferring from the cause to the result, and transferring from specifics to principle. PERHAPS it is CALLED GREAT SKILLFUL MEANS. One has numerous clever means within one’s grasp to teach living beings. PERHAPS it is CALLED DIFFERENT EXPEDIENTS. There are different skill-in-means to apply to different situations. One can use them all at the appropriate time. PERHAPS it is CALLED LIKE EMPTY SPACE. This way is just like emptiness itself. You look at it, but you can’t see it. You try to listen, but you can’t hear. But if you cultivate according to this Way, then you will accomplish Buddhahood. PERHAPS it is CALLED STILL AND QUIET CONDUCT. One walks on the road that leads to still quiescence. PERHAPS it is CALLED VICTORIOUS WISDOM. This is wisdom most supreme and unique. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABLE TO UNDERSTAND MEANING. One is able to decipher meanings and principles very well.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED GATHERING IN, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM TO ALL BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED GATHERING IN, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE DESCRIBED IN the forty names I have just listed. But they expand to FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM TO ALL BE TAMED AND SUBDUED. They can cause all living beings to obtain benefit.

SUTRA:

VII. THE WORLD BENEFITTING

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD, IN THE WORLD CALLED BENEFITTING IS PERHAPS CALLED HEAVY BURDEN, PERHAPS CALLED NOT SOLID, PERHAPS CALLED THIEF-LIKE, PERHAPS CALLED OLD AGE AND DEATH, PERHAPS CALLED PRODUCT OF LOVE, PERHAPS CALLED FLOWING AND TURNING, PERHAPS CALLED WEARINESS, PERHAPS CALLED VILE APPEARANCE, PERHAPS CALLED GROWTH, PERHAPS CALLED SHARP BLADE.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD, is known by different names. IN THE WORLD CALLED BENEFITTING, the world to the southeast, it IS PERHAPS CALLED HEAVY BURDEN. The road of suffering is very cumbersome. PERHAPS it is CALLED NOT SOLID. Since it is not firm or solid it goes bad easily; this is also a characteristic of suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED THIEF-LIKE. Suffering is like a thief in that it steals away your jewels and robs you of your joy. PERHAPS it is CALLED OLD AGE AND DEATH. It is very miserable, just like old age and death. PERHAPS it is CALLED PRODUCT OF LOVE. People have to undergo suffering because it is the outcome of love. When there is love, there is bound to be suffering, such as the suffering of being apart from the ones you love and so forth. PERHAPS it is CALLED FLOWING AND TURNING. One revolves in the Three Realms, which is the suffering of turning. PERHAPS it is CALLED WEARINESS. Suffering makes you feel tired and drained, so that everything becomes bitter toil, and you derive no joy from it. PERHAPS it is CALLED VILE APPEARANCE. Suffering also has its symptoms and characteristics, all of which are distasteful and loathesome. PERHAPS it is CALLED GROWTH, the growth and maturation of the shoots of suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED SHARP BLADE. The suffering of life itself is so harsh that sometimes it feels like one is being stabbed by a sharp knife.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED BENEFITTING, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED DEGENERATION, PERHAPS CALLED TURBIDITY, PERHAPS CALLED RETREAT, PERHAPS CALLED LACKING STRENGTH, PERHAPS CALLED LOSS, PERHAPS CALLED OPPOSITION, PERHAPS CALLED DISHARMONY, PERHAPS CALLED THAT WHICH IS DONE, PERHAPS CALLED GRASPING, PERHAPS CALLED INTENT AND DESIRE.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED BENEFITTING, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED DEGENERATION. It causes the decay of all good roots and everything wholesome. PERHAPS it is CALLED TURBIDITY. Accumulation is the complex conglomeration of afflictions; it is as turbid and unclear as dirty water. PERHAPS it is CALLED RETREAT. It causes peole to retreat from the power of goodness, to regress from their Bodhi resolve. PERHAPS it is CALLED LACKING STRENGTH. People do not have the power to augment their own good roots. PERHAPS it is CALLED LOSS. One loses one’s Bodhi resolve, so one cannot certify to the fruition. PERHAPS it is CALLED OPPOSITION. Afflictions do not accord with principle; instead they counter what is true. Their very nature is adverse and opposing. PERHAPS it is CALLED DISHARMONY. It makes it hard for cooperation to take place. Afflictions don’t get along with good dharmas; they are uncooperative. PERHAPS it is CALLED THAT WHICH IS DONE. Here the reference is to all the offense karma that is created. PERHAPS it is CALLED GRASPING. There is grasping of ignorance and afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED INTENT AND DESIRE. All of one’s mental activity is ignorant, vexatious, worrisome, false, and obsessive.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED BENEFITTING, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED ESCAPE FROM JAIL, PERHAPS CALLED TRUE AND ACTUAL, PERHAPS CALLED AVERTING DISASTERS, PERHAPS CALLED SHIELDING AND PROTECTING, PERHAPS CALLED APART FROM EVIL, PERHAPS CALLED COMPLIANCE, PERHAPS CALLED FUNDAMENTAL SOURCE, PERHAPS CALLED RENOUNCING CAUSES, PERHAPS CALLED NON-ACTIVITY, PERHAPS CALLED NO CONTINUATION.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED BENEFITTING, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED ESCAPE FROM JAIL. One gets out of the jail of the Three Realms. PERHAPS it is CALLED TRUE AND ACTUAL. This is a wonderful dharma that is genuine and not false. PERHAPS it is CALLED AVERTING DISASTERS. One is removed from all difficulties. PERHAPS it is CALLED SHIELDING AND PROTECTING. It protects the purity of body and mind so they can remain undefiled. PERHAPS it is CALLED APART FROM EVIL. One leaves all evil and gives rise to all good. PERHAPS it is CALLED COMPLIANCE. This means according with all skillful means. PERHAPS it is CALLED FUNDAMENTAL SOURCE. This refers to one’s fundamental Dharma door. PERHAPS it is CALLED RENOUNCING CAUSES. The causes of suffering are relinquished, and one attains the fruit of bliss. PERHAPS it is CALLED NON-ACTIVITY. There is nothing done; it transcends the realm of the conditioned. It is a dharma of getting out. PERHAPS it is CALLED NO CONTINUATION. When prepetuation is cut off, one leaps out of the revolving wheel.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED BENEFITTING, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED ARRIVING AT THE STATE OF NOTHINGNESS, PERHAPS CALLED THE SEAL OF ALL, PERHAPS CALLED TREASURE OF SAMADHI, PERHAPS CALLED ATTAINING BRIGHT LIGHT, PERHAPS CALLED DHARMA OF IRREVERSIBILITY, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO BRING AN END TO EXISTENCE, PERHAPS CALLED BROAD AND VAST ROAD, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO TAME AND SUBDUE, PERHAPS CALLED PEACE, PERHAPS CALLED ROOT OF NO REVOLVING.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED BENEFITTING, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED ARRIVING AT THE STATE OF NOTHINGNESS. When you reach the place where there is nothing at all, you give up all attachments. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE SEAL OF ALL. This “seal” refers to *Dharani* –uphoding and uniting—uniting all dharmas and upholding all meanings. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE TREASURE OF SAMADHI. Now one attains the treasure of samadhi, of “proper reception and proper concentration.” PERHAPS CALLED ATTAINING BRIGHT LIGHT, PERHAPS it is CALLED DHARMA OF IRREVERSIBILITY. Cultivators absolutely cannot retreat. They should have this Dharma of Irreversibility. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABLE TO BRING AN END TO EXISTENCE. If you can cut off ties to the twenty-five realms of the Triple World, then you can escape from the realm of existence. PERHAPS it is CALLED BROAD AND VAST ROAD This road is expansive and wide, not a dark and windy path. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABLE TO TAME AND SUBDUE. It can tame the body and mind, as well as subdue all karmic obstacles. PERHAPS it is CALLED PEACE. This road is very secure. You can travel on it all the way to the Buddha’s land. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE ROOT OF NO REVOLVING. This is the very root of not spinning around and around in samsara.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED BENEFITTING, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM TO ALL BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED BENEFITTING, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS have been described in forty names. But these forty expand to FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM TO ALL BE TAMED AND SUBDUED. Although these names are very many and each is different, the underlying principle is the same. They are all aimed at subduing living beings and causing them to bring forth the Bodhi mind.

