

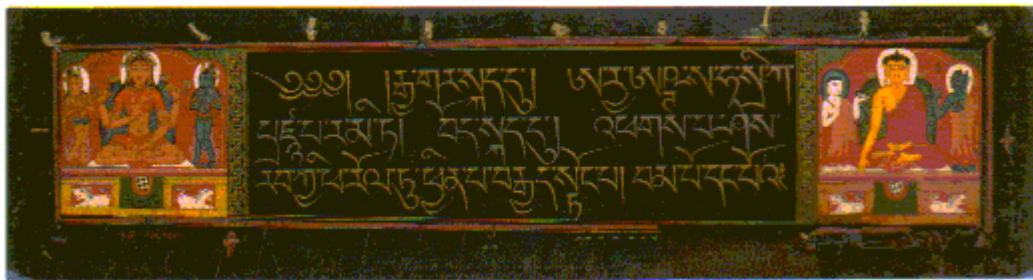
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The Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita Sutra [The Prajnaparamita in 8,000 Lines]

and
its résumé in verses:
The Prajnaparamita Ratnagunasamcayagatha

[The verses were translated from the Sanskrit by Edward Conze]



[Above] **Frontispiece from a copy of the Sutra of Perfect Wisdom in 8,000 Lines** PAPER - 1 LEAF - 200 x 700 MM - 15TH CENTURY - TIBET - IN TIBETAN On multiple-layered black-stained paper, a central panel 120 x 620 mm also varnished, the margin built up with additional layers of paper, in the centre there are three lines of ornate calligraphic script in gold and silver ink, flanked by two miniatures. 120 x 110 mm, that on the left showing the goddess Prajnaparamita, that on the right showing Sakyamuni Buddha. The verso is blank except for a simple panel outlined in gold, and would have been the exterior cover of a manuscript. Buckled, frayed edges, lacks some layers of reinforcement around the margins, the text and miniatures are undamaged and bright. The goddess Prajnaparamita (Perfection of Wisdom) is shown in Vajra pose on a lion throne, she holds a sceptre of immutability (Vajra) in her right hand and the book of perfect wisdom in her left. Her second right hand is held before her chest in the gesture of teaching, while her lower left rests on her lap in meditation posture. She is flanked by a pair of standing bodhisattvas. Maitreya on her right bearing a water pot upon a lotus, and the blue Vajrapani on her left, whose cognizance is the vajra, also resting upon the petals of a lotus, the stem of which he holds in his hands. The legend beneath reads: Homage to the Great Mother. On the right Sakyamuni Buddha touching the earth in the gesture of calling it to witness his attainment of supreme awakening is flanked by his two closest disciples, Sariputra, renowned for his great intellect, and Madgalyayana, renowned for his mystical powers, holding begging bowls and alarm staffs. The statement of homage below the image is no longer legible. **The text is the opening phrases of the Tibetan version of the Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 lines.**

[On the right] Greater Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom, Vol. 26 PAPER - 1 LEAF - 292 x 111MM - 11-12TH CENTURY, Song DYNASTY Single sheet, woodblock printed on thick yellowish-brown mulberry paper, mounted and framed. With 6 columns of 17 characters. The Da Bore jing, the shorter title of the Greater Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom, a large body of texts translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by the Chinese pilgrim-scholar Xuan Zang (602-664). His translation in 600 chapters included several versions of the original Sanskrit Prajnaparamita sutra, and is effectively a library of the Prajnaparamita literature. (Several other translations of the same body of works were made by others under various titles and considerable differences are found between them.) The Prajnaparamita sutra is said to contain the teachings delivered by the Buddha in four locations (the Vulture Peak, Sravasti, Parinirmitavasavartin and Veluvana) to sixteen audiences. The sutra declares that the sixth paramita - prajna, the highest knowledge, is the origin of all Dharma. It has been extremely influential in China, and the meaning of Emptiness it preached became the fundamental philosophical base of most of the Mahayana schools such as the Fahua (Lotus of the Good Law), Huayan (Flower Garland) and Niepan (Nirvana) sects. This page has been cut from the Chapter 26 of the Da Bore jing, mounted and framed. The format of a single border, six columns and seventeen characters per column is standard for Buddhist sutras printed during the 11th and 12th centuries. The large, well-formed characters of the text were printed on thick, yellowish-brown mulberry paper which was commonly used for printing sutras in the Northern Song dynasty (908-1127). The calligraphic style of this page is an excellent example of the style of the great Tang dynasty calligrapher Yen Zhenching (709-785). The smooth corners and fullness of each stroke create beautifully balanced, square characters, very faithful to Yen's aim to archaize and simplify each character. Although there is no direct evidence on this page to indicate its date, it is likely that this edition dates to the 11th or 12th century. -- [Source](#)



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General Introduction

Prajnaparamita

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

1. The sixth of **the six perfections**.
2. The Perfection of Wisdom sutras or Prajnaparamita sutras are a group of Mahayana Buddhist sutras dealing with the subject of the Perfection of Wisdom.

History

The earliest sutra is the Perfection of Wisdom in **8,000 lines, or astasahasrika prajnaparamita sutra**, probably written about 100 BCE with more material added later up until about 100 CE. As well as the sutra itself there is a **summary in verse, the ratnagunasamcayagatha**, which may be slightly older as it is not written in standard literary Sanskrit. This sutra is one of the earliest Mahayana sutras.

Between 100 CE and 300 CE the original sutra was expanded into large versions in 10,000, 18,000, 25,000 and 100,000 lines, collectively known as the Large Perfection of Wisdom. These differ mainly in the extent to which the many lists are either abbreviated or written out in full, **the rest of the text is mostly unchanged between the different versions**. Since the large versions proved to be unwieldy they were later summarised into shorter versions, produced from 300 CE to 500 CE. The shorter versions include the two best known, the **Heart sutra**, or hridaya prajnaparamita sutra and the **Diamond sutra**, vajrachedika Prajnaparamita sutra. These two are very popular and have had a great influence on the development of Mahayana Buddhism. Tantric versions were produced from 500 CE on. ...

[source](#)

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Prajnaparamita

Guru and yidam - Mother of all the Buddhas

Prajnaparamita embodies the **bliss/emptiness** that gives rise to all phenomena -- hence her honorific title as Mother of all the Buddhas. She usually appears as a tranquil seated figure clothed in silks; her body is gold in colour, and she has one face and four arms. Her first two arms are held in meditation posture in her lap, while the other right hand holds a nine-spoked vajra (thunderbolt sceptre symbolising **compassion/bliss**) and the left, the text of the Heart Sutra which is the essential wisdom-text on **the emptiness of phenomena**. There are other forms of the deity, as at right: her first two hands in prayer mudra at the heart, second right hand holding a mala [rosary] and second left hand holding a text.

Her name means 'Perfection of Wisdom'; in Tibetan she is also known as Yum Chenmo, or 'Great Mother'. She is closely associated with chöd practice.

Natalie R. Marsh offers [an essay on the iconography of Prajnaparamita](#) (along with an [accompanying thangka image](#)). From the Mirrors of the Heart-Mind exhibit.

[Source](#)



Perfection of Wisdom (Prajnaparamita) Sutras

Many Prajnaparamita sutras are named after their length. Their length is measured in lines called shloka, each of which contains 32 syllables. One web page draws, as we do here, from the works of Edward Conze. Although incomplete to provide sources in the Chinese and Tibetan canons for many major Mahayana texts.

- In 100000 Lines
- In 25000 Lines
- In 18000 Lines
- In 10000 Lines
- [In 2500 Lines](#) (see Kalavinka & Gileht site)
- In 700 Lines
- In 500 Lines
- [In 300 Lines](#) - The Diamond (Cutter) Sutra
- In 150 Lines
- In 300 Lines
- In 8000 Lines
- [In 8000 Lines](#)

[The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines](#) is the oldest Prajnaparamita text, dating from 100BCE to 100CE. It consists of 32 chapters. (see below)

The Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Lines, the Perfection of Wisdom in 25,000 Lines and the Perfection of Wisdom in 18,000 Lines are all expansions on the 8,000 line Prajnaparamita. They largely differ in they way they expand lists. In saying X is emptiness, emptiness is X over some list, the longest sutra will repeat this for each item of the list, and there may be hundreds of items. Other versions will expand only the first and last items of the list: form is emptiness, emptiness is form, and so on till dharmas are emptiness, emptiness is dharmas skipping 198 expressions.

A Commentary on the Perfection of Wisdom, based on the 25,000-line version, is attributed to Nagarjuna. In Sanskrit, it is called the [Mahaprajnaparamita Upadesha](#). This [outline](#), though in French (*i.e. Excerpt from Lamotte's from Gileht's Web site*) contains links to many materials and translations of sections of the work in English. In contrast Kalavinka (*i.e. Follow this link, also*) has a lot of materials in English, but not reflecting the structure of the commentary.

[A Hymn to Perfect Wisdom](#) was composed by Nagarjuna's disciple Rahulabhadra. (see below)

The Perfection of Wisdom in 10,000 Lines begins the trend of reducing rather than expanding the size of the Perfection of Wisdom texts. This trend is continued in the Perfection of Wisdom in 2,500 Lines, the Perfection of Wisdom in 700 Lines, the Perfection of Wisdom in 500 Lines, the Perfection of Wisdom in 50 Lines, the Perfection of Wisdom in 150 Lines and the Perfection of Wisdom in a few words.

The Perfection of Wisdom Explaining how Benevolent Kings may Protect their Countries

[The Diamond-Cutter Sutra](#) (see below) is another sutra important to much of Mahayana.

[The Heart Sutra](#) (see below) is the most popular sutra in Mahayana Buddhism. We discuss it on a page of its own.

[Abhisamayalankara - this is the Ornament of Clear Realisation](#). This text is variously ascribed to Asanga, the brother of Vasubandhu and to someone called Maitreyanatha. Some claim that Maitreyanatha was Asanga's teacher, while others suggest that Asanga and Maitreyanatha are the same person. This text is an attempt to systematise and summarise the vast Perfection of Wisdom teachings. [It is targetted at the individual buddhist, elucidating the steps of Mahayana practice on the route to realisation.](#)

[Source](#), see [also](#), [also](#)

The Abhisamayalamkara, Maitreya

Abhisamayālamkāra of Maitreya

(i.e. Abhisamayalamkara-Prajnaparamita-Upadesha-Shastra – See: The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom: With the Divisions of the Abhisamayalamkara: Edward Conze, ISBN 0520053214)

Maitreya's Abhisamayalamkara / Ornament of Clear Realization: "the advanced text on the stages of the path and the fruitions of both Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism. The topic here is the so-called "hidden" or implied meaning of the Prajnaparamita sutras. This means the progression through the various paths and bhumis of bodhisattvas, shravakas and pratyekabuddhas, which actually means to become friends with the basic groundlessness of our existence. In other words, the text describes in detail what happens in the mind of someone who meditates on emptiness, from the stage of a beginner up through Buddhahood." -- [source](#)

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[Sanskrit copy](#)

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Asanga was predicted by Buddha Shakyamuni to explain the implicit meaning of the Prajnaparamita, which he did in his text Abhisamayalamkara (The Ornament of Clear Realizations). In eight chapters this text deals with the perfections, covering the following subjects in extensive detail: the grounds and paths, clear realisation, their order, how to generate them, and how to abandon the objects of abandonment. The Seventy Topics is a seventy point outline of the Abhisamayalamkara, and thus gives a good overview before the material is studied in detail. – Maitreyanatha wrote the Ornament of Clear Realization as a commentary to the Perfection of Wisdom sutras to clarify their implicit meaning. This text became famous in India and Tibet, where it became the object of further commentaries which were widely studied and relied upon to understand the Buddha's instructions for training the mind. The 4th Chapter, called "The Complete Training in all the Aspects" deals with four trainings called: Complete Training in all the Aspects; Peak Training; Serial Training; and Momentary Training. One meditates through condensing the aspects to make them handy for practice. All the four trainings have similar types of objects for their meditations but their way of meditating on the objects is different. — [source](#)

* * *

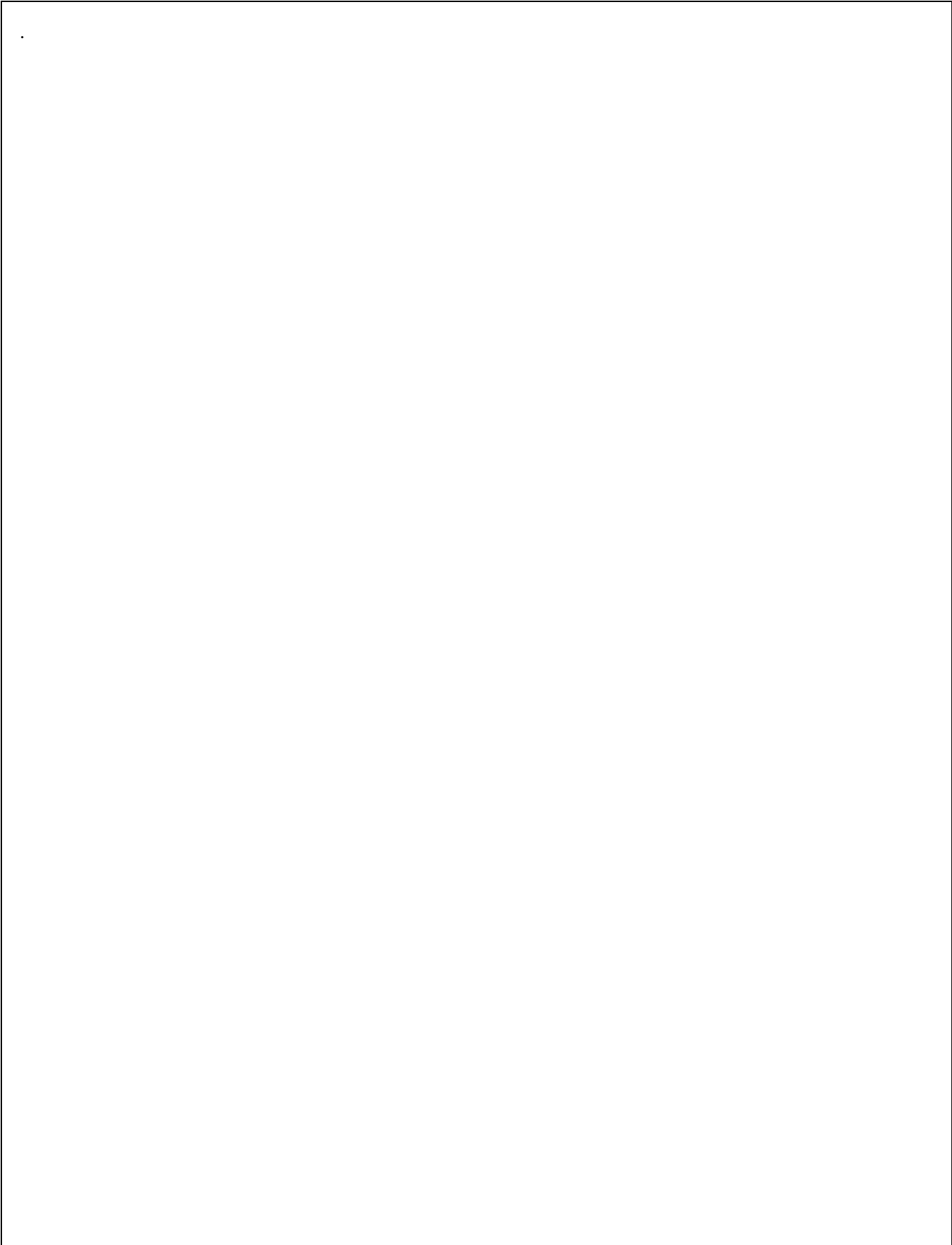
Commentary on the Ornament of Clear Realization [Skt.: Abhisamayalamkara]: Relief of the Noble Ones, by Mikyo Dorje, 1130 pages (Partial translation by Karl Brunholz. Taught at Nitartha Institute 2001 and 2002) -- The topic here is the so-called "hidden" or implied meaning of the Prajnaparamita sutras. This means the progression through the various paths and bhumis of bodhisattvas, shravakas and pratyekabuddhas, whereby the practitioner becomes friends with the basic groundlessness of his or her existence. In other words, the text describes in detail what happens in the mind of someone who meditates on emptiness, from the stage of a beginner up through Buddhahood. -- [Source](#)

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-- See also: [Overview of the Eight Sets of Realizations in Abhisamayalamkara](#), by Alexander Berzin

* * *

-- See also; [Buddhism Refuge](#) – Course 2 of ACI, This Course is based upon The Ornament of Realizations (Abhisamaya Alamkara) of Maitreya and Master Asanga (350 AD), with a monastic commentary by Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye (1493-1568). Topics include: what is the perfection of wisdom, what is refuge, the objects of refuge, the reasons for taking Buddhist refuge, the qualities of a Buddha, the different types of bodhichitta, what is nirvana, the divisions of nirvana, five different proofs that emptiness is the ultimate nature of reality, and the five paths which lead to full enlightenment.