SUTRA:

VIII. THE WORLD UNIQUE AND RARE

“THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD, IN THE WORLD CALLED UNIQUE AND RARE IS PERHAPS CALLED INDULGING IN PRECARIOUS DESIRES, PERHAPS CALLED PLACE OF BONDS AND FETTERS, PERHAPS CALLED DEVIANT PRACTICES, PERHAPS CALLED CORRESPONDING RECEPTION, PERHAPS CALLED LACKING REMORSE AND SHAME, PERHAPS CALLED ROOT OF GREED AND DESIRE, PERHAPS CALLED LIKE THE GANGES RIVER, PERHAPS CALLED CONSTANT DEPRAVITY, PERHAPS CALLED NATURE OF A HUGE FLAME, PERHAPS CALLED MUCH WORRY AND VEXATION.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD has many other names in different worlds. IN THE WORLD CALLED UNIQUE AND RARE, the world to the southwest, it is PERHAPS CALLED INDULGING IN PRECARIOUS DESIRES. To delight in the five desires – wealth, sex, fame, food, and sleep – is a very dangerous thing. It leads to a lot of complications and suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED PLACE OF BONDS AND FETTERS. This is a place wherein one gets tied up by afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED DEVIANT PRACTICES. Every action is based on deviant knowledge, deviant views, and perverse practices. PERHAPS it is CALLED CORRESPONDING RECEPTION. If you run after your desires and create karma, then you will receive the corresponding retribution. PERHAPS it is CALLED LACKING REMORSE AND SHAME. One engaged in this practice has no shame or modesty. PERHAPS it is CALLED ROOT OF GREED AND DESIRE. Suffering is the source of lust and craving. PERHAPS it is CALLED LIKE THE GANGES RIVER. The flow of afflictions is likened to the Ganges River, whose currents perpetually rage on without stop. PERHAPS it is CALLED CONSTANT DEPRAVITY. It constantly destroys good roots so that they don’t grow and flourish. PERHAPS it is CALLED NATURE OF A HUGE FLAME. A huge conflagration is very harmful because it consumes everything. PERHAPS it is CALLED MUCH WORRY AND VEXATION. Suffering is characterized by much worry, distress, and vexation.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED UNIQUE AND RARE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED EXPANSIVE FIELD, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO TEND TOWARDS, PERHAPS CALLED FAR REMOVED FROM WISDOM, PERHAPS CALLED IMPEDING, PERHAPS CALLED HORROR AND APPREHENSION, PERHAPS CALLED INDULGENCE AND LAXNESS, PERHAPS CALLED POSSESSIVE GRASPING, PERHAPS CALLED PLACE OF ATTACHMENT, PERHAPS CALLED LORD OF THE HOUSE, PERHAPS CALLED TIED UP.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED UNIQUE AND RARE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED EXPANSIVE FIELD. It is a large place where extensive afflictions are gathered to-gether. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABLE TO TEND TOWARDS the three evil paths. PERHAPS it is CALLED FAR REMOVED FROM WISDOM. One is far away from prajna wisdom. PERHAPS it is CALLED IMPEDING. It hampers you with a lot of difficulties and adversities. PERHAPS it is CALLED HORROR AND APPREHENSION. One is constantly oppressed by the feelings of fear and paranoia. PERHAPS it is CALLED INDULGENCE AND LAXNESS. One is very loose and doesn’t follow the rules; this inevitably leads to afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED POSSESSIVE GRASPING. Here afflictions merge and assemble together. PERHAPS it is CALLED PLACE OF ATTACHMENT. This is the place to which living beings are attached. PERHAPS it is CALLED LORD OF THE HOUSE of suffering and vexation. PERHAPS it is CALLED TIED UP. Afflictions tie you up so you aren’t free. Ordinary people don’t attain liberation because they are bound up by the five desires.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED UNIQUE AND RARE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED FILLING UP, PERHAPS CALLED NOT DYING, PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT A SELF, PERHAPS CALLED DEVOID OF SELF-NATURE, PERHAPS CALLED THE END OF DISCRIMINATION, PERHAPS CALLED PEACEFUL AND HAPPY DWELLING, PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT MEASURE, PERHAPS CALLED CUTTING OFF THE FLOW, PERHAPS CALLED THE PLACE WHERE ACTIVITIES COME TO AN END, PERHAPS CALLED NON-DUAL.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED UNIQUE AND RARE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED FILLING UP. It fills up emptiness and pervades the Dharma Realm. PERHAPS it is CALLED NOT DYING. This state is apart from production or extinction. It transcends both the state of birth and the state of death. PERHAPS it is CALLED WITHOUT A SELF. Because there is ultimate extinction, there is no ego, no self. PERHAPS it is CALLED DEVOID OF SELF-NATURE. Extinction itself has no self-nature, and dharmas have no self-nature either. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE END OF DISCRIMINATION. At this place there are no more differentiating thoughts. PERHAPS it is CALLED PEACEFUL AND HAPPY DWELLING. When one abides in the holy truth of the extinction of suffering, one is always happy and peaceful. PERHAPS it is CALLED WITHOUT MEASURE. It has no limits and no boundaries. PERHAPS it is CALLED CUTTING OFF THE FLOW. The flow of the revolving wheel is terminated. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE PLACE WHERE ACTIVITIES COME TO AN END. This is the state where,

The path of words is cut off,  
The place of the mind’s workings is extinguished.

PERHAPS it is CALLED NON-DUAL. The state of non-duality is extinction.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED UNIQUE AND RARE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED GREAT LIGHT, PERHAPS CALLED SEA OF PROCLAMATIONS, PERHAPS CALLED SELECTIVE ABOUT MEANINGS, PERHAPS CALLED DHARMA OF HARMONY, PERHAPS CALLED APART FROM GRASPING AND ATTACHMENT, PERHAPS CALLED SEVERING THE FLOW, PERHAPS CALLED VAST AND BROADROAD, PERHAPS CALLED LEVEL AND IMPARTIAL CAUSE, PERHAPS CALLED PURE EXPEDIENT, PERHAPS CALLED SUBLIME INSIGHT.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED UNIQUE AND RARE, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED GREAT LIGHT. Relying on this way, one attains the great bright light of Bodhi. PERHAPS it is CALLED SEA OF PROCLAMATIONS. The principles elucidated and spoken of are as vast as the ocean. PERHAPS it is CALLED SELECTIVE ABOUT MEANINGS. One should exercise discrimination, choose only true doctrines, and then cultivate according to them. PERHAPS it is CALLED DHARMA OF HARMONY. When you cultivate the Holy Truth of the Way, all dharmas abide in harmony. PERHAPS it is CALLED APART FROM GRASPING AND ATTACHMENT. You can leave your grasping and fixations behind. PERHAPS it is CALLED SEVERING THE FLOW. You break off the perpetual flow of birth and death. PERHAPS it is CALLED VAST AND BROAD ROAD. This road is level and broad. From the position of an ordinary person, one travels down the road to reach the position of a sage. PERHAPS it is CALLED LEVEL AND IMPARTIAL CAUSE. This is a most democratic cause. Whoever cultivates according to the Dharma will be able to attain the fruition. PERHAPS it is CALLED PURE EXPEDIENT. This is a pure Dharma door of skill-in-means. PERHAPS it is CALLED SUBLIME INSIGHT. This type of insight is the highest.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED UNIQUE AND RARE THE HOLY TRUTHS ARE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED UNIQUE AND RARE THE HOLY TRUTHS ARE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE. The forty names explained so far expand to become many, many more names, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED. Stubborn living beings are now rendered compliant and gentle. They bring forth the Bodhi mind and practice the Bodhisattva path.

SUTRA:

IX. THE WORLD HAPPINESS

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD IN THE WORLD CALLED HAPPINESS IS PERHAPS CALLED TURNING AND FLOWING, PERHAPS CALLED GIVING BIRTH, PERHAPS CALLED LOSING ADVANTAGE, PERHAPS CALLED DEFILED ATTACHMENT, PERHAPS CALLED CUMBERSOME LOAD, PERHAPS CALLED DISCRIMINATION, PERHAPS CALLED INNER DANGER, PERHAPS CALLED ASSEMBLAGE, PERHAPS CALLED EVIL HOUSE, PERHAPS CALLED NATURE OF MISERY AND VEXATION.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD IN THE WORLD CALLED HAPPINESS – the world located to the northwest – is called by many different names. PERHAPS it is CALLED TURNING AND FLOWING. Living beings turn within the six paths. PERHAPS it is CALLED GIVING BIRTH. Giving birth to what? – to afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED LOSING ADVANTAGE. You lose the benefit that comes from leaving suffering and attaining bliss. PERHAPS it is CALLED DEFILED ATTACHMENT. One suffers because one is attached to defiled dharmas; that is, one is unable to put down love and desire. PERHAPS it is CALLED CUMBERSOME LOAD. This suffering is a dead weight, so heavy that it causes people to fret and become distraught. PERHAPS it is CALLED DISCRIMINATION. Whenever discrimination surfaces, there is suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED INNER DANGER. In your mind there is a precarious situation. PERHAPS it is CALLED ASSEMBLAGE. It assembles all types of karmic retribution, which are fruits of suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED EVIL HOUSE. Nothing is auspicious within this house; everything is unlucky and miserable. PERHAPS it is CALLED NATURE OF MISERY AND VEXATION. That is the very nature of suffering.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA ,IN THE WORLD CALLED HAPPINESS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED GROUND, PERHAPS CALLED EXPEDIENT, PERHAPS CALLED UNTIMELY, PERHAPS CALLED NON-ACTUAL DHARMA, PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT A BOTTOM, PERHAPS CALLED POSSESSING AND GRASPING, PERHAPS CALLED SEPARATING FROM PRECEPTS, PERHAPS CALLED DHARMA OF AFFLICTIONS, PERHAPS CALLED NARROW AND VULGAR VIEWS, PERHAPS CALLED COLLECTION OF FILTH.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA,IN THE WORLD CALLED HAPPINESS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED GROUND. It is the fertile ground from which afflictions sprout. PERHAPS it is CALLED EXPEDIENT. It facilitates the aggregation of afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED UNTIMELY. It doesn’t have any appointed time; it is always inappropriate. PERHAPS it is CALLED NON-ACTUAL DHARMA. It is not a true dharma. It is born from falseness, and will perish by falseness. It is PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT A BOTTOM. There is no end to this chasm. No amount of afflictions will fill it up. PERHAPS it is CALLED POSSESSING AND GRASPING. It draws afflictions to it. PERHAPS it is CALLED SEPARATING FROM PRECEPTS. Once you separate from precepts, you will not be able to stop evil and prevent transgression. PERHAPS it is CALLED DHARMA OF AFFLICTIONS. It is PERHAPS CALLED NARROW AND VULGAR VIEWS. The view-point of people who are afflicted with suffering is very biased and constricted. As it is said,

They see what is near, but not what is far.  
They see only themselves, but not others.

PERHAPS it is CALLED COLLECTION OF FILTH. It attracts all filth and groups it together.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED HAPPINESS, THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED DESTROYING THE PLACE OF RELIANCE, PERHAPS CALLED NOT BEING LAX, PERHAPS CALLED TRUE AND ACTUAL, PERHAPS CALLED LEVEL AND EQUAL, PERHAPS CALLED GOOD AND PURE, PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT ILLNESS, PERHAPS CALLED NOT CROOKED, PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT MARKS, PERHAPS CALLED SOVEREIGNTY, PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT PRODUCTION.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED HAPPINESS, THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED DESTROYING THE PLACE OF RELIANCE. The place that afflictions rely on is now vanquished. There is no more ignorance and no more vexation. PERHAPS it is CALLED NOT BEING LAX. One follows the rules, one is without thoughts of desire and so one cuts off afflictions. Universal Worthy Bodhisattva’s *Verse of Exhortation* says,

This day has passed, and our lives decrease accordingly.  
We are like fish in an evaporating pond, what joy is there in this?  
Great Assembly! Be diligent and vigorous,  
As if saving your very heads.  
Be ever mindful of impermanence,  
And make sure not to be lax!