The Perfection of Wisdom

Introduction

The Perfection of Wisdom literature is a major part of early Mahayana literature. **The Sanskrit name** for this literature is Prajnaparamita actually does not mean 'Perfection of Wisdom'. It contains the root term jña which relates to wisdom in its sense of wisdom that leads to liberation as opposed to wisdom that has to do with knowledge, it is a term also used for insight in distinction to vidya which refers to knowledge. The prefix pra means excellent/supreme and so prajña means 'excellent wisdom/supreme insight'. The remainder of the word means para, the other shore, i means gone and ta is a postfix that makes a term into a state of being. So all together Prajnaparamita means something more like 'The state of excellent wisdom gone to the other shore', or 'The Supreme Insight from the other shore'. The other shore of what? Well that is a big question, but here it can be taken to mean that which is the other shore from where we are in samsara. This is a bit of a mouthful to speak about all the time and so the more catchy 'Perfection of Wisdom' has become popular as a translation of Prajnaparamita .

Like the Lotus sutra the Prajnaparamita literature represents **not a single unitary text but a textual tradition** that is the heir to a long tradition of oral and textual development. The most famous twentieth scholar of Prajnaparamita literature was Edward Conze and his views are in general taken as quite authoritative as he studied the Prajnaparamita literature for pretty much the whole of his life and gained a deep understanding of it. He proposed that its origins were in the first or second century BCE in Southern India in the Andhra Pradesh area, the same time and area as that in which the Lotus sutra probably had its origins. However, the first firm date in Prajnaparamita literature is **179 CE** when a translation of **the version in 8000 lines, the Astasahasrikaprajnaparamita sutra** was translated into Chinese by Lokakema. He was one of the Indian Pandits who worked with in Central Asia with Chinese sages translating texts into Chinese. There are many later translations into Chinese, and into Tibetan. There are also some important Prakrit versions of the Prajnaparamita literature which were found in North West Pakistan in Gilgit and in Central Asia, these are fairly early and may date back as early as the fourth or fifth century CE .

Fortunately it also became a popular manuscript to copy in Sanskrit and so many Sanskrit manuscripts of the Prajnaparamita literature also survive. However, due the perishability of manuscripts there are no particularly ancient Sanskrit manuscripts available for study. In addition the versions available for study at the moment are all of the text as revised by the eighth century Pa la dynasty scholar Haribhadra who wrote the important Abhisamayalankara commentary on it. It is not clear to what extent Haribhadra made alterations to the text or whether he simply divided it into chapters in a new way.

The origins and development of Prajnaparamita literature

In Mahayana and in Tibetan Mahayana traditions the origins of the Prajnaparamita literature are often taken as being synonymous with the origins of the Mahayana itself. It is generally held that **Nagarjuna recovered the texts of the Prajnaparamita literature from the Nagas** who had kept them from the time of the Buddha when they were given at the stupa at Amaravati to the emergence of the Mahayana.

Unlike the Lotus sutra which consists of a single text one characteristic of the Prajnaparamita literature is that it is vast literature consisting of numerous main texts and commentaries. It can seem a daunting task to try and approach this literature.

There are some early versions which are a bit shorter.

- In particular there is a text called **the Ratnagunasamacaya, 'the collection of jewel like virtues'**. (*see copy below*) This is a verse text in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit which is fairly close to Prakrit. Due to it being verse it has retained the Prakrit forms so as to maintain the way the verses scan. The translation is about 40 pages long.
- The next oldest version is probably the version in 10,000 lines of the Prajnaparamita literature which is about 10,000 words or so in English.
- The next later version is in 25,000 lines
- and then there is a version in 100,000 lines.
- Following this the versions start getting smaller again.
- **The Vajrachedika sutra or Diamond sutra**, (*see copy below*) actually the Diamond cutter sutra.
- The next version again is **the Heart sutra** (*see copy below*)
- and the ultimate end of this process is **a version in one letter 'a'**. (*see copy below, no! That was it! :*)

At the same time people also began to make commentaries and the most famous commentary is the eighth century **Ornament of the Teaching or Abhisamayalankara**. It is often said that the root texts are not fully understandable without the commentaries and not all of them are translated into English.

Conze suggested a number of tendencies to **the way the texts developed over the centuries** and they make a very interesting list of the developments of the tradition.

These include, in the order of their development: an **increasing trend towards sectarianism, increasing scholasticism, emphasis on skill in means, growing concern with Buddha's of faith, such as Tara and Avalokateshvara**. There is also a very evident **trend towards verbosity**, the earliest Buddhist texts often use multiple terms, the Dharma is deep, deep in meaning etc. In the Prajnaparamita literature terms such as 'the earth shook' gradually get more and more complicated until they end up with formulations like 'the earth, shook, rocked, rolled, quaked and trembled'. A further tendency which is quite apparent is for **lamentations over the decline of the Dharma start appearing**. **The hidden meanings of the texts also become eventually a subject for discussion, especially in the commentaries**. **The dharmakaya theory also starts to appear**, the view that there are different bodies of the Buddha, in particular that the dharmakaya is not simply the body of the Buddha's teachings, but this becomes transformed into the dharmakaya being the abstract eternal form of the Buddha and the form he appears in the world in is caused the nirmanakaya, the construction body. Later still the number of kayas, or bodies increases again and a sambhogakaya, or enjoyment body appears in addition. Later still the doctrines of the stages of the evolution of the Bodhisattva, **the bodhisattvabhumi theory appears**. Finally, the tendency to extract out the essential essence of the Prajnaparamita literature becomes manifest.

Teachings on Emptiness

The Prajnaparamita literature shares with the Lotus sutra an enormous emphasis on the teaching of the dharma and the importance of the doctrine of emptiness. Unlike the Lotus sutra **the Prajnaparamita literature emphasises countless times this doctrine [of emptiness] and in particular expands on the implications of this doctrine.** In particular the implication of emptiness is seen as being that nothing has any inherent self nature, or svabhava, literally self-nature. This is the view because everything is essentially of the nature of emptiness. Whereas in Nikaya Buddhism the method for realisation is to attain insight into the non-existence of the self, in the Prajnaparamita literature the main method for realisation is the recognition that nothing has a self, a svabhava.

One striking aspect of its teaching method is its **relentless emphasis on creating logical negations**, something is not something, and not not something. Such statements are hard to understand. Indeed its arguments often ramble on for pages without apparently making any sense at all. *(i.e. They do not make sense to someone who is trying to get an affirmation out of them; but they are all non-affirmative negation. That is the whole point, the finger pointing at the moon.)* Despite this even if you do not take to its abstruse style of argument it contains a wealth of material which is more approachable. It **makes extensive use of similes and parables** to teach and these are as clear as its philosophical arguments are obscure. So just as in the Lotus sutra it is possible to learn a great deal about the material culture of the communities within which the Prajnaparamita literature was current. The following references are drawn from **the Ratnagunasamacaya which is basically a short version of the Astasahasrikaprajnaparamita** and hence many of these teachings crop up in the same sequence in both texts.

The claim is made that texts are better than relics and wisdom is even better than texts. A simile is given that a relic of the Buddha in a casket suffuses the casket with a quality that makes the casket worthy of reverence. So in the same way the text of the Prajnaparamita literature is revered as it contains the essential teachings of the Buddha. There is considerable emphasis in the Prajnaparamita literature on veneration of the text as the receptacle of wisdom.

The use of similes

The wealth of similes include those based on: villages, oceans, springs, seasons, pregnant women, ships, kings and ministers, jewel islands, merchants on a journey, people created by magic, a machine, a parachute.

One of the main groups addressed in the Prajnaparamita literature are traders and merchants from urban areas, rather than farmers and rural people. Its viewpoint is very open and includes numerous references to sea voyages. This is a far remove from the landscape of Magadh and more akin to the sea going cultures of the South of India. The similes describe an environment which would be compatible with that of India from the time of Asoka onwards. Some of the similes are also timeless and not bound by culture or environment. For instance it suggests that just as a man infatuated with a woman thinks only of her, so a man infatuated with the dharma thinks also only of it and is single minded in his pursuit of it. There are teachings about signs that indicate the coming of things, such as the signs of spring like blossom, pregnancy heralds child birth, and digging for water in a desert a man becomes happy when the sand become damp. These kinds of teachings show that even if the whole of the teaching is not revealed its signs may be found. Some similes are complex like two merchants who are preparing for a journey. One checks his ship carefully before setting out, the other does not, and the result is predictable.

In an important teaching like this it suggests that a magician at a cross-roads might conjure up the images of many men by magic. But would those apparent images be real? It only asks the question, it does not answer it.

It describes the universe as being like a machine of interlocking parts, an interesting depiction perhaps of a view of Dependent Origination.

The odd parallel of the parachute suggest that the dharma is like a parachute and just as a man jumping off a cliff can be saved by a parachute so a person following the dharma will be saved. The oddity here is essentially that there is no well know tradition of parachuting in ancient India.

Poetic and philosophical modes of teaching

One thing I would like to point out to you is that despite the tendency to endlessly state that things simultaneously do and don't exist and neither don't or do not exist, and similar kinds of pairs this is not in some senses philosophy. It is rather a kind of text which summons up a state of mind which is suggestive of the nature of emptiness. In some instance the Prajnaparamita literature expresses itself in a very poetic manner. In particular the famous last stanzas of the Diamond sutra show how a text can have both a poetic truth and be interpretable in philosophical terms.

- As stars, a fault of vision, as a lamp,
- a mock show, dew drops, a bubble,
- a dream, a lightning flash, or a cloud
- So we should view what is conditional. (Diamond sutra verse 84)

Emptiness is not taught as a logical philosophical argument but spoken of as experiential truth. The commentaries explain all these terms in logical philosophical terms. For instance 'a fault of vision' refers to the debate over how perception functions. The mock show refers back to the conjuror at the cross-roads. The point is that this is accessible as a philosophical truth, but it also functions as set of image which have the ability to engender a non-conceptual insight into the nature of emptiness. It can therefore be suggested that its teachings are intended to be taken as experiential as much as they are intellectual.

The Bodhisattva

The Prajnaparamita literature also contains numerous references to Bodhisattvas. Some are human, some are more than human. The Bodhisattvas are often depicted as human teachers of the dharma. It describes who they travel and teach the dharma. They are said to sit in round buildings with peaked roofs. (Conze 1974: p. 221) Perhaps caitya halls, or communal halls of some sort. Or are these references to tents, like circus big tops? This is only a speculation. However it is not a speculation that such travelling teaching expositions still take place and this is one of the texts that the Tibetan Buddhist teachers still expound on. There is also a reference to performing the Prajnaparamita literature on set days of the lunar month in a regular cycle and this practice is still current amongst the Newari Buddhists of the Kathmandu valley. The chanting of the sutra and the giving of teachings on it are an integral part of this tradition. This point to the Prajnaparamita literature being both a performance tradition. Indeed, the Perfection of Wisdom literature says that the teaching of the Bodhisattvas is better than that of the worship of sutra texts or holy relics and more efficacious than all other forms of practice.

There are also reference to celestial Bodhisattvas in the Prajnaparamita literature such as Manjushri and Avalokateshvara and to their salvific powers. It is possible that over the period in which the Perfection of Wisdom literature the nature of the Bodhisattva developed from that of a teacher of the Dharma into a kind of figure with powers like that of a deity, such as Manjushri».

Skill in Means

Skill in means are also a key feature of the Prajnaparamita literature. This is nicely illustrated in the Skill in the Means sutra which forms part of the Prajnaparamita literature. It is quite short and contains some extreme examples of skill in means. Tatz argues that the Skill in means sutra, is a fairly early part of the Prajnaparamita literature which became independent from the main text early on. It is preserved in both Chinese and Tibetan versions and in fragments of the Sanskrit text quoted in other works. It contains a number of stories which show how the doctrine of skill in means works.

A striking instance of what seems an odd kind of Bodhisattva is found in the Bodhisattva Priyakara who is a monk who is so fantastically handsome that women die on the spot when they see him. They thus attain liberation from the female body and are reincarnated with male bodies and are able to attain liberation. Evidently this is a

very peculiar story from our modern viewpoint. It is an example of skill in means, and a pretty sneaky strategy it seems. (Tatz 1994: p. 39).

The Bodhisattvas can act in apparently immoral ways to lead people to liberation, in the story of the Compassionate Ship's captain (Tatz 1994: p. 73) the Bodhisattva in a former life was a ship's captain who out of compassion for the 500 merchants he was carrying on his ship killed a robber in order to stop him killing the 500 merchants.

There is a story of a monk who is immensely handsome and having meditated in the forest for a long time is going to the town when a woman sees him and falls in love with him and wants him to marry her. He wants to decline but she pressurizes him and he agrees in order to use skill in means to lead her towards liberation. In this way he helped her to reach enlightenment. The Skill in means doctrine gives the teachers great freedom teaching techniques and in choices about how to teach.

Changes in attitude to the Buddha

A second aspect of this work is that it demonstrates some of the concerns current in the early Mahayana about the nature of the Buddha. In particular it tries to explain how all of the apparent misfortunes of his life, which are on the surface just the kind of accidents that could have happened to a person, were actually examples of skill in means. Thus he came back from a begging round without any food once, so that monks who have the same experience are not disheartened. Also although his body is really incapable of suffering harm he pretended to have a thorn stuck in his foot, in order to lead people to liberation. This indicates an increasing emphasis on the Buddha as a manifestation of a supernatural phenomena. Also that the text considers it necessary to explain incidents like this is indicative of some tension that must have existed over such incidents. The tension is not between a human or a divine Buddha. The Nikaya Buddhist explanation is that rather they represent the maturation of former negative karma that could not be worked out by the Buddha until his last life as Gautama Buddha. So the Skill in Means doctrine means that all of these stories become displays which are ways of teaching.

It is also possible that these debates may reflect arguments about how karma worked. The Pali canon doctrine of karma includes the possibility of purely accidental events, so physical sickness need not be the fruit of any karma. However, this only works because the early canon considers that things actually exist, and so accidents of matter can occur. However, once the view began to shift towards nothing really existing, in the sense of having no self nature, then accidental karma became a problem, for it implies that things exist in their own right. So instead Buddhism started shifting towards only accepting the existence of intentional karma. It is possible then that some events in the Buddha's life could be understood early on as examples of accidental karma, in particular his various physical ailments and so were not a problem for early Buddhists. The concern about this issue it seems coincides with the change in view of the world from real to 'unreal'. Although the use of these terms needs considerable qualification, it might be better to say from 'dharmas having their own self nature' to 'the emptiness of all dharmas'.

Skill in Means and Emptiness

The doctrine of the emptiness of all phenomena and that of Skill in Means actually fit together in an interesting way. Thus the language of the Prajnaparamita literature leads one part of the way to something which is inexpressible. A nice parallel for this is how the Buddha created a jeweled city in the sky and told everyone that it was nirvana, but when everyone got there he revealed it was a mirage and the true nirvana lay further beyond and was without form and was emptiness. Skill in Means can be the telling of half truths, which lead to the realisation of ultimate reality.

The goal of the teaching of emptiness of all things in Prajnaparamita literature is not an intellectual understanding, but rather an experiential insight. So the teachings can never ultimately substitute for the experience, and thus all they can be are examples of Skill in Means, signs and stratagems which point the way towards realisation of emptiness. The Prajnaparamita literature is only in the end like a relic casket for the teaching it contains. [Source](#)

Buddhism's Sacred Texts

...

Most of the scriptures have never been fully translated into English, which is understandable when we consider that no other tradition on earth has created a larger body of sacred texts. To take one example, **the 40 sutras known collectively as the Prajnaparamita Sutra take up, in their Tibetan block print editions, 100 volumes of about 1,000 pages each**. Set down in writing somewhat later than the Tripitaka, this sutra is believed by Western scholars to reflect elaborations on the words of the Buddha by Indian Buddhists beginning about 100 B.C.E., and as late as Nagarjuna. Mahayana Buddhist scholars, on the other hand, believe that the Sutra records the actual words of the Buddha, but that the texts were removed from the human realm by gods and dragons for 400 years to allow time for the renunciative, monastic life to purify and prepare people for the messianic nature of its teachings.

Over the centuries, abridged versions of this great sutra have appeared, from the extremely short [One Letter Sutra](#) (its text is the letter A) to [versions of 8,000, 18,000, 20,000, and 25,000 lines](#). In its original form, called the "Great Mother," it purports to be a complete record of Shakyamuni's audience on Vulture Peak Mountain, in which the Buddha states that he is only the latest of a line of avataric predecessors, and constantly asserts that Prajnaparamita -- the female embodiment of the Sutra -- produced all the Buddhas and is their mother and instructor. It also gives us the classic Buddhist mantra, Om mani padme hum, and predicts the coming of Maitreya (Skt. "Loving One"), the Buddha-to-be who waits to emanate at some time in the future to help any who have not yet realized enlightenment. Besides the sutras, the Mahayana canon contains many shastras, treatises that interpret and comment on the philosophical statements contained in the sutras.