The meaning is that this day has gone by, and our lifespans have grown one day shorter. We are like fish living in a pond. At first they are very happy swimming about, but the water keeps evaporating. There’s less and less of it every day. The more the water dries up, the more the lives of the fish are endangered. The same applies to the human situation. What joy can you derive from this? Therefore, Universal Worthy Bodhisattva goes on to exhort the Great Assembly: “You should be industrious and strive to make progress, as if saving your very head.” If your head were to catch fire, or if it were about to be hit by some hard object, you would try to save it at all cost, wouldn’t you? You should use that same kind of attention and concern to remain constantly aware that the ghost of impermanence can arrive at any time. You should follow the rules and not be self-indulgent. If you are lax and let your life go by in vain, you will fall into the hells after your death. When you get to the hells, it’s too late to start following the rules even if you should want to. King Yama will not listen to excuses and rationalizations. He may simply decide that you will have to stay in the hells forever.

PERHAPS it is CALLED TRUE AND ACTUAL. This principle is genuine and absolutely true. PERHAPS it is CALLED LEVEL AND EQUAL. It is not produced, it is not extinguished, it is neither pure nor defiled and it neither increases nor decreases. PERHAPS it is CALLED GOOD AND PURE. This is the most wholesome and pure doctrine. PERHAPS it is CALLED WITHOUT ILLNESS. One is not plagued by any of the types of illnesses of afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED NOT CROOKED. One doesn’t have a crooked or devious mind. “The straight mind is the Way Place.” One is straightforward, upright, and uncompromising with regard to what is proper. PERHAPS it is CALLED WITHOUT MARKS. Because afflictions are already extinct, they no longer assume any appearance or shape. PERHAPS it is CALLED SOVEREIGNTY. Sovereignty is liberation; liberation is sovereignty. PERHAPS it is CALLED WITHOUT PRODUCTION. When the state of still extinction is reached, there is not more production or destruction.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED HAPPINESS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED ENTERING A SUBLIME STATE, PERHAPS CALLED CUTTING OF ACCUMULATION, PERHAPS CALLED TRANSCENDING THE AVERAGE, PERHAPS CALLED VAST AND GREAT NATURE, PERHAPS CALLED THE END OF DISCRIMINATION, PERHAPS CALLED THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL PENETRATIONS, PERHAPS CALLED MULTIPLE SKILL-IN-MEANS, PERHAPS CALLED THE CONDUCT OF PROPER MINDFULNESS, PERHAPS CALLED THE ROAD OF CONSTANT STILLNESS, PERHAPS CALLED THE LIBERATION OF GATHERING IN.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED HAPPINESS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED ENTERING A SUBLIME STATE. Traveling on this road you enter a supreme and wonderful state of being. PERHAPS it is CALLED CUTTING OF ACCUMULATION. All afflictions are cut off. PERHAPS it is CALLED TRANSCENDING THE AVERAGE. One transcends everything. One becomes outstanding among one’s peers – an exceptional, extraordinary person. PERHAPS it is CALLED GREAT AND VAST NATURE. Its nature is very expansive and all inclusive; it was sixteen years old, I composed the following verse:

The Tao

The ten thousand things all arise from the Tao.  
One who attains it naturally penetrates its efficacy.  
Enlighten to this principle:  
Bodhi neither increases or decreases.

The meaning of the verse is that the myriad phenomena are all begotten from the Tao. When one attains the Tao, one spontaneously understands this divine secret. One awakens to the principle that Bodhi neither increases nor decreases. It is just right. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE END OF DISCRIMINATION. All discriminating thoughts are done away with. At that time, there are no more words to say, and no more thoughts to think. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL PENETRATIONS. Con-tained within this state are tremendous spiritual powers. PERHAPS it is CALLED MULTIPLE SKILL-IN-MEANS. There is a store of uncountable skill-in-means appropriate for transforming every type of living being at the proper time. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE CONDUCT OF PROPER MINDFULNESS. Culti-vation is the conduct of maintaining proper mindfulness. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE ROAD OF CONSTANT STILLNESS. This is a road of calmness and tranquility and perpetual peace. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE LIBERATION OF GATHERING IN. Cultivation can liberate the different types of gathering in.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED HAPPINESS, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED HAPPINESS, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS have been described in forty names. But these forty names further expand to become FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM TO ALL BE TAMED AND SUBDUED. These names work on the consciousnesses and inner mental resources of living beings so that when they hear them, living beings are awakened. Stuborn living beings become gentle and compliant and they resolve their minds on the Way.

SUTRA:

X. THE WORLD LOCK AND KEY

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD IN THE WORLD CALLED LOCK AND KEY, IS PERHAPS CALLED CHARACTERIZED BY RUIN AND DESOLATION, PERHAPS CALLED LIKE A VESSEL, PERHAPS CALLED BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE SELF, PERHAPS CALLED BODY OF MANY DESTINIES, PERHAPS CALLED MULTIPLE REVOLUTIONS, PERHAPS CALLED DOOR TO THE MYRIAD EVILS, PERHAPS CALLED BITTER BY NATURE, PERHAPS CALLED SHOULD BE RENOUNCED, PERHAPS CALLED FLAVORLESS, PERHAPS CALLED COMING AND GOING.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva goes on to say: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD, is known by various names. IN THE WORLD CALLED LOCK AND KEY, it is described in other terms. PERHAPS it is CALLED CHARACTERIZED BY RUIN AND DESOLATION. The features of suffering are ruin and desolation. Everything breaks down: even the good breaks down and becomes bad. PERHAPS it is CALLED LIKE A VESSEL. It is a container that holds only certain things. Its function is very limited. PERHAPS it is CALLED BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE SELF. Suffering is brought about by a sense of self; there’s an ego involved. PERHAPS it is CALLED BODY OF MANY DESTINIES. It is the source of rebirth in the four evil destinies–asuras, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings. PERHAPS it is CALLED MULTIPLE REVOLUTIONS. There is ceaseless turning in the revolving wheel; it’s not known when one can stop. PERHAPS it is CALLED DOOR TO THE MYRIAD EVILS. It is the gateway to many types of evil. PERHAPS it is CALLED BITTER BY NATURE. The nature of suffering is bitter. PERHAPS it is CALLED SHOULD BE RENOUNCED. Since it is so bitter, you really should leave it behind and not yearn for it anymore. PERHAPS it is CALLED FLAVORLESS. It has no sweet taste; its only taste is that of bitterness. PERHAPS it is CALLED COMING AND GOING. People come and go and go and come. That is, they are reborn and then die, they die and then are reborn, forever revolving without end.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LOCK AND KEY, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED ACTIVITY, PERHAPS CALLED POISONOUS WRATH, PERHAPS CALLED CONJOINING, PERHAPS CALLED BRANCH OF RECEPTION, PERHAPS CALLED EGOTISM, PERHAPS CALLED MIXED POISON, PERHAPS CALLED FALSE NAME, PERHAPS CALLED OPPOSING, PERHAPS CALLED HEATED AFFLICTIONS, PERHAPS CALLED PARANOIA.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LOCK AND KEY, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED ACTIVITY. This refers to the suffering of process, where the suffering goes on and on in a stream of uninterrupted activity. PERHAPS it is CALLED POISONOUS WRATH. Afflictions lead to rage and resentment which are as harmful as poison. PERHAPS it is CALLED CONJOINING. Afflictions conjoin and accumulate. PERHAPS it is CALLED BRANCH OF RECEPTION. This refers to one of the branches of the Twelve Links of Conditioned Co-production: the link of reception.

The Twelve Causal Links

* ignorance
* consciousness
* name and form
* the six sense faculties
* contact
* reception
* love
* grasping
* existence
* birth
* old age
* death

The branch of reception refers to the input of external sense data that bombards the sense organs. It is the basis of much affliction.

PERHAPS it is CALLED EGOTISM. Because of egotistical obsessions one becomes vexed and distraught. PERHAPS it is CALLED MIXED POISON. Different kinds of poisons come together within the truth of accumulation. PERHAPS it is CALLED FALSE NAME. It is just a name, not something real. PERHAPS it is CALLED OPPOSING. It contradicts the true principle of the self-nature. PERHAPS it is CALLED HEATED AFFLICTIONS. Afflictions are like a huge blaze. They burn up all of your good roots. PERHAPS it is CALLED PARANOIA. It causes people to be afraid and nervous all the time.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LOCK AND KEY, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT ACCUMULATION, PERHAPS CALLED THAT WHICH CANNOT BE OBTAINED, PERHAPS CALLED WONDROUS REMEDY, PERHAPS CALLED INDESTRUCTIBLE, PERHAPS CALLED NO ATTACHMENT, PERHAPS CALLED MEASURELESS, PERHAPS CALLED VAST AND GREAT, PERHAPS CALLED SHARE OF ENLIGHTENMENT, PERHAPS CALLED APART FROM CORRUPTION, PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT OBSTACLES.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LOCK AND KEY, THE TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT ACCUMULATION. There is no accumulation of suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED THAT WHICH CANNOT BE OBTAINED. Because afflictions are extinguished they can no longer be obtained. This is the state of “no knowing and no attaining” that is mentioned in the *Heart Sutra*. PERHAPS it is CALLED WONDROUS REMEDY. The truth of extinction is like a wonder-ful medicine. It cures the illness of suffering and affliction. PERHAPS it is CALLED INDESTRUCTIBLE. The truth of extinction is imperishable. PERHAPS it is CALLED NO ATTACHMENT. There is no more clinging to anything; all attachments are put down. PERHAPS it is CALLED MEASURELESS. It is also without number, without a limit. PERHAPS it is CALLED VAST AND GREAT. It is expansive and infinite. PERHAPS it is CALLED SHARE OF ENLIGHTENMENT. This refers to one of the seven shares of enlightenment. PERHAPS it is CALLED APART FROM CORRUPTION. One leaves all defiled dharmas behind. PERHAPS it is CALLED WITHOUT OBSTACLES. All obstructions are eradicated.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LOCK AND KEY, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED PEACEFUL CONDUCT, PERHAPS CALLED LEAVING DESIRE, PERHAPS CALLED ULTIMATE REALITY, PERHAPS CALLED THE ENTRANCE TO MEANING, PERHAPS CALLED ULTIMATE NATURE, PERHAPS CALLED PURE MANIFESTATION, PERHAPS CALLED GATHERING IN ONE’S THOUGHTS, PERHAPS CALLED TENDING TOWARD LIBERATION, PERHAPS CALLED RESCUE, PERHAPS CALLED VICTORIOUS CONDUCT.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LOCK AND KEY, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED PEACHFUL CONDUCT. The conduct of this Holy Truth is very calm and peace-ful, not agitated at all. PERHAPS it is CALLED LEAVING DESIRE. One is removed from all afflictions and desire. It is because of desire that we have tempers. With desire, there comes selfishness, with selfishness, there comes aflictions, with afflictions there comes suffering. If one can be apart from desire, then one will have no more suffering. When faced with any situation, one’s mind will not move, and one will be;

Thus, thus unmoving,  
Constantly bright and understanding.

That is the advantage of attaining the Holy Truth of the Way. The *Vajra Sutra* refers to the ‘arhats apart from desire.” They turn all their thoughts of desire into pure thoughts, into the bright light of wisdom. People who cultivate the Way, who believe in the Buddha, who study the Buddhadharma, must return the light to illuminate within and ask themselves: “Do I have desire?” If you still have thoughts of desire, particularly thoughts of sexual desire, then you should quickly apply effort and sever them. Only then will you have some success. If you do not sever these thoughts, you won’t manage to leave any of your desire behind, much less cut it off completely. It is my hope that all of you pay special attention to this point.

PERHAPS it is CALLED ULTIMATE REALITY. This Way is the most true and ultimate method for cultivation. PERHAPS it is CALLED THE ENTRANCE TO MEANING. If you cultivate this Way, you will develop an understanding of the true meaning. PERHAPS it is CALLED ULTIMATE NATURE. This is the self-nature’s place of refuge, its ultimate resting place. Having cultivated the Way to perfectior you can certify to the fruition of the enlighten-ment of the self-nature. PERHAPS it is CALLED PURE MANIFESTATION. If you cultivate the pure path, your wisdom will naturally manifest. PERHAPS it is CALLED GATHERING IN ONE’S THOUGHTS. How do you leave desire? By gathering in our thoughts. It means bringing your myriad thoughts to a single focal point, concentrating and not letting your thoughts run amok. Our minds play tricks on us. In fact the mind is aptly described thus:

Mind like a monkey and thoughts like a wild steed.

If we don’t reign in our thoughts then they run all over the place. How can you reign in your thoughts? You can recite the holy name “Namo Amitabha Buddha,” or you can investigate Ch’an and concentrate on a meditation topic such as “Who is mindful of the Buddha?”, or you can recite the mantra of the six magical syllables, “Om Mani Padm Hum,” or you can recite the Sutras and bow to the Buddhas. There are any number of methods you can use to keep your crazy thoughts in check. Make sure your thoughts don’t get turned by external stimuli and go running after states. If you can gather in our thoughts, then;

Seeing things and awakening to them, you transcend the mundane.  
Seeing things and being confused by them, you fall back upon the wheel.

If, upon encountering any given state you immediately understand it, then you can transcend the common world. But if you see things and get all muddled by them, you fall into the turning wheel and sink. To sum it up, if you can gather in your thoughts, you will transcend the Triple World; if you can’t gather in your thoughts, you will fall and revolve in the Triple World. All principles can be reduced to one single statement: Gather in your thoughts and leave desire.