Most Buddhist sects are based on one or another sutra. For example, followers of the Japanese sect of Nichiren Buddhism chant their faith in the Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Law, or Lotus Sutra, a key sutra of Mahayana Buddhism. The Chinese school of T'ien-t'ai ("School of the Celestial Platform") also bases its doctrine on the Lotus Sutra.

One of the most often quoted scriptures is a small section of the Prajnaparamita known popularly as [the Diamond Sutra](#), a name that implies the penetration of the most impenetrable wisdom. Translated into Chinese in the year 401, the Diamond Sutra later became the first book ever printed (in 868), more than five centuries before the Gutenberg Bible. ...

[Source](#)

On the origins of transcendental wisdom - The Prajnaparamita Literature

(Source)

(i.e. This author insist in saying that there is an absolute, and that this text is a proof that Buddhist believe in some absolute reality like a God. Anyway, there are some interesting historical points in this text. The rest has been left out.)

Herein, for the purpose of exegetic study, is presented the root treatise on Holy Transcendental Wisdom (arya Prajnaparamita), consisting of XLI Stanzas extracted from the Ratnagunasamucayagatha (Rgs) and representing the earliest known text on this subject. *(i.e. Of course this author has his own translation to help prove his point – these have been also left out; anyway see the 41 first verses of the Ratnagunasamucayagatha translated by Conze below)*

The [41] Stanzas of the Practice of Holy Transcendental Wisdom consist of what later became the first two chapters of the Prajnaparamita-ratnagunasamucayagatha. Prof. Conze and other Western scholars have suggested that these forty-one Stanzas of the Practice of Holy Transcendental Wisdom form the earliest known, original Prajnaparamita-sutra, which according to legend are said to have been written with blue vaidurya on golden plates, sealed with seven seals, and placed in the sikhara of a tower presumably in or near Gandhara, northwest India. **As we review this text, its obvious precedence is startling.** It may not, however, have originally been composed as a Sutra (i.e., an authentic scripture spoken by the historical Buddha); in fact, quite the contrary. The text itself begins by deliberately stating that **it is a revelation, a treatise 'inspired' by the Buddha's power,** implying that no pretense is being made over the fact that it comes after Lord Sakyamuni's time, and is a work of a later Disciple. Just as the water of all the rivers of India flows from one common source, namely Lake Manasarovar in the Himalayas, likewise the true "insight" of a Disciple (sravakas) comes from the Buddha, says our text; it is precisely in that sense, and not in an historical sense, that the claim is put forth for this being a scripture of the Buddha!

We note that the traditional sutra-opening, i.e., Evam mayam sutram, is absent. In later productions of Prajnaparamita literature, this sutra-opening is artificially tacked on to the beginning of the text.

Much of the thought expressed in our text, and certainly in later Arya-Prajnaparamita texts, is **derivative of the Madhyamaka philosophy of Nagarjuna.** In classical Tibetan studies up to this point, it has always been stated that Nagarjuna acquired his philosophical view from his readings of the Prajnaparamita Sutra. However, **the trend of modern scholarship would show that the true case is the other way around. The philosophical vision expressed in the Prajnaparamita Sutra springs from the thought of Nagarjuna.**

The Mulamadhyamakakarika, composed by Nagarjuna probably in the first century AD, shows no sign of literary dependence on any Vaipulya-sutra. It is now suggested by western scholars that Nagarjuna was wholly unaware of the Mahayana Movement that later blossomed largely in his name. Indeed, he was probably an Abbot in one of the traditional branch schools of the Mahasamghika Order flourishing in the south of India.

A later and distinct "Nagarjuna" is known, who without question must have been both a member of the Sarvastivada Order and an abbot-professor of Nalanda University. This latter figure, disciple of someone named **Rahulabhadra,** wrote a commentary on the Pancavimsati-sahasrika-Prajnaparamita-sutra. He obviously may be associated with Mahayana developments, as with the literature of the Prajnaparamita in India. The Tibetans wrongly conflate the two Nagarjunas, not appreciating that Nalanda University was only founded and built several hundred years after the life time of the author of the Mulamadhyamakakarika.

The date for the composition of the Stanzas on the Practice of Arya-Prajnaparamita is unknown. However it certainly may be placed at an early period. Is it even pre-Christian? We do not know. Conze would tend to incline towards this view.

The most important feature of the Forty-one Stanzas is that it is from this original text that all other versions of the Prajnaparamita-sutra have derived. (as stated by Prof. Conze) From the Mahayana Buddhist perspective these Stanzas are therefore **THE ONE KEY TEXT** for an understanding of the original Prajnaparamita teachings. (*i.e. Didn't this author just mentioned that the source is Nagarjuna. So the "key" would be in Nagarjuna's teachings.*) This understanding must take place within the context of Prajnaparamita literature as a whole.

We would suggest, that for this purpose, it is first essential to appreciate **the underlying meaning of the name, Transcendental Wisdom,** particularly from its original intent, and secondly, the historical role played out in the evolution of these unique treatises in Buddhism. (*i.e. This author is going to do his best to try to prove that this text means that there is an absolute, a God.*)

First, the name: The primary term in usage here is **Prajnaparamita**. It is important to remember the different meanings in which the term Prajnaparamita is used. As explained by Dignaga 3 (vide Prajnaparamita-artha-samgraha), the term means:

- the non-dual Gnosis of the Buddha (jnanam advayam sa Tathagatah), where non-dual (adwaita) means "non-differentiated by subject and object" (grahya-grahaka);
- the Path (marga) leading to the attainment of the Non-dual, in the sense of the "spiritual knowledge" (prajna) which leads to realization; and
- the Sutras (written texts) themselves, which reveal this knowledge.

The term **Prajna** is generally translated 'Wisdom'. Frequently and unfortunately the term **Paramita** is translated 'Perfection', as for example in Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's rendition of Prajnaparamita, the "Perfection of Wisdom" (see Heart of Wisdom, Tharpa Publ., London 1986). Conze makes the same error.

- In English this implies that the said 'Wisdom' is something that can and needs to be perfected — a knowledge that is to be gained, developed and matured, until it becomes finally perfect. (*i.e. Yes!*)
- This is not the meaning of Prajnaparamita. When the early texts speak of Transcendental Wisdom, they imply an immutable, primordial Wisdom that is utterly absolute, transcendental and complete. (*i.e. No!*)

Second, the historical evolution of the basic texts: We also use the term Prajnaparamita to mean the actual collection of treatises or Sutras which contain the teaching of the practice of Prajnaparamita. **There are known to be a little more than 16 of these treatises.** There are some texts in Chinese translation which do not appear in Tibet, but following the Tibetan tradition, **we tend to classify the whole collection under two headings,** namely,

- those referred to as **Mother-texts**
- and those considered **Sibling-texts.**
- There are six Mother-texts and at least ten Sibling-texts.

Western scholars are convinced, on good evidence, that there was **an original Root Text (mula-sutra)** and that gradually various expanded (vailpulya) redactions of the Root Text were fashioned. By examining internal evidence in the texts themselves, they have been able to suggest the progression in which these redactions appeared.

In the East, however, the tradition is that all the texts are original and fixed Sutras since the inception of Buddhism itself. As said by Prof. Conze: "...religious people are inclined to attribute their holy scriptures to divine inspiration, and they do not like to think of them as an historical sequence of utterances made by fallible men." 4

For our part we consider that these unique texts are indeed the result of divine inspiration, or intuition, but we do see them very much as part of an historical sequence of revelation. Thus, we are able to reconcile both the Eastern and the Western points of view.

There are authentic historical references to a Root Treatise (mula-sutra) in the Astasahasrika-prajnaparamita-sutra. This root treatise was said to have been communicated by the Acarya Dharmodgata to his disciple Sadaparudita,

a seeker from the West. Sadaprarudita is described as a layman, in that he is a Bodhisattva with a female companion. Through making an exceptional self-sacrifice, he becomes worthy to be entrusted with the sacred text, much like Parceval in the later Grail Legends.

Here is a list of the ensuing treatises in their historical sequence of composition:

The Six Mother texts:

- 302 gathas - Ratnagunasamucayagatha
- 8,000 slokas - Astasahasrika
- 10,000 slokas - Dasasahasrika
- 18,000 slokas - Astadasasahasrika
- 25,000 slokas - Pancavimsatisahasrika
- 100,000 slokas - Satasahasrika

The Ten Sibling texts:

- 2,500 slokas - Suvikrantavikramipariprccha
- 700 slokas - Saptasatika
- 500 slokas - Pancasatika
- 300 slokas - Trisatika (= Vajracchedika)
- 150 slokas - Naya-sata-pancasatika
- 25 slokas - Prajnahrdaya (Heart Sutra)
- 1 syllable - Ekaksari
- 50 slokas - Ardhasatika
- Kausika-prajnaparamita-tantra
- Svalpaksara-prajnaparamita-tantra

The general consensus amongst scholars at the present time is that the initial 41 verses of the first Mother text, the Samucayagatha (Tib: sDud-pa [Kg. Ser.1 no. 11), constitutes the substance of the original Prajnaparamitamulasutra; the root text from which all the 'expanded' (vaipulya) versions have sprung. However, as Conze explains, "Unfortunately our present [version of the Samcaya-gatha] is not the original one. It has been tampered with in the eighth century when, under the Buddhist Pala dynasty, which then ruled Bihar, the great expert on Prajnaparamita, Haribhadra, either rearranged the verses or, perhaps, only divided them into chapters." 5

Haribhadra nevertheless could not, we do not think, have done much damage to the initial 41 gathas, since their archaic metre and language still bears the signature of the Prakrit original. The Ratna gunasamcaya gatha is composed exclusively in the vasantatilaka metre, which is quite regular throughout. It appears to be the only existing Prajnaparamita text written in so-called Buddhist Sanskrit. Akira Yuyama has published a descriptive grammar of the Indic Recension A of this text. 6 Again as shown by Conze, these verses form a single block of text, held together by the recurring line "and that is the practice (carya) of the absolute Transcendental Wisdom" (prajna-vara-paramitaya)." This is very significant.

Further, when the initial 41 Stanzas of the Samucayagatha are examined in the light of a study of the Heart Sutra, we find that the Heart Sutra is a close commentary, or restatement, on just this block of verses. It is, for example, in the Samucaya gatha that we find the earliest reference to the disciples receiving their inspiration 'from the power of the Buddha' (vide verse 4). And it is here too that we read how 'form, feeling, thought, motivation, and consciousness, are not united, never bound, and not in need of liberation' (verse 20). The line of the Heart Sutra, "since there is no acquisition, Bodhisattvas abide in reliance on Transcendental Wisdom Having utterly transcended erroneous views, they acquire ultimate Nirvana," nicely parallels verse 22, "Thus transcending the world, he eludes our apprehensions... 'He goes to Nirvana,' but no one can say where he went to." - although Conze also supplies the information that many passages in the Heart Sutra parallel lines belonging to the Pancavimsati, a fact to be kept in mind.

As Conze states: "The Prajnaparamita texts are elusive to our understanding, because they are full of hidden hints, allusions, and indirect references to the pre-existing body of scriptures and traditions circulating in the memory of the Buddhist community at the time. They are more often than not an echo of older sayings. Without the relation

to the older sayings they lose most of their point. We at present have to reconstruct laboriously what seemed a matter of course 1,500 years ago." 7

A. K. Warder tells us that, "Of all those now available the Eight Thousand [Astasahasrika-Prajnaparamita-sutra] is apparently the oldest. According to a tradition recorded in Tibet the Purva and Aparā Sāila [Mahasanghika] schools had a Perfection of Understanding (in Prakrit, those extant are more or less in Sanskrit, the older ones probably 'Sanskritised' and the later ones written in Sanskrit; the least Sanskritised is the only one in verse, the Ratnaguna-samucayagātha, which is closely related to the Eight Thousand and may preserve parts of the old Sāila text, though with later additions)." 8

1 Conze, The Composition of the Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita, Bulletin of the London School of Oriental and African Studies, 14,1952, pp. 251-62.

2 See: B. Lang, Frau Weisheit (Dusseldorf 1975); Wilckens and Fohrer, Sophia, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Grand Rapids, 1971; Hengel, Judaism and Hellenism, Philadelphia 1974; Kuchler, Fruhjudische Weisheitstraditionen, Gottingen 1979; etc., etc.

3. See Obermiller, Prajnaparamita in Tibetan Buddhism, Delhi 1988. p.6

4. Conze, The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines, Bolinas CA. 1973

5. Conze, The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines, Bolinas CA. 1975

6 See: Yuyama, Grammer of the Rgs (Sanskrit Recension A), Canberra 1973; "Some Glossarial Notes on the Rgs," Proceedings and Papers of the XIV Congress of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association, Dunedin 19-28 Jan. 1972; "Remarks on the Metre of the Rgs," Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture, II (Raghu Vira Volume), New Delhi 1973.

7. Conze, The Prajnaparamita-hrdaya Sutra, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Soc., 1948, pp. 33-51

8. A. K. Warder, Indian Buddhism, Delhi, 1970

Hymn to wisdom transcendent, Rahulabhadra

(Rahulabhadra's Verses in Praise of Perfect Wisdom; served as a preface to many of the Perfection of Wisdom Texts
(Wisdom personified))



hail wisdom transcendent
unlimited unimagined
in form unblemished
the observant know perfection

pure unbounded soundless
as the entire universe
who so knows you knows
him whose coming is also
blessed

pity is what brought you those
who hail Buddhadharmas
theirs o salutary one
is sovereignty peerless

pure in heart the revelation
of you makes them
they have won already
you who make fertile

the heroically compassionate
for the rest of humankind
are nourished by you as a
mother
given birth and love

Buddhas teach the world
and are your pitying sons
thus you great lady
are the grandmother of us all

what is perfectly pure
surrounds you always
as stars the moon's bow
sanctified you are utterly

they who walk in darkness
the Tathagatas tell
of you as one and many
various with many names

dew disappears when once
the sunbeams come
so theoretics depart
when you are known

you are frightening to those
who foolish see you fearfully
you are peace and succor
in the sight of the wise

there must be fondness for you
in anyone you save
or mother how would anyone
discern the rest of it?

you come from nowhere
don't go anywhere
there is no dwelling place
where the sages have you

this is the way to see you
not and so find you
seeing you is freedom
not seeing you is freedom too

you bind the faithful
and the faithless
free the one
as well as the other

perfect is your fame
and mystery though hard to
discern
you appear as semblances
and can't be seen at all

all the Buddhas everywhere
and disciples seek you
who are the only path of holiness
there can be no other

they who save the world
for pity of ignorant men
speak of you by custom
and speak not of you

who on earth can praise you
in your featurelessness?
there are no words
nor means of approach

we do our best with common
coinage praising you
though it concerns you not
thus are we blessed

praise to wisdom transcendent
thus I raise in return
grant only that the world
become devoted to you peerless

Rahulabhadra (2nd c.)
tr. after Edward Conze [Source](#)

The Heart Sutra

([source](#)) ([see also](#))

Om namo Bhagavatyai Arya-Prajnaparamitayai!

Homage to the Perfection of Wisdom, the Lovely, the Holy!

Arya-Avalokitesvaro bodhisattvo gambhiram prajnaparamitacaryam caramano vyavalokayati sma: panca-skandhas tams ca svabhavasunyan pasyati sma.

Avalokita, The Holy Lord and Bodhisattva, was moving in the deep course of the Wisdom which has gone beyond. He looked down from on high, He beheld but five heaps, and he saw that in their own-being they were empty.

Iha Sariputra rupam sunyata sunyataiva rupam, rupan na prithak sunyata sunyataya na prithag rupam, yad rupam sa sunyata ya sunyata tad rupam; evam eva vedana-samjna-samskara-vijnanam.

Here, O Sariputra, form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form; emptiness does not differ from form, form does not differ from emptiness; whatever is form, that is emptiness, whatever is emptiness, that is form, the same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness.

Iha Sariputra sarva-dharmah sunyata-laksana, anutpanna aniruddha, amala aviamala, anuna aparipurnah.

Here, O Sariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness; they are not produced or stopped, not defiled or immaculate, not deficient or complete.

Tasmac Chariputra sunyatayam na rupam na vedana na samjna na samskarah na vijnanam. Na caksuh-srotra-ghranajihva-kaya-manamsi. Na rupa-sabda-gandha-rasa-sprastavaya-dharmah. Na caksur-dhatur yavan na manovjnana-dhatuh. Na-avidya na-avidya-ksayo yavan na jara-maranam na jara-marana-ksayo. Na dukkha-samudaya-nirodha-marga. Na jnanam, na praptir na-apraptih.

Therefore, O Sariputra, in emptiness there is no form, nor feeling, nor perception, nor impulse, nor consciousness; No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; No forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or objects of mind; No sight-organ element, and so forth, until we come to: No mind-consciousness element; There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so forth, until we come to: there is no decay and death, no extinction of decay and death. There is no suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path. There is no cognition, no attainment and non-attainment.