Cultivators who can watch over themselves are those who manage to gather in their thoughts. People who can remain unmoved and not be turned by situations, are those who can leave desire. To leave desire is to have true purity, true regulation, true Way, and true virtue. In order to leave desire, you must start by gathering in you thoughts. Don’t strike up false thinking. If you can pull yourself away from thoughts of desire, and bring your mind to a one-pointed focus, then you have gathered in your thoughts. On the other hand, if you can gather in your thoughts, you will naturally be apart from desire. The two are interconnected.

PERHAPS this truth of the Way is CALLED TENDING TOWARD LIBERATION. One tends toward the path of liberation and non-attachment. PERHAPS it is CALLED RESCUE. It rescues living beings and takes them to the other shore. PERHAPS it is CALLED VICTORIOUS CONDUCT. This practice-door is the most sublime. It takes you all the way to ultimate Nirvana.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LOCK AND KEY, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS CAN BE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED LOCK AND KEY, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS are known by different names. I have explained forty of them to you, but those forty can expand to ineffably many names. They CAN BE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED with skill-in-means. These holy truths are explained to living beings in a way that they like to hear. Then living beings become tamed and subdued in body and mind, and resolve to cultivate this most pure door of practice.

SUTRA:

XI. THE WORLD OF ROUSING SOUNDS

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD. IN THE WORLD ROUSING SOUNDS IS PERHAPS CALLED CONCEALING BLEMISHES, PERHAPS CALLED WORLDLY, PERHAPS CALLED THAT WHICH IS RELIED UPON, PERHAPS CALLED ARROGANCE, PERHAPS CALLED NATURE OF DEFILED ATTACHMENT, PERHAPS CALLED PROPELLING CURRENT, PERHAPS CALLED CANNOT BE DELIGHTED IN, PERHAPS CALLED HIDING AND COVERING, PERHAPS CALLED SPEEDY DISINTEGRATION, PERHAPS CALLED HARD TO SUBDUE.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING AS EXPLAINED IN THIS SAHA WORLD is known by many different names. IN THE WORLD ROUSING SOUNDS, it IS PERHAPS CALLED CONCEALING BLEMISHES. One conceals one’s bad habits and shortcomings. “Blemishes” refer to all the bad habits or improper actions that people become engaged in. PERHAPS it is CALLED WORLDLY. What is worldly is suffering; suffering belongs to the world. PERHAPS it is CALLED THAT WHICH IS RELIED UPON. It is what afflictions rely on. PERHAPS it is CALLED ARROGANCE. When one has a big view of self, with a lot of pride and conceit one has much suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED NATURE OF DEFILED ATTACHMENT. The self-nature is originally pure. Once it becomes blemished, it is no longer pure, and greed, anger and stupidity are born. PERHAPS it is CALLED PROPELLING CURRENT. The cycle of birth and death is a driving force, a madly raging torrent that keeps us going round and round without end. PERHAPS it is CALLED CANNOT BE DELIGHTED IN. Because of living beings’ bad habit energies, they are completely upside down and very lax. They don’t follow the rules, and live their lives in dissipation. Mistaking a thief for their son, they take suffering as bliss. When left home-people cultivate, they aspire toward ultimate and true bliss, that is, the Four Virtues of Nirvana;

Permanence  
Bliss  
True Self  
Purity

However, most people aren’t willing to seek true happiness. They are content with gaining a temporary relief from the myriad sufferings, and mistakenly call that transitory state “pleasure.” Actually this pleasure provides only a very short respite from the pain, and quickly turns into more pain. Most people never realize that there is a real joy (deep and abiding bliss).

Some people argue, “After you leave the home life, you aren’t of much help to your parents or your brothers and sisters.” That is a mistaken notion. To leave home and cultivate is to be truly filial to your parents and be truly helpful to your siblings. It is said,

When on child attains the Way, his ancestors from nine previous generations ascend to the heavens.

When one child in the family attains the Way, nine generations of his ancestors can leave the suffering of the hells and ascend to the heavens. In addition, his parents from every past life are able to leave the Triple World, separate from suffering, and attain bliss.

PERHAPS this truth of suffering is CALLED HIDING AND COVERING. When people make mistakes and don’t divulge their offenses and repent, but instead hide their offenses, they are never truly at peace with their own conscience. Some people blatantly deny the workings of cause and effect and say “People shouldn’t develop guilty consciences. They are just being masochists!” But if people don’t develop a sense of shame about their own offenses, then they can very easily go on to murder their fathers, or their mothers, to kill, plunder, and commit arson. They can do any evil they wish and still feel totally guiltless. If this happens, then families will fall apart, society will sink into chaos, and the entire world will become wild! So it is absolutely impermissible to suggest in any way that people don’t need to reflect upon offenses and divulge their mistakes. To advocate such a position would be to contribute directly to the ruin of the world.

On the other hand, if people understand that all the ghosts and spirits are constantly aware of everything they do, and if they can develop a sense of shame, they can strive to make sure that all their actions can stand the light of day. Then they won’t have to bow their heads in shame before their ancestors, and the world will be a peaceful and law-abiding place.

You should never do things that are illegal or that contradict principle. If you have a sense of shame and a resolve to abide by the laws and rules, then there is hope for your cultivation. If you can change from the deviant and return to the proper, then you have a chance to renew yourself.

PERHAPS it is CALLED SPEEDY DISINTEGRATION. It quickly demolishes all joy, and only serves to increase one’s suffering. PERHAPS CALLED HARD TO SUBDUE. For example, stubborn living beings are very hard to tame and subdue; therefore they undergo much suffering.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ROUSING SOUNDS, THE TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED THAT WHICH NEEDS TO BE REGULATED AND CONTROLLED, PERHAPS CALLED HEART’S TENDENCIES, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO FETTER, PERHAPS CALLED ARISING FROM THOUGHTS, PERHAPS CALLED REGRESSION, PERHAPS CALLED CONJOINING, PERHAPS CALLED DIFFERENTIATION, PERHAPS CALLED GATEWAY, PERHAPS CALLED FLOATING AND TOSSING ABOUT, PERHAPS CALLED HIDING AND CONCEALING.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ROUSING SOUNDS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE ACCUMULATION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED THAT WHICH NEEDS TO BE REGULATED AND CONTROLLED. You have to get your afflictions under control; only then can you separate from suffering and attain bliss. At the beginning of every Sutra lecture, someone requests the Dharma and asks the Dharma-lecturing host to “turn the Dharma wheel to teach living beings to separate from suffering and attain bliss. But most people don’t want to “separate from suffering,” and they don’t want to “attain bliss.” Human beings are very strange. The more you teach them to leave suffering, the more they incline towards suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED HEART’S TENDENCIES. The hearts of ordinary people tend toward afflictions. You teach them to go toward a happy place, but they aren’t willing to cultivate. Instead, they head toward evil destinies. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABLE TO FETTER. This truth of accumulation is able to cover over the wisdom of living beings; it ties up their inherent potential for developing their spiritual powers. PERHAPS it is CALLED ARISING FROM THOUGHTS. Afflictions arise as a result of your false thinking. A single false thought will bring about a flood of afflictions. If you don’t have false thoughts, then you won’t have afflictions. Therefore, I often say,

Let everything go its own way.  
Melt your afflictions.  
The ignorance will never arise,   
And your karmic offenses will all be gone.