Tasmac Chariputra apraptitvad bodhisattvasya prajnaparamitam asritya viharaty acittavaranah. Cittavarana-nastitvad atraastro viparyasa-atikranto nishtha-nirvana-praptah.

Therefore, O Sariputra, it is because of his non-attainmentness that a Bodhisattva, through having relied on the Perfection of Wisdom, dwells without thought-coverings. In the absence of thought-coverings he has not been made to tremble, he has overcome what can upset, and in the end he attains to Nirvana.

Tryadhva-vyavasthitah sarva-Buddhah prajnaparamitam-asritya-anuttaram samyaksambodhim abhisambuddhah.

All those who appear as Buddhas in the three periods of time fully awake to the utmost, right and perfect Enlightenment because they have relied on the Perfection of Wisdom.

Tasmaj jnatavyam : prajnaparamita maha-mantra maha-vidya-mantra 'nuttara-mantra' samasama-mantrah, sarva-dukkha-prasamanah, satyam amithyatvat. Prajnaparamitayam ukto mantrah. Tadyatha : Gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhisvaha. Iti prajnaparamita-hridayam samaptam.

Therefore one should know the prajnaparamita as the great spell, the spell of great knowledge, the utmost spell, the unequalled spell, allayer of all suffering, in truth - for what could go wrong? By the prajnaparamita has this spell been delivered. It runs like this: Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond, O what an awakening, all-hail! - This completes the Heart of Perfect Wisdom.

trad. Edward Conze

The Diamond Sutra

([Source](#)) ([see also](#))

Om namo Bhagavatyai Arya-Prajnaparamitayai!

Homage to the Perfection of Wisdom, the Lovely, the Holy!

Thus have I heard at one time. The Lord dwelt at Sravasti, in the Jeta Grove, in the garden of Anathapindika, together with a large gathering of monks, consisting of 1,250 monks, and with many Bodhisattvas, great beings. Early in the morning the Lord dressed, put on his cloak, took his bowl, and entered the great city of Sravasti to collect alms. When he had eaten and returned from his round, the Lord put away his bowl and cloak, washed his feet, and sat down on the seat arranged for him, crossing his legs, holding his body upright, and mindfully fixing his attention in front of him. Then many monks approached to where the Lord was, saluted his feet with their heads, thrice walked round him to the right, and sat down on one side.

At that time the Venerable Subhuti came to that assembly, and sat down. Then he rose from his seat, put his upper robe over one shoulder, placed his right knee on the ground, bent forth his folded hands towards the Lord, and said to the Lord: 'It is wonderful O Lord, it is exceedingly wonderful, O Well-Gone, how much the Bodhisattvas, the great beings, have been helped with the greatest help by the Tathagata, the Arhat, the Fully Enlightened One. It is wonderful, O Lord, how much the Bodhisattvas, the great beings, have been favoured with the highest favour by the Tathagata, the Arhat, the Fully Enlightened One. How then, O Lord, should a son or daughter of good family, who have set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle, stand, how progress, how control their thoughts?'

After these words the Lord said to the Venerable Subhuti: 'Well said, well said, Subhuti! So it is, Subhuti, so it is, as you say! The Tathagata, Subhuti, has helped the Bodhisattvas, the great beings with the greatest help, and he has favoured them with the highest favour. Therefore, 'Subhuti, listen well, and attentively! I will teach you how those who have set out in the Bodhisattva vehicle should stand, how progress, how control their thoughts.' 'So be it, O Lord', replied the Venerable Subhuti and listened.

The Lord said: Here, Subhuti, someone who has set out in the vehicle of a Bodhisattva should produce a thought in this manner: 'As many beings as there are in the universe of beings, comprehended under the term "beings" – egg-born, born from a womb, moisture-born, or miraculously born; with or without form; with perception, without perception, and with neither perception nor non-perception, –as far as any conceivable form of beings is conceived: all these I must lead to Nirvana, into that Realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind. And yet, although innumerable beings have thus been led to Nirvana, no being at all has been led to Nirvana.' And why? If in a Bodhisattva the notion of a 'being' should take place, he could not be called a 'Bodhi-being'. 'And why? He is not to be called a Bodhi-being, in whom the notion of a self or of a being should take place, or the notion of a living soul or of a person.'

Moreover, Subhuti, a Bodhisattva who gives a gift should not be supported by a thing, nor should he be supported anywhere. When he gives gifts he should not be supported by sight-objects, nor by sounds, smells, tastes, touchables, or mind-objects. For, Subhuti, the Bodhisattva, the great being should give gifts in such a way that he is not supported by the notion of a sign. And why? Because the heap of merit of that Bodhi-being, who unsupported gives a gift, is not easy to measure. What do you think, Subhuti, is the extent of space in the East easy to measure? –Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. –The Lord asked: In like manner, is it easy to measure the extent of space in the South, West or North, downwards, upwards, in the intermediate directions, in all the ten directions all round? –Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. –The Lord said: Even so the heap of merit of that Bodhi-being who unsupported gives a gift is not easy to measure. That is why, Subhuti, those who have set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle, should give gifts without being supported by the notion of a sign.

The Lord continued: 'What do you think, Subhuti, can the Tathagata be seen by the possession of his marks?' Subhuti replied: 'No indeed, O Lord. And why? What has been taught by the Tathagata as the possession of marks, that is truly a no-possession of no-marks.' The Lord said: 'Wherever there is possession of marks, there is fraud,

wherever there is no-possession of no-marks there is no fraud. Hence the Tathagata is to be seen from no marks as marks.'

Subhuti asked: Will there be any beings in the future period, in the last time, in the last epoch, in the last 500 years, at the time of the collapse of the good doctrine who, when these words of the Sutra are being taught, will understand their truth? –The Lord replied: Do not speak thus, Subhuti! Yes, even then there will be such beings. For even at that time, Subhuti, there will be Bodhisattvas who are gifted with good conduct, gifted, with virtuous qualities, gifted with wisdom, and who, when these words of the Sutra are being taught, will understand their truth. And these Bodhisattvas, Subhuti, will not be such as have honoured only one single Buddha, nor such as have planted their roots of merit under one single Buddha only. On the contrary, Subhuti, those Bodhisattvas who, when these words of the Sutra are being taught, will find even one single thought of serene faith, they will be such as have honoured many hundreds of thousands of Buddhas, such as have planted their roots of merit under many hundreds of thousands of Buddhas. Known they are, Subhuti, to the Tathagata through his Buddha cognition, seen they are, Subhuti, by the Tathagata with his Buddha-eye, fully known they are, Subhuti, to the Tathagata. And they all, Subhuti, will beget and acquire an immeasurable and incalculable heap of merit.

And why? Because, Subhuti, in these Bodhisattvas (1) no perception of a self takes place, (2) no perception of a being, (3) no perception of a soul, (4) no perception of a person. Nor do these Bodhisattvas have (5) a perception of a dharma, or (6) a perception of a no-dharma. (7) No perception or (8) non-perception takes place in them.

And why? If, Subhuti, these Bodhisattvas should have a perception of either a dharma, or a no-dharma, they would thereby seize on a self, a being, a soul, or a person. And why? Because a Bodhisattva should not seize on either a dharma or a no-dharma. Therefore this saying has been taught by the Tathagata with a hidden meaning: 'Those who know the discourse on dharma as like unto a raft, should forsake dharmas, still more so no-dharmas.'

The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, is there any dharma which the Tathagata has fully known as 'the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment, or is there any dharma which the Tathagata has demonstrated? Subhuti replied: No, not as I understand what the Lord has said. And why? This dharma which the Tathagata has fully known or demonstrated –it cannot be grasped, it cannot be talked about, it is neither a dharma nor a no-dharma. And why? Because an Absolute exalts the Holy Persons.

The Lord then asked: What do you think, Subhuti, if a son or daughter of good family had filled this world system of 1,000 million worlds with the seven precious things, and then gave it as a gift to the Tathagatas, Arhats, Fully Enlightened Ones, would they on the strength of that beget a great heap of merit? –Subhuti replied: Great, O Lord, great, O Well-Gone, would that heap of merit be! And why? Because the Tathagata spoke of the 'heap of merit' as a non-heap. That is how the Tathagata speaks of 'heap of merit'. –The Lord said: But if someone else were to take from this discourse on dharma but one stanza of four lines, and would demonstrate and illuminate it in full detail to others, then he would on the strength of that beget a still greater heap of merit, immeasurable and incalculable. And why? Because from it has issued the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment of the Tathagatas, Arhats, Fully Enlightened Ones, and from it have issued the Buddhas, the Lords. And why? For the Tathagata has taught that the dharmas special to the Buddhas are just not a Buddha's special dharmas. That is why they are called 'the dharmas special to the Buddhas'.

The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, does it occur to the Stream-winner, 'by me has the fruit of a Stream-winner been attained'? Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. And why? Because, O Lord, he has not won any dharma. Therefore is he called a Stream-winner. No sight-object has been won, no sounds, smells, tastes, touchables, or objects of mind. That is why he is called a 'Stream-winner'. If, O Lord, it would occur to a Stream-winner, 'by me has a Stream-winner's fruit been attained', then that would be in him a seizing on a self, seizing on a being, seizing on a soul, seizing on a person. –The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, does it then occur to the Once-Returner, 'by me has the fruit of a Once-Returner been attained'? –Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. And why? Because there is not any dharma that has won Once-Returnership. That is why he is called a 'Once-Returner'. –The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, does it then occur to the Never-Returner 'by me has the fruit of a Never-Returner been attained'? –Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. And why? Because there is not any dharma that has won Never Returnership. Therefore is he called a 'Never-Returner'. –The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, does it then occur to the Arhat, 'by me has Arhatship been attained'? –Subhuti: No indeed,

O Lord. And why? Because no dharma is called 'Arhat'. That is why he is called an Arhat. If, O Lord, it would occur to an Arhat. 'by me has Arhatship been attained', then that would be in him a seizing on a self, seizing on a being, seizing on a soul, seizing on a person. –And why? I am, O Lord, the one whom the Tathagata, the Arhat, the Fully Enlightened One has pointed out as the foremost of those who dwell in Peace. I am, O Lord, an Arhat free from greed. And yet, O Lord, it does not occur to me, 'an Arhat am I and free from greed'. If, O Lord, it could occur to me that I have attained Arhatship, then the Tathagata would not have declared of me that 'Subhuti, this son of good family, who is the foremost of those who dwell in Peace, does not dwell anywhere; that is why he is called "a dweller in Peace, a dweller in Peace"'.

The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, is there any dharma which the Tathagata has learned from Dipankara, the Tathagata, the Arhat, the Fully Enlightened One? Subhuti replied: Not so, O Lord, there is not.

The Lord said: If any Bodhisattva would say, 'I will create harmonious Buddhafields', he would speak falsely. And why? 'The harmonies of Buddhafields, the harmonies of Buddhafields', Subhuti, as no-harmonies have they been taught by the Tathagata. Therefore he spoke of 'harmonious Buddhafields'.

Therefore then, Subhuti, the Bodhisattva, the great being, should produce an unsupported thought, i.e. a thought which is nowhere supported, a thought unsupported by sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or mind-objects.

Suppose, Subhuti, there were a man endowed with a body, a huge body, so that he had a personal existence like Sumeru, king of mountains. Would that, Subhuti, be a huge personal existence? Subhuti replied: Yes, huge, O Lord, huge, O Well-Gone, would his personal existence be. And why so? 'Personal existence, personal existence', as no-existence has that been taught by the Tathagata; for not, O Lord, is that existence or non-existence. Therefore is it called 'personal existence'.

The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, if there were as many Ganges rivers as there are grains of sand in the large river Ganges, would the grains of sand in them be many? –Subhuti replied: Those Ganges rivers would indeed be many, much more so the grains of sand in them. –The Lord said: This is what I announce to you, Subhuti, this is what I make known to you, –if some woman or man had filled with the seven precious things as many world systems as there are grains of sand in those Ganges rivers, and would give them as a gift to the Tathagatas, Arhats, fully Enlightened Ones –what do you think, Subhuti, would that woman or man on the strength of that beget a great heap of merit? –Subhuti replied: Great, O Lord, great O Well-Gone, would that heap of merit be, immeasurable and incalculable. –The Lord said: But if a son or daughter of good family had taken from this discourse on dharma but one stanza of four lines, and were to demonstrate and illuminate it to others, then they would on the strength of that beget a still greater heap of merit, immeasurable and incalculable. Moreover, Subhuti, that spot of earth where one has taken from this discourse on dharma but one stanza of four lines, taught or illumined it, that spot of earth will be a veritable shrine for the whole world with its gods, men and Asuras. What then should we say of those who will bear in mind this discourse on dharma in its entirety, who will recite, study, and illuminate it in full detail for others! Most wonderfully blest, Subhuti, they will be! And on that spot of earth, Subhuti, either the Teacher dwells, or a sage representing him.

Subhuti asked: What then, O Lord, is this discourse on dharma, and how should I bear it in mind? –The Lord replied: This discourse on dharma, Subhuti, is called 'Wisdom which has gone beyond', and as such should you bear it in mind!

And why? Just that which the Tathagata has taught as the wisdom which has gone beyond, just that He has taught as not gone beyond. Therefore is it called 'Wisdom which has gone beyond'. What do you think, Subhuti, is there any dharma which the Tathagata has taught? –Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord, there is not. –The Lord said: When, Subhuti, you consider the number of particles of dust in this world system of 1,000 million worlds-would they be many? –Subhuti replied: Yes, O Lord. Because what was taught as particles of dust by the Tathagata, as no-particles that was taught by the Tathagata. Therefore are they called 'particles of dust'. And this world-system the Tathagata has taught as no-system. Therefore is it called a 'world system'. –The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, can the Tathagata be seen by means of the thirty-two marks of the superman? –Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. And why? Because those thirty-two marks of the superman which were taught by the Tathagata, they are really no-marks. Therefore are they called 'the thirty-two marks of the superman'.

The Lord said: And again, Subhuti, suppose a woman or a man were to renounce all their belongings as many times as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges; and suppose that someone else, after taking from this discourse on Dharma but one stanza of four lines, would demonstrate it to others. Then this latter on the strength of that would beget a greater heap of merit, immeasurable and incalculable.

Thereupon the impact of Dharma moved the Venerable Subhuti to tears. Having wiped away his tears, he thus spoke to the Lord: It is wonderful, O Lord, it is exceedingly wonderful, O Well-Gone, how well the Tathagata has taught this discourse on Dharma. Through it cognition has been produced in me. Not have I ever before heard such a discourse on Dharma. Most wonderfully blest will be those who, when this Sutra is being taught, will produce a true perception. And that which is true perception, that is indeed no perception. Therefore the Tathagata teaches, 'true perception, true perceptions'. –It is not difficult for me to accept and believe this discourse on Dharma when it is being taught. But those beings who will be in a future period, in the last time, in the last epoch, in the last 500 years, at the time of the collapse of the good doctrine, and who, O Lord, will take up this discourse on Dharma, bear it in mind, recite it, study it, and illuminate it in full detail for others, these will be most wonderfully blest. –In them, however, no perception of a self will take place, or of a being, a soul, or a person. And why? That, O Lord, which is perception of self, that is indeed no perception. That which is perception of a being, a soul or a person, that is indeed no perception. And why? Because the Buddhas, the Lords have left all perceptions behind.

The Lord said: So it is, Subhuti. Most wonderfully blest will be those beings who, on hearing this Sutra, will not tremble, nor be frightened, or terrified. And why? The Tathagata has taught this as the highest (parama-) perfection (paramita). And what the Tathagata teaches as the highest perfection, that also the innumerable (aparimana) Blessed Buddhas do teach. Therefore is it called the 'highest perfection'.

Moreover, Subhuti, the Tathagata's perfection of patience is really no perfection. And why? Because, Subhuti, when the king of Kalinga cut my flesh from every limb, at that time I had no perception of a self, of a being, of a soul, or a person. And why? If, Subhuti, at that time I had had a perception of self, I would also have had a perception of ill-will at that time. And so, if I had had a perception of a being, of a soul, or of a person. With my superknowledge I recall that in the past I have for five hundred births led the life of a sage devoted to patience. Then also have I had no perception of a self, a being, a soul, or a person.

Therefore then, Subhuti, the Bodhi-being, the great being, after he has got rid of all perceptions, should raise his thought to the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment. He should produce a thought which is unsupported by forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables, or mind-objects, unsupported by dharma, unsupported by no-dharma, unsupported by anything. And why? All supports have actually no support. It is for this reason that the Tathagata teaches: By an unsupported Bodhisattva should a gift be given, not by one who is supported by forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables, or mind-objects.

And further, Subhuti, it is for the weal of all beings that a Bodhisattva should give gifts in this manner. And why? This perception of a being, Subhuti, that is just a non-perception. Those all-beings of whom the Tathagata has spoken, they are indeed no-beings. And why? Because the Tathagata speaks in accordance with reality, speaks the truth, speaks of what is, not otherwise. A Tathagata does not speak falsely.

But nevertheless, Subhuti, with regard to that dharma which the Tathagata has fully known and demonstrated, on account of that there is neither truth nor fraud.

In darkness a man could not see anything. Just so should be viewed a Bodhisattva who has fallen among things, and who, fallen among things, renounces a gift. A man with eyes would, when the night becomes light and the sun has arisen, see manifold forms. Just so should be viewed a Bodhisattva who has not fallen among things, and who, without having fallen among things, renounces a gift.

Furthermore, Subhuti, those sons and daughters of good family who will take up this discourse on Dharma, will bear it in mind, recite, study, and illuminate it in full detail for others, they have been known, Subhuti, by the Tathagata with his Buddha-cognition, they have been seen, Subhuti, by the Tathagata with his Buddha-eye, they have been fully known by the Tathagata. All these beings, Subhuti, will beget and acquire an immeasurable and incalculable heap of merit. –And if, Subhuti, a woman or man should renounce in the morning all their belongings

as many times as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, and if they should do likewise at noon and in the evening, and if in this way they should renounce all their belongings for many hundreds of thousands of millions of milliards of aeons; and someone else, on hearing this discourse on Dharma, would not reject it; then the latter would on the strength of that beget a greater heap of merit, immeasurable and incalculable. What then should we say of him who, after writing it, would learn it, bear it in mind, recite, study and illuminate it in full detail for others?

Moreover, Subhuti, (1) unthinkable and (2) incomparable is this discourse on Dharma. (3) The Tathagata has taught it for the weal of beings who have set out in the best, in the most excellent vehicle. Those who will take up this discourse on Dharma, bear it in mind, recite, study and illuminate it in full detail for others, the Tathagata has known them with his Buddha-cognition, the Tathagata has seen them with his Buddha-eye, the Tathagata has fully known them. All these beings, Subhuti, will be blest with an immeasurable heap of merit, they will be blest with a heap of merit unthinkable, incomparable, measureless and illimitable. All these beings, Subhuti, will carry along an equal share of enlightenment. And why? (4) Because it is not possible, Subhuti, that this discourse on Dharma could be heard by beings of inferior resolve, nor by such as have a self in view, a being, a soul, or a person. Nor can beings who have not taken the pledge of Bodhi-beings either hear this discourse on Dharma, or take it up, bear it in mind, recite or study it. That cannot be.

(1) Moreover, Subhuti, the spot of earth where this Sutra will be revealed, that spot of earth will be worthy of worship by the whole world with its Gods, men and Asuras, worthy of being saluted respectfully, worthy of being honoured by circumambulation, like a shrine will be that spot of earth. –And yet Subhuti, those sons and daughters of good family, who will take up these very Sutras, and will bear them in mind, recite and study them, they will be humbled, well humbled they will be! And why? The impure deeds which these beings have done in their former lives, and which are liable to lead them into the states of woe, in this very life they will, by means of that humiliation, (2) annul those impure deeds of their former lives, and (3) they will reach the enlightenment of a Buddha. –

With my superknowledge, Subhuti, I recall that in the past period, long before Dipankara, the Tathagata, Arhat, fully Enlightened One, during incalculable, quite incalculable aeons, I gave satisfaction by loyal service to 84,000 million milliards of Buddhas, without ever becoming again estranged from them. But the heap of merit, Subhuti, from the satisfaction I gave to those Buddhas and Lords without again becoming estranged from them –compared with the heap of merit of those who in the last time, the last epoch, the last five hundred years, at the time of the collapse of the good doctrine, will take up these very Sutras, bear them in mind, recite and study them, and will illuminate them in full detail for others, it does not approach one hundredth part, not one thousandth part, nor a one hundred thousandth part, not a ten millionth part, nor a one hundred millionth part, nor a 100,000 millionth part. It does not bear number, nor fraction, nor counting, nor similarity, nor comparison, nor resemblance. –(4) If moreover, Subhuti, I were to teach, the heap of merit of those sons and daughters of good family, and how great a heap of merit they will at that time beget and acquire, beings would become frantic and confused. Since, however, Subhuti, the Tathagata has taught this discourse on Dharma as unthinkable, so just an unthinkable karma result should be expected from it.

(Subhuti asked: How, O Lord, should one set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle stand, how progress, how control his thoughts? The Lord replied: Here, Subhuti, someone who has set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle should produce a thought in this manner: 'all beings I must lead to Nirvana, into that Realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind; and yet, after beings have thus been led to Nirvana, no being at all has been led to Nirvana'. And why? If in a Bodhisattva the notion of a 'being' should take place, he could not be called a 'Bodhi-being'. And likewise if the notion of a soul, or a person should take place in him.)

And why? He who has set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle ~ he is not one of the dharmas.

What do you think Subhuti, is there any dharma by which the Tathagata, when he was with Dipankara the Tathagata, has fully known the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment? –Subhuti replied: There is not any dharma by which the Tathagata, when he was with the Tathagata Dipankara, has fully known the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment. –The Lord said: It is for this reason that the Tathagata Dipankara then predicted of me:

'You, young Brahmin, will be in a future period a Tathagata, Arhat, fully Enlightened, by the name of Shakyamuni!'

And why? 'Tathagata', Subhuti, is synonymous with true Suchness (tathata). ¬And whosoever, Subhuti, were to say, 'The Tathagata has fully known the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment', he would speak falsely. And why? [(There is not any dharma by which the Tathagata has fully known the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment. And that dharma which the Tathagata has fully known and demonstrated, on account of that there is neither truth nor fraud.)] Therefore the Tathagata teaches, all dharmas are the Buddha's own and special dharmas'. And why? 'All-dharmas', Subhuti, have as no-dharmas been taught by the Tathagata. Therefore all dharmas are called the Buddha's own and special dharmas. ¬[(Just as a man, Subhuti, might be endowed with a body, a huge body.)] ¬Subhuti said: That man of whom the Tathagata spoke as 'endowed with a body, a huge body', as a no-body he has been taught by the Tathagata. Therefore is he called, 'endowed with a body, a huge body'.

The Lord said: So it is, Subhuti. The Bodhisattva who would say, 'I will lead beings to Nirvana', he should not be called a 'Bodhi-being'. And why? Is there, Subhuti, any dharma named 'Bodhi-being'? ¬Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. ¬The Lord said: Because of that the Tathagata teaches, 'selfless are all dharmas, they have not the character of living beings, they are without a living soul, without personality'. ¬[(If any Bodhisattva should say, 'I will create harmonious Buddhafields'), he likewise should not be called a Bodhi-being. [(And why? 'The harmonies of Buddhafields, the harmonies of Buddhafields', Subhuti, as no-harmonies have they been taught by the Tathagata. Therefore he spoke of 'harmonious Buddhafields'.)] ¬The Bodhisattva, however, Subhuti, who is intent on 'without self are the dharmas, without self are the dharmas', him the Tathagata, the Arhat, the fully Enlightened One has declared to be a Bodhi-being, a great being.

What do you think, Subhuti, does the fleshly eye of the Tathagata exist? ¬Subhuti replied: So it is, O Lord, the fleshly eye of the Tathagata does exist. ¬The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, does the Tathagata's heavenly eye exist, his wisdom eye, his Dharma-eye, his Buddha-eye? ¬Subhuti replied: So it is, O Lord, the heavenly eye of the Tathagata does exist, and so does his wisdom eye, his Dharma-eye and his Buddha-eye.

The Lord said: What do you think, Subhuti, has the Tathagata used the phrase, 'as many grains of sand as there are in the great river Ganges'? ¬Subhuti replied: So it is, O Lord, so it is, O Well-Gone! The Tathagata has done so. ¬The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, if there were as many Ganges rivers as there are grains of sand in the great river Ganges, and if there were as many world systems as there are grains of sand in them, would those world systems be many? ¬Subhuti replied: So it is, O Lord, so it is, O Well-Gone, these world systems would be many. ¬The Lord said: As many beings as there are in these world systems, of them I know, in my wisdom, the manifold trends of thought. And why? 'Trends of thought, trends of thought', Subhuti, as no trends have they been taught by the Tathagata. Therefore are they called 'trends of thought'. And why? Past thought is not got at; future thought is not got at; present thought is not got at.

What do you think, Subhuti, if a son or daughter of good family had filled this world system of 1,000 million worlds with the seven precious things, and then gave it as a gift to the Tathagatas, the Arhats, the fully Enlightened Ones, would they on the strength of that beget a great heap of merit? ¬Subhuti replied: they would, O Lord, they would, O Well-Gone! ¬The Lord said: So it is, Subhuti, so it is. On the strength of that this son or daughter of good family would beget a great heap of merit, immeasurable and incalculable. But if, on the other hand, there were such a thing as a heap of merit, the Tathagata would not have spoken of a 'heap of merit'.

What do you think, Subhuti, is the Tathagata to be seen by means of the accomplishment of his form-body? Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord, the Tathagata is not to be seen by means of the accomplishment of his form-body. And why? 'Accomplishment of his form-body, accomplishment of his form-body', this, O Lord, has been taught by the Tathagata as no-accomplishment. Therefore is it called 'accomplishment of his form-body'. ¬The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, is the Tathagata to be seen through his possession of marks? Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. And why? This possession of marks, O Lord, which has been taught by the Tathagata, as a no-possession of no-marks this has been taught by the Tathagata. Therefore is it called 'possession of marks'.

The Lord asked: What do you think, Subhuti, does it occur to the Tathagata, 'by me has Dharma been demonstrated'? Whosoever, Subhuti, would say, 'the Tathagata has demonstrated Dharma', he would speak falsely,

he would misrepresent me by seizing on what is not there. And why? 'Demonstration of dharma, demonstration of dharma', Subhuti, there is not any dharma which could be got at as a demonstration of dharma.

Subhuti asked: Are there, O Lord, any beings in the future, in the last time, in the last epoch, in the last 500 years, at the time of the collapse of the good doctrine who, on hearing such dharmas, will truly believe? –The Lord replied: They, Subhuti, are neither beings nor no-beings. And why? 'Beings, beings', Subhuti, the Tathagata has taught that they are all no-beings. Therefore has he spoken of 'all beings'.

What do you think, Subhuti, is there any dharma by which the Tathagata has fully known the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment? –Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord, there is not any dharma by which the Tathagata has fully known the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment. –The Lord said: So it is, Subhuti, so it is. Not even the least (anu) dharma is there found or got at. Therefore is it called 'utmost (anuttara), right and perfect enlightenment'. –Furthermore, Subhuti, self-identical (sama) is that dharma, and nothing is therein at variance (vishama). Therefore is it called 'utmost, right (samyak) and perfect (sam-) enlightenment'. Self-identical through the absence of a self, a being, a soul, or a person, the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment is fully known as the totality of all the wholesome dharmas. 'Wholesome dharmas, wholesome dharmas', Subhuti –yet as no-dharmas have they been taught by the Tathagata. Therefore are they called 'wholesome dharmas'.

And again, Subhuti, if a woman or man had piled up the seven precious things until their bulk equaled that of all the Sumerus, kings of mountains, in the world system of 1,000 million worlds, and would give them as a gift; and if, on the other hand, a son or daughter of good family would take up from this Prajnaparamita, this discourse on Dharma, but one stanza of four lines, and demonstrate it to others, compared with his heap of merit the former heap of merit does not approach one hundredth part, etc., until we come to, it will not bear any comparison.

What do you think, Subhuti, does it occur to a Tathagata, 'by me have beings been set free'? Not thus should you see it, Subhuti! And why? There is not any being whom the Tathagata has set free. Again, if there had been any being whom the Tathagata had set free, then surely there would have been on the part of the Tathagata a seizing of a self, of a being, of a soul, of a person. 'Seizing of a self', as a no-seizing, Subhuti, has that been taught by the Tathagata. And yet the foolish common people have seized upon it. 'Foolish common people', Subhuti, as really no people have they been taught by the Tathagata. Therefore are they called 'foolish common people'.

What do you think, Subhuti, is the Tathagata to be seen by means of his possession of marks? –Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. –The Lord said: If, Subhuti, the Tathagata could be recognized by his possession of marks, then also the universal monarch would be a Tathagata. Therefore the Tathagata is not to be seen by means of his possession of marks. –Subhuti then said: As I, O Lord, understand the Lord's teaching, the Tathagata is not to be seen through his possession of marks. Further the Lord taught on that occasion the following stanzas:

Those who by my form did see me,
And those who followed me by voice
Wrong the efforts they engaged in,
Me those people will not see.

From the Dharma should one see the Buddhas,
From the Dharmabodies comes their guidance.
Yet Dharma's true nature cannot be discerned,
And no one can be conscious of it as an object.

What do you think, Subhuti, has the Tathagata fully known the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment through his possession of marks? Not so should you see it, Subhuti. And why? Because the Tathagata could surely not have fully known the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment through his possession of marks.

Nor should anyone, Subhuti, say to you, 'those who have set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle have conceived the destruction of a dharma, or its annihilation'. Not so should you see it, Subhuti! For those who have set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle have not conceived the destruction of a dharma, or its annihilation.

And again, Subhuti, if a son or daughter of good family had filled with the seven precious things as many world systems as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, and gave them as a gift to the Tathagatas, Arhats, fully

Enlightened Ones, –and if on the other hand a Bodhisattva would gain the patient acquiescence in dharmas which are nothing of themselves and which fail to be produced, then this latter would on the strength of that beget a greater heap of merit, immeasurable and incalculable.

Moreover, Subhuti, the Bodhisattva should not acquire a heap of merit. –Subhuti said: Surely, O Lord, the Bodhisattva should acquire a heap of merit? –The Lord said: 'Should acquire', Subhuti, not 'should seize upon.' Therefore is it said, 'should acquire'.

Whosoever says that the Tathagata goes or comes, stands, sits or lies down, he does not understand the meaning of my teaching. And why? 'Tathagata' is called one who has not gone anywhere, nor come from anywhere. Therefore is he called 'the Tathagata, the Arhat, the fully Enlightened One'.

And again, Subhuti, if a son or daughter of good family were to grind as many world systems as there are particles of dust in this great world system of 1,000 million worlds, as finely as they can be ground with incalculable vigour, and in fact reduce them to something like a collection of atomic quantities, what do you think, Subhuti, would that be an enormous collection of atomic quantities? –Subhuti replied: So it is, O Lord, so it is, O Well-Gone, enormous would that collection of atomic quantities be! And why? If, O Lord, there had been an enormous collection of atomic quantities, the Lord would not have called it an 'enormous collection of atomic quantities'. And why? What was taught by the Tathagata as a 'collection of atomic quantities', as a no-collection that was taught by the Tathagata. Therefore is it called a 'collection of atomic quantities'.

And what the Tathagata taught as 'the world system of 1,000 million worlds', that he has taught as a no-system. Therefore is it called 'the world system of 1,000 million worlds'. And why? If, O Lord, there had been a world system, that would have been a case of seizing on a material object, and what was taught as 'seizing on a material object' by the Tathagata, just as a no-seizing was that taught by the Tathagata. Therefore is it called 'seizing on a material object'. –The Lord added: And also, Subhuti, that 'seizing on a material object' is a matter of linguistic convention, a verbal expression without factual content. It is not a dharma nor a no-dharma. And yet the foolish common people have seized upon it.

And why? Because whosoever would say that the view of a self has been taught by the Tathagata, the view of a being, the view of a living soul, the view of a person, would he, Subhuti, be speaking right? –Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord, no indeed, O Well-Gone, he would not be speaking right. And why? That which has been taught by the Tathagata as 'view of self', as a no-view has that been taught by the Tathagata. Therefore is it called 'view of self'. –The Lord said: It is thus, Subhuti, that someone who has set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle should know all dharmas, view them, be intent on them. And he should know, view and be intent on them in such a way that he does not set up the perception of a dharma. And why? 'Perception of dharma, perception of dharma, 'Subhuti, as no-perception has this been taught by the Tathagata. Therefore is it called 'perception of dharma'.

And finally, Subhuti, if a Bodhisattva, a great being had filled world-systems immeasurable and incalculable with the seven precious things, and gave them as a gift to the Tathagatas, the Arhats, the fully Enlightened Ones, and if, on the other hand, a son or daughter of good family had taken from this Prajnaparamita, this discourse on Dharma, but one stanza of four lines, and were to bear it in mind, demonstrate, recite and study it, and illuminate it in full detail for others, on the strength of that this latter would beget a greater heap of merit, immeasurable and incalculable. And how would he illuminate it? So as not to reveal. Therefore is it said, 'he would illuminate'.

As stars, a fault of vision, as a lamp,
A mock show, dew drops, or a bubble,
A dream, a lightning flash, or cloud,
So should one view what is conditioned.