PERHAPS it is CALLED REGRESSION. Whereas the Truth of Accumulation reverts to the three evil paths, the Truth of the Way reaches forward, to the Four Sagely Destinies. PERHAPS it is CALLED CONJOINING. It is a conglomeration of good and bad, pure and defiled all mixed together. When good and bad are all rolled into one, there are bound to be afflictions. When there are afflictions there are karmic obstacles. PERHAPS it is CALLED DIFFERENTIATION. When you have discriminating thoughts, you have afflictions. PERHAPS it is CALLED GATEWAY. It is the gateway to much suffering. PERHAPS it is CALLED FLOATING AND TOSSING ABOUT. It bobs up and down and never keeps still. It is that way by nature. PERHAPS it is CALLED HIDING AND CONCEALING. This refers to the way in which people hide their own mistakes and pretend they do not exist.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ROUSING SOUNDS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT A PLACE OF RELIANCE, PERHAPS CALLED THAT WHICH CANNOT BE GRASPED, PERHAPS CALLED HEADING BACK, PERHAPS CALLED APART FROM ARGUMENT, PERHAPS CALLED SMALL, PERHAPS CALLED BIG, PERHAPS CALLED GOOD PURITY, PERHAPS CALLED ENDLESS, PERHAPS CALLED VAST AND EXPANSIVE, PERHAPS CALLED INVALUABLE.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ROUSING SOUNDS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED WITHOUT A PLACE OF RELIANCE. Within this truth, afflicitons have no place of reliance. PERHAPS it is CALLED THAT WHICH CANNOT BE GRASPED. Because afflictions have been cut off, there is no more grasping, no renouncing, and no attaining. PERHAPS it is CALLED HEADING BACK – returning to the root and going back to the source. PERHAPS it is CALLED APART FROM ARGUMENT. When one reaches the level of extinction, there is no more striving. Because there is nothing produced or extinguished, there is no basis for argument. PERHAPS it is CALLED SMALL. It is as small as a mote of dust. It is too small to contain even a single thing. PERHAPS it is CALLED BIG. On the other hand, this truth is at the same time called “big.” When one returns to the root and goes back to the source, one attains the fundamental substance, which is so big that nothing lies outside of it. It is the nature of the Dharma Realm. PERHAPS it is CALLED GOOD PURITY. This is a state of wholesome true purity. PERHAPS it is CALLED ENDLESS. This state reaches to infinity and it abides forever and ever. PERHAPS it is CALLED VAST AND EXPANSIVE. The truth of extinction is very wide and all inclusive. PERHAPS it is CALLED INVALUABLE. There’s no way to figure out how much worth it has; its value transcends the realm of numbers.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ROUSING SOUNDS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED CONTEMPLATION, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO SMASH THE ENEMY, PERHAPS CALLED SEAL OF KNOWLEDGE, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO ENTER INTO THE NATURE, PERHAPS CALLED IMMUNE TO ATTACK, PERHAPS CALLED LIMITLESS MEANINGS, PERHAPS CALLED ABLE TO ENTER WISDOM, PERHAPS CALLED MERGING WITH THE WAY, PERHAPS CALLED FOREVER UNMOVING, PERHAPS CALLED UNIQUE AND SUBLIME DOCTRINE.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ROUSING SOUNDS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING IS PERHAPS CALLED CONTEMPLATION. Here one observes and investigates the true mark of all dharmas. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABLE TO SMASH THE ENEMY. This truth can defeat the enemy of suffering, so that one attains joy. PERHAPS it is CALLED SEAL OF KNOWLEDGE. It is the seal of understanding, the seal that certifies to one’s knowledge of all doctrines. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABLE TO ENTER INTO THE NATURE. One can enter and understand the Buddhanature. The home that most of us have now is just an ordinary home, a temporary resting place that is not ultimate. But when we bring our cultiation to success and enter the Buddhanature, we will live with the Buddha. That is our true home.

PERHAPS it is CALLED IMMUNE TO ATTACK. The function of the Way is to vanquish all delusion. It is immune to the onslaught of delusions. Therefore, it is called “immune to attack”; it is invincible. PERHAPS it is CALLED LIMITLESS MEANINGS, This Way contains boundless principles. We cultivate in order to leave the Triple Realm, so that we need not undergo samsara. If we strike up false thinking from morning to night, then there will never be a time in the future when we will be able to get out of the Triple Realm. PERHAPS it is CALLED ABLE TO ENTER WISDOM. If you practice according to this principle, you will be able to enter the Buddha’s wisdom. PERHAPS it is CALLED MERGING WITH THE WAY. Everything meshes with everything else. All is in harmony, perfectly fused and unobstructed. PERHAPS it is CALLED FOREVER UNMOVING. This is a state that is forever abiding. It never changes and never moves. PERHAPS it is CALLED UNIQUE AND SUBLIME DOCTRINE. The doctrine of the Way is especially sublime and real.

When we listen to the Buddhadharma, we have to practice according to it. We must deeply enter the Sutra store and bring forth great faith. If you can meet those three conditions you will attain great benefit. Don’t listen to the Sutras as if you were listening to a fairy tale. That would be a big mistake. For endless aeons, we have undergone uncountable births and deaths. Every time we died, we discarded the body of that life. If the bodies we have assumed throughout all this time, were piled up, they would form a stack as high as Mount Sumeru. That’s why there is a saying,

People eat the earth;  
The earth consumes people.

When people are alive, they feed off the grains that grow from the earth. When they die, their bodies return to mother earth. How many of our bodies have been devoured by the earth? And yet we are still wandering aimlessly around as if in a daze because we have not bothered to cultivate. As a result, we have not been able to smash the “enemy,” the three poisons of greed, hatred, and stupidity. These three poisons numb out bodies and minds and turn us upside down. They cause us to take right for wrong and wrong for right; to take black for white, and white for black; to take suffering for bliss, and bliss as suffering. For cultivators of the Way, the primary enemy is sexual desire. If you can’t cut off desire and cast out love, then you can’t cultivate. Therefore love and desire are the greatest obstructions. You must subdue them, get rid of them, and not allow them to stir up waves. Otherwise you will lose the opportunity to become enlightened.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ROUSING SOUNDS, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS CAN BE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva calls out: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THE WORLD CALLED ROUSING SOUNDS, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS CAN BE DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES SUCH AS THESE, WHICH, BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS, CAN CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED. Although the names are different, their underlying principle is the same. The forty names mentioned above can expand to an infinite number of names. And in compliance with what living beings are willing to hear, they are explained so as to help these living beings to gain an understanding.