Thus spoke the Lord. Enraptured, the Elder Subhuti, the monks and nuns, the pious laymen and laywomen, and the Bodhisattvas, and the whole world with its Gods, men, Asuras and Gandharvas rejoiced in the Lord's teaching.

- This completes the Diamond-Cutter of Perfect Wisdom.

trad. Edward Conze

The Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita Sutra – The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines

Chapter I - [The Middle Way away from all extremes]

Introduction [question: how to train for the perfection of wisdom; answer: using the Middle Way that is always in accord with reality]

[\(Source\)](#)

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Thus I now hear at this time.

The Lord, dwelling at **Rajagriha**, on the Vulture Peak, together with a great gathering of 1,250 beings, all of these Arhats, - their outflows being dried up, undefiled, fully controlled, quite free in heart, well free and wise, thoroughbreds, great Serpents, their work being done, their task getting accomplished, their burdens laying down, their own weal becoming accomplished, with fetters which bound these to becoming extinguished, hearts quite free by right understanding, in perfect control of whole mind with the exception of one single person, i.e., the Venerable Ananda.

[Note from the translator: Note to interpolation: numbers appearing in square brackets refer to the versified version of The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines, available in Dr. Conze's book.] (i.e. Note from me: there is an error of overflow here: there are only 302 verses and the numbers go up to 500. So I have added my own numbers in the format "[V.###]. Also the section titles were added by the translator. I have changed some to make them more revealing of the content.")

The Lord says to the Venerable Subhuti, the Elder: **"Make it clear now, Subhuti, to Bodhisattvas, the great beings, starting from perfect wisdom, how Bodhisattvas, the great beings go forth into perfect wisdom!"**

Herein the Venerable Sariputra thinks to himself: Will this Venerable Subhuti, the Elder, expound perfect wisdom of himself, through the operation and force of own-power in revealing wisdom, or through the Buddha's might?

The Venerable Subhuti, knowing through the Buddha's might, the Venerable Sariputra to be in such wise discoursing, says to the Venerable Sariputra: "Whatsoever, **Venerable Sariputra, the Lord's Disciples** teach, all this is to be known as Tathagata's work. In dharma which Tathagatas demonstrate, the devoted ones **train and realize true nature and hold this in mind**. Herein nothing which these teach contradicts **true nature of dharma**. Whatsoever these sons and daughters of good family may expound as nature of dharma, this these do not bring into contradiction with **actual nature of dharma**.

(i.e. Their teachings are always in accord with the real nature of everything, suchness. As we will see to be in accord with reality means to teach via the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting, because everything is at the edge between existence and non-existence; empty of inherent existence but still dependently arisen and functional. That is to use adapted skillful means while always being aware that there is no absolute view or method. To use virtuous methods, like renunciation, morality, loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity, bodhicitta, ..., while combining them with more and more wisdom gradually realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action. The methods get perfected by combining them with the perfection of wisdom realizing the emptiness of all dharma, not by rejecting them as if completely non-existent, meaningless, useless. That would be falling into nihilism. And the opposite, realism, would be to take those virtuous methods and views to be absolute. The only efficient way, in perfect accord with reality, is the Middle Way: not accepting any as absolute, not rejecting everything; combining method/skillful-means and wisdom.)

[The Middle Way: realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action/teaching, while still not rejecting everything, while still teaching others]

Herein the Venerable Subhuti, by the Buddha's might, said to the Lord: "The Lord says, 'Make it clear now, Subhuti, to Bodhisattvas, the great beings, starting from perfect wisdom, how Bodhisattvas, the great beings go forth into perfect wisdom!'"

As one speaks of a 'Bodhisattva', which dharma does this word 'Bodhisattva' denote?

Lord, I see neither this dharma 'Bodhisattva', nor any dharma called 'perfect wisdom'. [V.5a] Since I neither find, nor apprehend, nor see this dharma 'Bodhisattva', nor any dharma called 'perfect wisdom', what Bodhisattva do I instruct and admonish, in what perfect wisdom? (*i.e. Realizing the emptiness of inherent existence of the three: subject, object, action.*)

And yet, O Lord, as this is pointed out, a Bodhisattva heart is known as neither cowed, nor stolid... neither despairing nor despondent, as one neither turns away nor is dejected or trembling, neither is frightened or terrified, it is just this Bodhisattva, this great being which comes to be instructed in perfect wisdom. (*i.e. While still not rejecting everything, thus of being afraid of it. Everything is not existent, but still not non-existent either, not both, nor neither. A Bodhisattva adopts the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting the world, others. So the Venerable Subhuti will teach while being perfectly aware of the real nature of all beings, things, teachings, actions ... all dharma of the three worlds.*)

It is precisely this which is recognized as the perfect wisdom of any Bodhisattva, as one's instruction in perfect wisdom. As one thus stands firm, this is one's instruction and admonition. As a Bodhisattva courses in perfect wisdom and is developing such...this one so trains oneself, as one does not pride oneself on or with any thought of enlightenment [with which one begins one's career]. **Any thought is no thought, since in its essentially aware nature thought is transparently luminous.** (*i.e. This action itself, teaching while realizing the emptiness of the three, is in itself the teaching of the Middle Way, the path to the perfect wisdom. That is the practice of the Middle Way: acting for the benefits of all others while being perfectly aware of the real nature of the three. Practicing while being aware of the emptiness of the subject, the action/path, the result/enlightenment. Not letting the mind go wild accepting/chasing after thoughts as if the illusions were real, not trying to reject/stop all thoughts either, since they are also already pure, also coming from the same clear luminous source. That is the Bodhisattva Way, the Middle Way, the Way to Buddhahood.*)

Sariputra: **This thought which is no thought, is this something which is?** (*i.e. Sariputra, the Hinayanist, says: What is the nature of thoughts? Shouldn't we try to stop them, to reject them, as taught in the Hinayana ?*)

Subhuti: Is here existing, or can one apprehend in this state of absence of thought either a 'here is' or a 'here is not'?

(*i.e. The Middle Way: thoughts, like everything else, are at the edge of existence and non-existence; not existent, but still not completely non-existent either; empty of inherent existence but still dependently arisen and functional. So there is nothing to accept or reject anyway. There is no real origination, duration or cessation of thoughts, or for anything. There is no absolute basis to judge wholesome or unwholesome thoughts, or for any discrimination. It is all dependently arisen, relative. Just realizing the real nature of the thoughts purifies them; there is no need to artificially try to drop them; that would only be an impermanent solution. So just let it be while being perfectly aware. There is no difference between a mind with thoughts and a mind without thoughts. Everything is already pure for one who can see their real nature.*)

Sariputra: No, not this.

Subhuti: Is this now a suitable question which the Venerable Sariputra asks whether this thought which is no thought is something which is?

Sariputra: So, what is this absence of thought? (i.e. So what is the meaning of “no-thought”?)

Subhuti: It is without modification or discrimination.

(i.e. The Middle Way beyond thought and non-thought, beyond discrimination and non-discrimination, beyond stillness and movement. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting thoughts. That is how one should meditate in equanimity: not letting the mind go wild, not trying to control it either. Just watch the thoughts pass by without pursuing them or trying to reject them. To try to control the mind, or try to reject the thoughts is not acting in accord with reality; it is falling into the extreme of quietism or nihilism. Even if you kill yourself you will still be reborn in hell for an eternity.)

[Another Translation: **Sariputra:** Revered brother disciple of the Lord, though luminous and transparent, are not the thinking subject, the thought and its object still some reality which actually exists?

Subhuti: Can assertions such as it exists or it does not exist apply to pure presence, which is entirely without modification and hence remains untouched by any possible discrimination or definition? ...

The Reality to which these and all other terms [bodhisattva and prajnaparamita] refer is ungraspable and inconceivable, possessing no physical or metaphysical self-existence. – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

Sariputra: Well do you expound this. Subhuti, you whom the Lord declares to be foremost of any who dwell in Peace. And for this is seen to be foremost of any who dwell in Peace. And for this reason [i.e. as one does not pride oneself on any thought of enlightenment] is a Bodhisattva considered as incapable of turning away from full enlightenment, and as one who never ceases from taking perfect wisdom to heart. Whether one perseveres in training on the level of Disciple, or PratyekaBuddha, or Bodhisattva, - does one listen to this perfection of wisdom, take this up, bear this in mind, recite this, study this, spread this among others, and in this very perfection of wisdom does one train and exert oneself. In this very perfection of wisdom does one endowed with skill in means exert oneself, concentrating on procuring any and all dharmas which constitute a Bodhisattva. In just this perfection of wisdom any and all dharmas which constitute a Bodhisattva, and in which one trains and exerts oneself, are indicated in full detail. Any being which aspires to train for full enlightenment also listens, takes up, bears in mind, recites, studies and spreads this perfection of wisdom. Any being which is endowed with skill in means exerts oneself in just this perfection of wisdom, with the aim of procuring any and all dharmas which constitute a Buddha.

(i.e. Sariputra trying to resume the teaching of the Middle Way so far; but he is still stuck in his realism. Subhuti will answer that this has to be combined with the realization of the emptiness of the three. There is no permanent self to liberate. The perfect wisdom itself is not a view, not a method. Its real nature is beyond words, beyond causality. There is nothing to accept, nothing to reject, no absolute view or method. So Sariputra's effort in trying to “define” and “grasp” the Middle Way is vain.)

Subhuti: As I who do not find anything to correspond to the words 'Bodhisattva', or 'perfect wisdom', -which Bodhisattva do I now instruct and admonish in which perfect wisdom? It is truly regrettable as I, while unable to find either thing itself, merely in words might cause a Bodhisattva to arise and to pass away. Even so, this, thusly designated, is neither continuous nor not-continuous, neither discontinuous nor not-discontinuous. (i.e. There is no continuity of a permanent self, nor is there complete discontinuity of a self, from one moment to another, and from one rebirth to another. And it is the same for everything that change, for everything.) And why? Simply...this does not exist. This is why this is neither continuous nor not-continuous, neither discontinuous, nor not-discontinuous. [V.5b]

A Bodhisattva, being as unafraid as this unfathomable and perfect wisdom is indicated can be recognized as not lacking in perfect wisdom, and, as one in this irreversible stage of Bodhisattva, standing firmly in consequence of not taking one's stand anywhere. So too, a Bodhisattva coursing in perfect wisdom and developing as such, neither does nor even can stand in form, feeling, perception, impulse and consciousness, [V.6] due to this fact...as

one stands in, or is set in view regarding form, etc., as such, one courses only in its formative influence, and one can neither gain perfect wisdom, exert oneself upon nor fulfill this.

As one does not fulfill perfect wisdom, neither can one go forth to all-knowledge, so long as one remains trying to appropriate the essentially elusive.

(i.e. Without this perfection of wisdom one cannot aspire to full Buddhahood. This perfection of wisdom is the mother of all Buddhas or the three times, of the ten directions. All knowledge is synonymous with full enlightenment, full Buddhahood. It is called all-knowledge, or omniscience, as a skillful means to insist on the fact that even if all dharmas are empty of inherent existence, they are not completely non-existent either. It is related to the use of adapted skillful means, or Buddha-activities. But it should not be confused with ordinary knowledge of everything. It is more like knowing the real nature of everything while using them to help all other sentient beings. – “When one achieves Buddhahood, "prajna paramita" changes in name to "sarvaj-naa" (omniscience).” – webdana – Even omniscience is empty. – “Literally, the word Buddha in Sanskrit means awakened, developed and enlightened. Buddhas have fully realized all aspects of Buddha body, speech and mind. The word for Buddha in Tibetan has a slightly different flavor reflecting the view of Vajrayana; sangs rgyas means "One who has purified or dispelled (sangs) the darkness of the two obscurations, and developed (rgyas) the two kinds of omniscience (knowing the nature of phenomena and knowing the multiplicity of phenomena)." The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary”)

In perfect wisdom form, feeling, perception, impulse and consciousness is/are not appropriated. So, the non-appropriation of form, etc., is not form, etc. [the 5 skandhas], and perfect wisdom also cannot be appropriated. It is thus which a Bodhisattva courses in perfect wisdom.

This concentrated insight of a Bodhisattva is called 'the non-appropriation of all dharmas'. [V.6b] It is vast, noble, unlimited and steady, not shared by any of the Disciples or PratyekaBuddhas. *(i.e. This “concentrated-insight” refers to the practice of the Union of Shamatha and Vipashyana, the ultimate concentration where one realize the perfect Union of Dependent Origination and Emptiness, the Union of the Two Truths, the transcendence of existence and non-existence.)*

All-knowledge cannot be taken hold of, as it cannot be seized through any sign. Could all-knowledge be seized through a sign, Srenika the Wanderer could not gain faith in this our doctrine and tradition. Srenika the Wanderer believes resolutely in cognition of all-knowing, and as a faith-follower he enters cognition with a limited scope. He does not take hold of these skandhas. Nor does he review cognition with joyful zest and pleasure. He views this neither as from inside form, etc., nor as from outside, nor as from both inside and outside, nor as from other than form, etc. *(i.e. The Tetralemma)* In this scripture passage, Srenika the Wanderer, as one who always resolutely believes in cognition of the all-knowing, is called a faith-follower. He takes true nature of dharmas as his standard, and resolutely believes in signlessness such as he neither takes hold of any dharma, nor apprehends any dharma which he even might appropriate or release. He does not even care about Nirvana. This also can be known as a Bodhisattva's perfect wisdom, as he does not take hold of form, etc., and he does not enter Nirvana midway [V.7] before he realizes ten powers of Tathagatas, his four grounds of self-confidence, and the eighteen dharmas peculiar to a Buddha. Herein too is known as a Bodhisattva's perfection of wisdom.

Further, any Bodhisattva coursing in perfection of wisdom and developing this, considers and meditates on what perfection of wisdom is, on one demonstrating perfect wisdom, and on perfect wisdom as dharma which does not exist, which cannot be apprehended. Only as these considerations make a type of wordless sense, and do not make one doubtful or afraid, can be one be known as, or come to be known as a Bodhisattva taken hold of by perfect wisdom.

(i.e. So this perfection of wisdom is not like ordinary knowledge that can be neatly defined, taught, and grasped. It is beyond all description, beyond all conceptualization. It has to be directly realized by turning inward and realizing the real nature of our own mind under all the karma, all the acquired conditioning, all the filters. Until then we should meditate on the meaning of this perfect wisdom, and see everything as like illusions.)

[Another Translation: The adamantine awareness who flows as Perfect Wisdom does not define, formulate and thereby experience Reality in terms of personal forms, personal feelings or personal consciousness. ... Whoever remains crystallized as personality cannot melt and flow as the Perfection of Wisdom. ... One can never blossom into the omniscience which is total awakens. Prajnaparamita never attempts to grasp or define What Is. Prajnaparamita can never be grasped or defined. With selfless freedom and openness alone can the bodhisattva truly flow as Perfect Wisdom.

The transcendent insight of the diamond being is called the vision which simultaneously sees and sees through all subjective and objective structures without remaining to grasp or even encounter them. This gnostic vision is limitless, unwavering, sublime. ...

Obviously, omniscience cannot be grasped. By its very allness, it is precluded from possessing any particular mark, sign or limit which the mind might cognize or even attempt to cognize. If total awakens manifested a sign by which it could be defined, discriminated and separately encountered, it would not be total. ... The omniscience or total awakens of Buddhahood can simply not be located or formulated.

Taking as sole guideline the true nature of all structures, which is the absence in them of any substantial self-existence, one should generate powerful conviction concerning the essential selflessness and signlessness of What Is, so as no longer to assume, even unconsciously or instinctively, the independent self-existence of any structure which one might then attempt to grasp, isolate, cognize and encounter separately. One should not attempt to encounter separately some state of final release, or Nirvana, because desiring or even acknowledging final release implies that there exists some independent structure of consciousness which is released at a certain moment. There is only Prajnaparamita. – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

Sariputra: How can a **Bodhisattva** become known as 'taken hold of by perfect wisdom', as form does not possess the own-being of form, and as well the other skandhas; as **perfect wisdom** does not possess own-being of **perfect wisdom**; and as **all-knowledge** does not possess own-being of **all-knowledge**? (*i.e. So what is the point? Isn't everything empty?*)

Subhuti: It is so, Sariputra. Form does not possess own-being of form, and as well the other skandhas. **Perfect wisdom does not possess any mark (of being) 'perfect wisdom'**. A mark does not possess own-being of a mark. Any 'thing' whatsoever as 'marked' does not possess own-being as [or for] being marked, and this which is seen or thought of as own-being does not possess any mark of [being] own-being, neither as any of vision, sound, thought, word **nor concept, nor subject or object**.