CONCLUSION

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THIS SAHA WORLD, THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE EXPLAINED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES. TO THE EAST, ARE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MILLIONS, COUNTLESS, MEASURELESS, BOUNDLESS, UNEQUALLED, UNCOUNTABLE, INESTIMABLE, INCONCEIVABLE, INEFFABLE WORLDS THAT EXHAUST THE DHARMA REALM AND THE REALM OF EMPTINESS. IN EACH OF THOSE WORLDS WHERE THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE EXPLAINED, THERE ARE ALSO FORTY TRILLION NAMES. BY ACCORDING WITH LIVING BEINGS’ THOUGHTS THESE NAMES CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED. AS IT IS IN THE EAST, SO TOO, IT IS IN THE SOUTH, WEST, AND NORTH, THE FOUR INTERMEDIATE DIRECTIONS, AND ABOVE AND BELOW.

COMMENTARY:

After describing the different names of the Four Holy Truths in one world, in each of the Ten directions, Manjushri Bodhisattva concludes by saying: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, IN THIS SAHA WORLD – the world we are currently dwelling in--THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE EXPLAINED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES. But this doesn’t apply only to our would system. TO THE EAST ARE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MILLIONS, COUNTLESS, MEASURELESS, BOUNDLESS, UNEQUALLED – there is no number to correspond to these many worlds. UNCOUNTABLE – there’s no way to even count how many worlds. INESTIMABLE – this number is so huge that it’s unreckonable. INCONCEIVABLE – you can’t even conceive of it with your thoughts. INEFFABLE – unspeakably many -- WORLDS THAT EXHAUST THE DHARMA REALM AND THE REALM OF EMPTINESS – in infinite universes that pervade the ten directions. IN EACH OF THOSE WORLDS WHERE THE FOUR HOLY TRUTHS ARE EXPLAINED, THERE ARE ALSO FORTY TRILLION NAMES. In each of those infinite universes just mentioned, the Four Holy Truths are explained, and in each case there are forty trillion variations of the same principles. The meanings of the Four Holy Truths are basically the same; nonetheless, according with the tendencies of the living beings in each of those worlds, they are explained in a way that completely suits living beings’ natures and aptitudes, thus causing them to be subdued and to obtain benefit. AS IT IS IN THE EAST, SO TOO, IT IS IN THE SOUTH, WEST, AND NORTH, THE FOUR INTERMEDIATE DIRECTIONS – southeast, southwest, northeast, and northwest -- AND ABOVE AND BELOW – that is, in all ten directions.

SUTRA:

“DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, JUST AS IN THIS SAHA WORLD SYSTEM, THERE ARE WORLDS IN THE TEN DIRECTIONS AS DESCRIBED ABOVE, SO TOO, THERE ARE WORLDS IN THE TEN DIRECTIONS IN EACH OF THOSE OTHER WORLD SYSTEMS. IN EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THOSE WORLDS THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING IS DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES. THE HOLY TRUTH OF ACCUMULATION, THE HOLY TRUTH OF EXTINCTION, AND THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY ARE ALSO EACH DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES. AND ACCORDING TO WHAT LIVING BEINGS LIKE IN THEIR MINDS, THEY CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED.

COMMENTARY:

Manjushri Bodhisattva says: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, JUST AS IN THIS SAHA WORLD SYSTEM, THERE ARE WORLDS IN THE TEN DIRECTIONS AS DESCRIBED ABOVE, SO TOO, THERE ARE WORLDS IN THE TEN DIRECTIONS IN EACH OF THOSE OTHER WORLD SYSTEMS. In each universe throughout the ten directions, there are infinite sub-universes and sub-sub-universes reaching out like a net, multilayered and infinite. AND IN EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THOSE WORLDS, THE HOLY TRUTH OF SUFFERING IS DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES. Also, THE HOLY TRUTH OF ACCUMULATION, THE HOLY TRUTH OF EXTINCTION, AND THE HOLY TRUTH OF THE WAY ARE ALSO EACH DESCRIBED IN FORTY TRILLION NAMES. AND ACCORDING TO WHAT LIVING BEINGS LIKE IN THEIR MINDS, according to their propensities and what they like to hear, these names are explained. They are used to CAUSE THEM ALL TO BE TAMED AND SUBDUED. Those explanations cause living beings to turn away from confusion and return to enlightenment. To stop their ignorance and inversion, and to return to the source.

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LIBERATING THE LIVING

Tomorrow (April 12, 1976) we will hold a ceremony that most Westerners are not familiar with, a ceremony for liberating the living. Since most Westerners have never seen this ceremony, they don’t understand the intent behind liberating the living creatures. Why do we liberate them? It is because if we ransom creatures that were destined to be slaughtered for food and then set them free, then they can live out their natural lifespans. This in turn enables the people who liberate the living to enjoy a long life.

Why are there wars in the world? It is because our collective killing karma is so heavy. If in this life I kill you, in the next life, you’ll kill me, and in the life after that I’ll come back to kill you. This cycle of killing continues forever. People kill animals and in their next life they become animals. The animals which they once killed now return as people to claim revenge. This goes on and on and on. There is endless killing and bloodshed. When incidents of slaughter multiply until the resentment can no longer be contained, they explode into massive world wars, with the resultant huge massacres and horrendous distruction. On the battlefield, people are propelled by resentment and enmity that has accumulated during many lifetimes, and they go absolutely berserk, lashing out at one another like savages. “You kill one person? I’ll kill ten!” They take revenge on one another like that. Wars are the painful results of killing karma created in our past lives.

Therefore, we liberate the living to diminish our killing karma. The more people engage in liberating the living, the less killing they will do. Wars will proportionally decrease. We who cultivate these compassionate practices do not oppose war: we just don’t go to war. We don’t kill but instead we set living creatures free. This is the true and ultimate way to eliminate war. It is also a gateway to long life and health and to the eradication of disasters and illnesses. The merit and virtue that one accumulates from liberating animals is boundless. It enables you to cause living beings to live out the full extent of their natural lifespans. In additions, you benefit personally because illnesses are averted. As a result you enjoy good health and are able to peacefully cultivate the Way.

The purpose of liberating the living is to protect the lives of creatures. It is a Dharma door that exemplifies the Buddha’s compassion. Everyone should protect living creatures and not abuse or slaughter them. When I visited Thailand and Vietnam a few years ago, I saw that Thailand was overrun with frogs, and Vietnam was infested with mice. Those were responses evoked by the heavy killing karma of those citizens of those countries. If we want to have a healthy and thriving country, then we sould exhaust our means to abstain from killing and cherish the living.

Bottom of Form