Sariputra: Even so, the **Bodhisattva** training in this goes forth to **all-knowledge**? (*i.e. So what is the point? Is this training still going somewhere, to omniscience?*)

[Another Translation: Shariputra: And still there is a bodhisattva who, cultivating this Perfect Wisdom, will attain omniscience? – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

Subhuti: Such a one does. As any and all dharmas are unborn, and do not go forth. As a **Bodhisattva** courses thus, **one comes nearer all-knowledge**. To such and any extent as **one comes nearer all-knowledge**, one's body, thought and marks are known as exceedingly pure, [V.8] for the sake of maturing beings, and one meets with Buddhas. It is thus any **Bodhisattva coursing in perfect wisdom comes nearer all-knowledge**.

(i.e. Yes. This training, the Middle Way, because it is more and more in accord with reality as one progress, then one's actions of body speech and mind becomes more and more pure, and everything is perceived as it really is: already pure. That what is called transmuting our impure body speech and mind into the pure body speech and mind of a Buddha. That is what is called meeting the Buddha inside, or realizing our own Buddha-nature. So, you see, even if everything is empty of inherent existence, the path, the adapted skillful means, still has a point: to go beyond all conditioning, all views, all methods, all points. The Middle Way: not accepting them, not rejecting them. Using them to help all others while being fully aware of their real nature.)

Subhuti speaks further concerning the **Bodhisattva**: **One courses in a sign** as one courses in any form, feeling, perception, impulse, or consciousness, or, in the **sign** of any of these skandhas, or in ideas such as 'form is a **sign**',

or in production of form, or in the stopping or destruction of form, or in the idea that 'form is *empty*', or 'I course', or 'I am a *Bodhisattva*'. For one actually courses in the idea 'I am a *Bodhisattva*' as a basis. Or, as it occurs to one 'one coursing thus, courses in *perfect wisdom* and develops it', one courses only in a *sign*. Such a *Bodhisattva* is known as *unskilled in means*. (*i.e. It would be a mistake to grasp at any self to liberate, any view, any virtuous method, path, skillful means, or even the Middle Way, as something real, inherently existing, absolute. Because then the skillful means become "unskillful" by its lack of wisdom. We have to combine both virtuous methods and wisdom together on the path; one alone is bondage, the two together is liberation because in accord with the goal, with reality at the edge of existence and non-existence.*)

[Another Translation: Subhuti: My noble brother, of course there is! Simply by this clear recognition that no processes, structures or characteristics of any kind are substantially generated, the bodhisattva blossoms as total awakens. The thought flow and even the physical body of an awakened bodhisattva become perfectly pure, because they manifest solely for the sake of guiding and maturing all conscious beings. With body and thought flow completely purified from subtle egocentricity, the bodhisattva, who actually embodies the omniscience of Prajnaparamita, will meet spontaneously with living Buddhas upon all planes of being and awareness. ...

The awakened bodhisattva does not indulge in analyzing and constantly reviewing the skandhas, or structural processes of personality, nor even in contemplating the advanced notions that the skandhas themselves are mere *signs*. Much less does the bodhisattva observe any apparent *arising*, *diminishing* or *destruction* of the skandhas. ...

Why? Because all beings and events, by their very nature are inconceivable and therefore unapproachable, ungraspable, unfindable, unrepresentable. Thus the awakened bodhisattva manifests spontaneously the transcendent insight known as not grasping any separate thing - the omniscient insight which is limitless, unwavering, sublime. This panoramic awakens transcends even the widest vision of any contemplative practitioner who remains subtly self-conscious and self-involved. ...

Even while remaining immersed in Prajnaparamita, the adamant awareness never forms or entertains any self-conscious notion such as 'I am now deep in sublime concentration' or 'I have now entered the meditation beyond all meditations'. – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

Sariputra: So, how does a *Bodhisattva* course as one coursing in *perfect wisdom*?

Subhuti: One does not course in skandhas, nor in *any sign* of such skandhas, nor in ideas such as 'skandhas are *signs*', nor in *production* of skandhas, nor in any *stopping* or destruction of such, nor in any idea such as 'skandhas are *empty*', or 'I course', or 'I am a *Bodhisattva*'. [V.9] And, this also doesn't occur to this one, 'one coursing thus courses in *perfect wisdom* and develops it'. [V.10] One courses but one does not entertain such ideas as 'I course', 'I do not course', 'I course and I do not course', 'I neither course nor do I not course', and the same [four] with 'I will course'. One does not go near any dharma at all as all dharmas are unapproachable and unappropriable. So, a *Bodhisattva* purely cognizes and is as *undifferentiated concentrated insight* 'Not grasping at any dharma' by name or appearance, and regardless whether vast, noble, *unlimited* and steady, not shared by any of the *Disciples* or *PratyekaBuddhas*. As one dwells as this *concentrated insight*, a *Bodhisattva* quickly realizes *full enlightenment* which Tathagatas of this time predict for one such as this. [V.11] But as one dwells in such *concentration*, one neither reviews nor thinks 'I am collected', 'I will enter *concentration*', 'I am entering into *concentration*', 'I have entered into *concentration*'. All these thoughts or notions in any and all ways do not exist for one such as this. (*i.e. "Concentrated insight" refers to the perfect union of Shamatha and Vipashyana, the perfect Union of the Two Truths, being continuously aware of the real nature of all dharmas while acting for the benefits of all sentient beings. In and near that state there is no difference between meditation sessions and non-meditation sessions. A mind with or without thoughts is the same, perfectly pure, for the one who can realize their real nature as they arise. The subject, object and action of meditation are all empty: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither.*)

Sariputra: Can one show forth such *concentration*?

Subhuti: No, Sariputra. Because any one of these ones born of good family neither knows nor perceives it.

Sariputra: You say one neither knows nor perceives it?

Subhuti: I do, for such **concentration** does not exist.

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti. And thus a **Bodhisattva** trains herein, as one trains in **perfect wisdom**.

Sariputra: As one thus trains, one trains in **perfect wisdom**?

The Lord: As one thus trains, one trains in **perfect wisdom**.

Sariputra: As one thus trains, which dharmas does one train in?

The Lord: **One does not train in any dharma whatsoever.** [V.12] Dharmas do not exist in such a way as people without such training are accustomed to suppose.

Sariputra: So, how do these exist?

(i.e. Sariputra has difficulty accepting that something can be empty (not existent) but still not completely non-existent either. He thinks emptiness denies conventional existence, and vice versa. Our dualistic mind refuse to let go of this duality: things are either existent or non-existent. Sariputra is still focusing on the object as something externally existing independently of the mind perceiving it. So, for him, this whole thing is a "paradox". The Lord will answer that it is because they are empty that they can arise as conventional truths; but to grasp at them as absolute is the cause of all suffering and of the whole samsara.)

The Lord: As these do not exist, so these exist. And so, since these do not exist [avidyamana], these are called [result of] **ignorance** [avidya]. [V.13] People not diligent and untrained in such have settled down in these. Although these do not exist, these people nonetheless have constructed all dharmas. Having constructed these, yet **attached to two extremes**, these people neither know nor see dharmas in their true reality. So these beings construct all dharmas which yet do not exist. Having constructed these, people **settle down in two extremes**. Depending on this link as a basic fact, beings now construct past, future and present dharmas. Now, once constructed these settle down in **name and form**. Thusly constructed are any and all dharmas, which yet do not exist, and these beings as such neither know nor see any path as it truly is. In consequence these ones do not go forth from any **triple world**, and **do not wake up to any reality limit**. *(i.e. "Any" means they do not realize even the Hinayana view, much less the perfection of this which is the Mahayana Enlightenment.)* For this reason ones such as these come to be styled as **'fools'**. Such ones as these reveal faith neither to self nor others in the **true nature of dharma**. But a **Bodhisattva** does not settle down in any dharma. *(i.e. The Middle Way is the path between the two extremes, the path that transcends all dharma of the three worlds (subject, object, action // desire, form, formless).)*

[Another Translation: While they construct all dharmas which yet do not exist, they neither know nor see the path which is that which truly is. In consequence they do not go forth from **the triple world**, and **do not wake up to the reality-limit**. For that reason they come to be styled "**fools**." They have no faith in the true dharma. – from [Streng's article. quote #1](#)]

[Another Translation: Buddha: The appearance of separately self-aware and substantially self-existing beings and events is the result of **primordial ignorance** which unconsciously and instinctively projects the notions of individuality, substance and separation. ...

This largely unconscious reasoning blinds naive realists and even naive contemplatives *(i.e. the two extremes of realism/existence and idealism/nihilism/non-existence)* to **the transparent, insubstantial and yet totally functional existence** of all structures and processes... *(i.e. The real nature of everything beyond existence and non-existence; empty but still dependently arisen and functional; not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither)* They attempt to crystallize Reality temporarily or permanently into **names and forms**. ... They remain asleep to the pure presence, or total awakeness, which constitutes all worlds and dimensions. – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

Sariputra: As one trains thus, is a **Bodhisattva** **trained in all-knowledge**? *(i.e. Does this path leads to omniscience of Buddhahood?)*

The Lord: As one thus trains oneself, a **Bodhisattva** does not even train in all-knowledge, and yet one trains in all dharmas. As one thus trains oneself, a **Bodhisattva** trains in all-knowledge, comes near to this and goes forth to it. (i.e. This Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting, is acting more and more in accord with reality, so it lead to the realization of the real nature of all dharmas. It is like a self-amplifying process. The more you act in accord with reality, combining more and more subtle virtuous methods and wisdom, the more you get positive feedback, like peace bliss equanimity, and the more it become easy to get nearer and nearer. The result is called the transmutation of the five poisons and three impure kayas into the five wisdoms and three inseparable kayas of a Buddha.)

Subhuti: As, O Lord, someone asks, -- "Does this illusory one train in all-knowledge, does one come near this, does one go forth to it?" --How does one explain it? (i.e. Subhuti is asking about the mirror and the dust. About the purification process. Is there a real purification process ?)

The Lord: I ask you a counter-question which you may answer as best you can.

Subhuti: Well said, O Lord. And the Venerable Subhuti listened to the Lord.

The Lord: Do you think, Subhuti, form, feeling, perception, impulse and consciousness, is one thing, and **illusion** another? [V.14] (i.e. The duality mirror vs. dust, or self vs. ignorance / defilements, or self vs. its five skandhas.)

Subhuti: No Lord, it is not so **illusion** being one thing, and these skandhas (i.e. they are not different), another; this very form is [not different than] **illusion**, this very **illusion** is [not different than] form. (i.e. They are not separate/different, but still not the same. One cannot exist without the other; one implies the other. They are interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. There is no permanent self in any of the skandhas individually, or in all of them together. There is no permanent self that can be separated from the so-called impure skandhas, no mirror that can be cleaned from the dust. Note: Here, it is only mentioned that they are not separate/different, but the fact that they are still not the same is implicit in the question of purification. Otherwise there is nothing to purify at all, and the path is pointless. – The same logic applies to the Heart Sutra where it is said: "Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form. Emptiness does not differ from form, and form does not differ from emptiness." In fact the two poles of any duality are like that. That is the meaning of the interdependence, inseparability, non-duality of everything: not two, not one.)

The Lord: Do you think, Subhuti, this notion '**Bodhisattva**', this denomination, this concept, this conventional expression, - is [not separate/different than] the five grasping skandhas? (i.e. This one is more explicitly about the duality: self vs. skandhas. They are not separate/different, but still not the same. One cannot exist without the other; one implies the other. They are interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. This self is empty of inherent existence, but still exist conventionally, as mere designations. So it is not completely non-existent either.)

Subhuti: Yes, it is. A **Bodhisattva** training oneself in perfect wisdom trains oneself as an illusory person for full enlightenment. One bears in mind these five grasping aggregates are [not separate/different than] this illusory person as well. The Lord says form is [not separate/different than] as an **illusion**. And as this is true of form, this is true also of six sense organs, and of five grasping aggregates. (i.e. Until we realize the perfect Union of the Two Truths, transcending the duality existence vs. non-existence, we should train ourselves to see everything as like illusion: dependent on the mind, but not from the mind only. We train using virtuous methods while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.)

Subhuti: Do **Bodhisattvas** newly set out in this vehicle not tremble, hearing this exposition? (i.e. About the fear to lose our "self".)

The Lord: These ones tremble getting into hands of bad friends, but not getting into hands of good friends. [V.15] (i.e. There is no reason to fear if one follow a teacher that follows the Middle Way, the Bodhisattva Way; but if one follows a false teacher that has fallen into quietism, total rejection, dropping all, stopping all mentation, not thinking, nihilism, then one will certainly develop fears, and end up in the worst hells.)

Subhuti: Who are a **Bodhisattva's** good friends?

The Lord: The ones instructing and admonishing these in **the perfections**. The ones pointing out to **Bodhisattvas** deeds which are seen as being of **Mara**, and saying, 'this is how faults and deeds seen as being of **Mara** come to be recognized. These are faults and deeds seen as being of **Mara**. Get rid of these as you recognize these.' These ones are known as good friends of a **Bodhisattva**, as **great beings**, armed with great armor and set out in this great vehicle, and mounted on this great vehicle.

*(i.e. The two colors, red and blue, like in "the perfections" represent the inseparability of **method** and **wisdom**. That is the main message of the Middle Way: the need to combine the two accumulations together to be in perfect harmony with the real nature of everything at the edge of existence and non-existence. **The first five paramitas** need to be combined with **the sixth paramita** to take their name of **perfections**.)*

The Meaning of "Bodhisattva" [obtaining non-attachment and enlightenment through the Middle Way]

Subhuti: Regarding what the Lord is saying, as speaking of '**Bodhisattva**', --what is meant by this word '**Bodhisattva**'? [V.16]

The Lord: **Nothing real is meant by this word 'Bodhisattva'**. A **Bodhisattva** trains oneself in **non-attachment to any and all dharmas**. The **Bodhisattvas, great beings, awake in non-attachment to full enlightenment in a sense in which one understands any and all dharmas**. As one has enlightenment as one's aim, this 'enlightenment-being' [**Bodhisattva**], this **great being**, is so called.

(i.e. The Bodhisattva is empty of inherent existence, but still dependently arisen and functional. His training consist on "non-attachment to any and all dharma" but not in the Hinayana sense of the terms by artificially trying to drop/reject all. This would not work; it could only bring short term benefits, not Buddhahood. His non-attachment is the result of realizing the real nature of any and all dharma. Once he realize the real nature of his own mind, and thus of all dharma, then automatically the three poisons drop by themselves fault of nutriment, and he doesn't fall into nihilism either. And he get to this point, to realize the real nature of all dharma, by adopting the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting; a path that is efficient because perfectly in accord with the result, in accord with the real nature of everything: not existence, not non-existence, not both, not neither (a non-affirmative negation).)



Tibet manuscript of the Prajnaparamita sutra in 8000 verses

This is complete manuscript in 407 folios, of the Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita sutra, one of the most important of the Mahayanasutras, considered the "heart sutra" of the Mahayana tradition. It is particularly popular in Nepal and Tibet. This manuscript is exceptional for its completeness, fine calligraphy and illuminations in good condition. The illuminations are in a Nepalese style, indicating that the manuscript was likely produced in a monastery with links to the Nepalese style, perhaps a Sakya gumpa. The top cover is original, the bottom cover a vestigial later replacement. ([source](#))

The Meaning of "Great Being" [they teach to all sentient beings without discrimination how to realize the real nature of their own mind]

Subhuti: So, as the Lord is speaking of a Bodhisattva as '**great being**', --for what reason is a Bodhisattva called '**great being**'? [V.17]

The Lord: Any Bodhisattva is called '**great being**' through understanding such as any of these **reveal to countless masses and collections of beings' access to their own unlimited awareness.** (i.e. They teach to all sentient beings without discrimination how to realize the real nature of their own mind, and thus to be free from all suffering.)

Sariputra: It is clear also to me this understanding through which a Bodhisattva is called '**great being**'.

The Lord: Make it clear what you think now!

Sariputra: Any Bodhisattva is called '**great being**' through understanding such as any of these **demonstrate dharma as truly as it is, and great errors are forsaken and dissolved** - such erroneous views as any assumption of a self, a being, a living soul, a person, of becoming, of not-becoming, of annihilation, of eternity, of individuality, etc. - erroneous views or notions of things or beings of any intrinsically non-dependent inherencies, or as such may lose any or all attributes assumed of such inherencies. (i.e. More: It is by realizing the real nature of their own mind, and thus of all dharma, that sentient beings can purify their own body speech and mind and act more in accord with reality, not creating uncontrolled karma and having to suffer the consequences of such mistakes.)

Subhuti: It is clear also to me this understanding through which any Bodhisattva is called '**great being**'.

The Lord: Make clear, Subhuti, what you think now!

Subhuti: Any Bodhisattva is called '**great being**' as being simply **unattached to and uninvolved in any thought of enlightenment, any thought of all-knowledge, any thought without outflows, any unequalled thoughts or any thought of equaling the unequalled, or thoughts as either shared or unshared by any of the Disciples or PratyekaBuddhas.** Any thought of **all-knowledge** is without outflows, and unincluded [in any empirical world]. Respecting **all-knowledge**, and regarding any thought which is without outflows and unincluded, one remains unattached and uninvolved. In coming to understand this as such, any Bodhisattva comes to be styled as '**great being**'. (i.e. They are superior to the Hinayanists. They are following the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. They are using those adapted skilful means without getting attached to any of them, using them while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action. Not thinking there is a self to liberate, or a final goal to reach, or thought to stop. They stay away from all extremes.)

Sariputra: For what reason is one unattached even to this thought, and uninvolved in such? (i.e. Sariputra doesn't understand how can one attain the goal without stopping all thoughts as it is done in dhyanas.)

Subhuti: **As such, this is no thought.** (i.e. It is a mistake to think that thoughts are bad in essence and that liberation is gained by dropping all thoughts, all conceptualization. All thoughts are dependently arisen, thus empty of inherent existence, thus beyond good and bad. They are already pure for one who can see their real nature as they arise. There is nothing to accept, nothing to reject. It is just a matter of realizing this. It is the realization of the real nature of everything that makes the three poisons to drop automatically by themselves fault of nutriment.)

Sariputra: **Is this thought, which is no thought, something which is?** (i.e. Same mistake as above. Sariputra, the Hinayanist, says: What is the nature of thoughts? Shouldn't we try to stop them, to reject them, as taught in the Hinayana ?)

Subhuti: Is here existing now, or can one apprehend in this state of absence of thought, either a 'here is' or 'here is not'? (i.e. The Middle Way: thoughts, like everything else, are at the edge of existence and non-existence; not existent, but still not completely non-existent either; empty of inherent existence but still dependently arisen and functional. So there is nothing to accept or reject anyway. There is no real origination, duration or cessation of thoughts, or for anything. There is no absolute basis to judge wholesome or unwholesome thoughts, or for any discrimination. It is all dependently arisen, relative. Just realizing the real nature of the thoughts purifies them;

there is no need to artificially try to drop them; that would only be an impermanent solution. So just let it be while being perfectly aware. There is no difference between a mind with thoughts and a mind without thoughts. Everything is already pure for one who can see their real nature.)

Sariputra: No, not even this.

Subhuti: So...how can Venerable Sariputra ask, or even say, 'is such thought, which is no thought, something which is'?

Sariputra: **Well do you expound this**, Subhuti, whom the Lord announces as foremost, as dwelling in Peace. (*i.e. Same question as above.*) (*i.e. Sariputra trying to pinpoint the teaching of the Middle Way so far; but he is still stuck in his realism. Seems like he still doesn't understand all the explanations of Subhuti above.*)

The Meaning of "armed in great armor" [Without falling into any extreme]

Herein the Venerable Purna, son of Maitrayani, says to the Lord: '**Great being**' is one thus called, armed in great armor is such a being, one set out in this great vehicle, such is mounted on this great vehicle. This is why one comes to be styled as '**great being**'. [V.18] (*i.e. The Bodhisattva is the one who is following the Middle Way: realizing the emptiness of all dharma, but still not rejecting them, still helping all sentient beings. That is acting in accord with reality.*)

Subhuti: How great is this which entitles one to be called '**armed in great armor**'?

The Lord: Here the **Bodhisattva**, the **great being**, thinks thus: 'countless beings do I lead to Nirvana yet here is neither one leading to Nirvana, nor any being led thus'. However many beings one may lead to Nirvana, yet neither has any being been led to Nirvana, nor had any led others to it. **As such is this true nature of dharmas, seeing this nature as such, is illusory**. Subhuti, just as a clever magician, or magician's apprentice conjures up at these crossroads a great crowd of people and makes these vanish again... What do you think, Subhuti, is anyone killed by anyone, or murdered, or destroyed, or made to vanish? [V.19] (*i.e. The Bodhisattva is the one who is following the Middle Way: helping all other sentient beings without discrimination, while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. That is acting in accord with reality. That is the Mahayana path leading to Buddhahood.*)

Subhuti: No indeed, Lord.

The Lord: Even so a **Bodhisattva**, **great being**, leads countless beings to Nirvana, and yet not any being has been led to Nirvana, nor has one led others to it. **Hearing this exposition without fear [V.19] is a great thing which entitles this Bodhisattva to be known as 'armed with the great armor'**. (*i.e. Great armor means they are immune to fears that some might generate from a superficial understanding of emptiness.*)

Subhuti: As I understand the meaning of the Lord's teaching, as certainly not armed with an armor this **Bodhisattva**, this **great being**, is known. (*i.e. It is not a real armor, or magic spell, it is more like a realization.*)

The Lord: So it is. As **all-knowledge** is **not made, not unmade, not affected**. Such beings also for whose sake one is armed with great armor are not made, not unmade, not effected. (*i.e. Indeed, everything is like that: not really existing, not really produced, not really changing, not really ceasing. There is no real origination, duration and cessation. Those are mere conceptual designations.*)

Subhuti: So it is. For **form, feeling, perception, impulse, consciousness**, is **neither bound nor freed**. And such is true also of **Suchness of form, Suchness of feeling, Suchness of perception, Suchness of impulse or Suchness of consciousness** [V.20] (*i.e. Indeed, the five aggregates are empty of inherent existence, but still not completely non-existent either. They are dependently arisen, thus empty, and vice versa. They are neither good nor bad. There is nothing to accept, nothing to reject. The real nature of everything is beyond the duality wisdom/freed vs. ignorance/bound. There is no mirror to clean, no dust to reject. They are not existing separately; they are not separate/different but still not the same; they are interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.*)

Purna: But **what now is the form of which you say is neither bound nor freed, and what this Suchness of form, etc.?** *(i.e. Same question as Sariputra asked twice above. And about Suchness: the real nature beyond conceptualization. He think that Subhuti is affirming something, proposing a view, an absolute.)*

Subhuti: **The form** of any illusory being is **neither bound nor freed.** **Suchness of form** of an illusory being is neither bound nor freed. **In reality it is not here at all, it is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, it is unproduced.** This is the great armor, the great non-armor of a **Bodhisattva**, a **great being**, armed as the great armor, set out in this great vehicle, mounted on the great vehicle. [V.20] *(i.e. Everything, even suchness, is like that: at the edge of existence and non-existence, like illusions, empty but still dependently arisen and functional, and vice versa. Suchness is not a view; one should not grasp at this either. All dharma are empty of inherent existence; there is no exception at all, not even emptiness, not even the Middle Way, not even suchness. No absolute, only adapted skillful means. – It is easy to realize the emptiness of gross elements, like it is easy to realize the impermanence of gross elements. But when it comes to very subtle elements like the mind, the self, some kind of elementary components, space, time, causality, samsara, nirvana, ignorance, wisdom, the Middle Way itself, or some kind of transcending reality like suchness, then it is much harder to realize it. We can easily accept that our present reality is probably false, but that the ultimate reality is also like an illusion is harder to accept. Some will escape the fire of naïve realism only to drown into nihilism, or to grasp at a cosmic oneness that eliminated all dualities and discrimination completely. That is not acting in accord with reality. The Middle Way is to stay away from all extremes.)*

After these words the Venerable Purna is silent. *(i.e. No more hinayanist objections.)*

The Meaning of "Great Vehicle" [Incommensurably efficient because more and more in accord with reality; transcending all comparisons, all limits, causality space and time, all karma]

Subhuti: It is thus, O Lord, a Bodhisattva, great being, is armed with great armor, and is set out in the great vehicle, is mounted on the great vehicle. But **what is this great vehicle?** How does one know any one thus set out in this great vehicle? Whence does it go forth and whither? Who or what being sets out in it? Where does it stand? Who or what being goes forth by means of this great vehicle? [V.21]

The Lord: 'Great vehicle' [i.e. Mahayana] is a synonym of **immeasurableness**. 'Immeasurable' is **infinite**, and as such no thing by which to determine any measurement either by name nor number, saying this is as such or this many. By means of **perfections** a Bodhisattva sets out. **From this triple world one goes forth. One sets out to where is no objective support whatsoever.**

Such is a Bodhisattva, a great being going forth, -but **not going forth** to anywhere. Nor does one set out in this as one does **not stand anywhere**, yet stands on **all-knowledge** by way of making a stand nowhere. And finally, by means of this great vehicle **no one goes forth, no one has gone forth, no one will go forth**. As neither of these dharmas exist, - one going forth, and this by which one goes forth - neither can these be got at. Since any and all dharmas do not exist, what dharma could go forth by what dharma?

[**Another translation:** Mahayana is synonymous with immeasurability. Immeasurability is synonymous with infinity, and infinity with ineffability. ... The courageous diamond being, the bodhisattva who travels in this vehicle of immeasurability, is therefore traveling nowhere. Nor is there any separate traveler. Nor does this uncontainable vehicle move through any substantial realm. Simply by its perfect freedom from all notions of location, substance and limitation, the Mahayana already abides as omnipresence and omniscience. No separately self-existing personality is traveling on the Great Vehicle, has ever traveled on the Great Vehicle, or will ever travel on the Great Vehicle. Neither the personality structure of the traveler nor the philosophical structure of the Mahayana possess even an atom of substantial or independent self-existence. Therefore, neither practitioner nor practice can be grasped, crystallized or objectified in any way. What transparent structure can travel in what transparent vehicle? – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

It is thus Subhuti, a Bodhisattva, a great being, is armed with great armor, and is mounted on the great vehicle.

(i.e. This Mahayana, this Middle Way, is a great vehicle because it permits to transcend all limitations, all comparisons, all discrimination, all concepts, causality space time. It does that by getting closer and closer to reality, making us to act more and more in accord with reality at the edge of existence and non-existence. So it becomes incommensurably powerful and efficient as it gets closer. On the other hand this is not like ordinary knowledge and power; there is nobody getting this power, no real going nor sanding, no real progress that can be measured on an absolute scale. This is not about getting personal power, it is about realizing our real nature under all the illusions and fears. This path is successful and efficient only when combining the virtuous methods like Bodhicitta, (developing loving-kindness, compassion, helping others, etc.) and the gradual development of the wisdom realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action. Somebody who would do this for personal gain would simply fail, he would not even understand, because then not acting in accord with reality. For him the whole path would be like a mystery, an unsolvable paradox. – This is like a magic sword that works only in the hand of the pure and innocent person. It cannot be controlled by force. Touch it with an impure mind and you instantaneously burn in hell. lol Ok. let's get back to reality.)

Subhuti: The Lord speaks of the 'great vehicle'. **Surpassing the world with its Gods, beings and Asuras**, such a vehicle goes forth. **It is the same as space**, and exceedingly great. As in space, so in this vehicle is room for **immeasurable and incalculable** beings. Such is this great **vehicle of the Bodhisattvas**, these **great beings**. One neither sees its coming, nor going, and its abiding as such, does not exist. Thus one cannot get at any beginning of this great vehicle, nor at any end, nor at any middle. Yet, such is self-identical everywhere. Thus, hereof one speaks of a 'great vehicle'.

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti. So it is. It is thusly the great **vehicle of the Bodhisattvas**, the **great beings**. Trained herein **Bodhisattvas reach all-knowledge**, have reached it, will reach it.

Purna: This Elder Subhuti, as asked about [perfect wisdom](#), fancies the great vehicle is something which can be pointed out.

Subhuti: Have I, O Lord, spoken of the great vehicle without transgressing against [perfect wisdom](#)?

The Lord: You have. In agreement with [perfect wisdom](#) you point out the great vehicle.

[The Bodhisattva Way: motivated by Bodhicitta, realizing the emptiness of more and more subtle dharma, thus staying away from all extremes]

(This is a repeat of the theme of the first section.)

Subhuti: [V.22] Through the Buddha's might O Lord, moreover, a [Bodhisattva](#) setting out on this journey does not approach the goal of full Bodhisattvahood from any beginning, nor any ending, nor from any middle either. [Bodhisattvas](#) are as [boundless](#) as form, feeling, perception, impulse and consciousness are [boundless](#). One does not approach any idea such as 'a [Bodhisattva](#) is form', etc. This also does not exist, and is not apprehended. Thus in each and every way neither do I get at any of the dharmas which constitute a [Bodhisattva](#), nor do I see any dharma which the word '[Bodhisattva](#)' denotes.

[Perfect wisdom](#) also is [neither seen nor got at](#). (*i.e. They are not existent. Nothing to accept. No permanent self to liberate using real methods and views, using an absolute path.*) [All-knowledge](#) also neither is seen nor got at. As in each and every way these dharmas are neither seen nor apprehended, -what dharma does one instruct and admonish, through what dharma, in what dharma?

['Buddha', 'Bodhisattva', 'perfect wisdom', all these are mere words](#). What 'things' being such as these denote is something uncreated? It is as with any [self](#) or notion hereof. Although we speak of a 'self', yet absolutely any self is some 'thing' uncreated. Since herein all dharmas are without own-being, what is form, etc., which cannot be seized, and which is something uncreated? Thus any [fact](#) -such as all dharmas are without own-being ...is the same as any fact that these are uncreated. Yet [non-creation](#) of any and all dharmas differs from these dharmas. How do I instruct and admonish non-creation in [perfect wisdom](#) which is also non-creation? [And yet](#), one cannot apprehend as other than uncreated all dharmas (*i.e. They are not non-existent either. Nothing to reject. No need to fear of losing the self.*), regardless whether these are thought of as constituting a Buddha, or a [Bodhisattva](#), or one marching to enlightenment.

[Another translation: [Buddha, bodhisattva, prajnaparamita - these are merely abstract terms](#), composed of certain sounds and letters, correlated with certain conventional perceptions and concepts. What they point at has never substantially come into being. What they indicate is an uncreated and, hence, ungraspable and unthinkable presence. The same is true of the terms self and universe. ... That all structures and processes have never been created simply means that they appear vividly and function coherently without possessing any independent essence that can be isolated, grasped or formulated in anyway. ...

The absence of the substantial creation of any form is not different from the radiantly transparent, harmonious and coherent functioning of all forms. [Thus absolute openness and relative functioning are not divided](#). They are not two alternative dimensions, but utter simplicity. If one labels and thereby experiences this expansive simplicity as material form and personal consciousness, one is foolishly numbering and labeling that which has no multiplicity and no identity. – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

[It is precisely this, the Middle Way, the path leading to the perfection of wisdom ...] If any [Bodhisattva](#) as this is being taught is not afraid, one can know 'this [Bodhisattva](#), this [great being](#) courses in [perfect wisdom](#), develops, investigates, and meditates on and as such.' At such a time as a [Bodhisattva](#) investigates these dharmas in [perfect wisdom](#), at such a time one does not approach form and other skandhas, nor go to any of these. Nor does one review any production of form, etc., nor any stopping. For [non-production](#) of form, etc., is not form, etc. Any non-passing-away of form, etc., is not form, etc. [Non-production and form are herein neither two nor divided](#). Inasmuch as one calls any thing 'form', etc., one makes a count of what is not two. Thus, [Bodhisattvas](#) investigate

in perfect wisdom any and all dharmas in any and all modes as such may merely indicate, yet one does not at any time approach form, feeling, perception, impulse, or consciousness.

Sariputra: As I understand the teaching of the Venerable Subhuti, a Bodhisattva also is non-produced. Yet, as a Bodhisattva is non-produced, how does one go on this difficult pilgrimage, and how can one possibly endure any experience of sufferings which one is said to undergo for the sake of beings? (i.e. About how to deal with difficulties.)

Subhuti: I do not look for a Bodhisattva going on any difficult pilgrimage. In any case, one coursing in perception of difficulties is not a Bodhisattva. One generating a perception of difficulties is unable to work the weal of countless beings. (i.e. One should not antagonize the difficulties but try to see everything as already pure.)

On the contrary, one forms the notion of ease, one forms this notion of all beings, whether men or women, are one's parents and children, and thus one goes on pilgrimage of a Bodhisattva. A Bodhisattva identifies all beings with one's parents or children, yes, even with one's own self, like this:

"As I myself aspire to be quite free from all sufferings, just so all beings aspire to be quite free from all sufferings." (i.e. Motivated by Bodhichitta, exchanging self for other, one doesn't mind the personal difficulties.)

In addition regarding all beings, one forms the notion:

"I do not desert all these beings. I aspire to set these free from any measureless heap of sufferings! And I do not produce towards any a thought of hate, even though I might be dismembered a hundred times!" [V.24] (i.e. Acting in perfect peace and equanimity.)

It is thus a Bodhisattva lifts up one's heart. As one dwells as one whose heart is this way, one neither courses nor dwells as one perceiving difficulties. And further a Bodhisattva produces the thought,

"as in each and every way a self does not exist, and so not got at, so in each and every way all dharmas do not exist, and are not got at." (i.e. There is no real self suffering, and no real suffering anyway.)

Such a one applies this notion to all dharmas, inside and outside. As one dwells as one whose heart is as such, one neither courses nor dwells as one perceiving difficulties. But as the Venerable Sariputra said, "non-produced is the Bodhisattva,"...indeed it is so, "non-produced is any Bodhisattva."

Sariputra: Further, is just such a Bodhisattva non-produced, or dharmas also which constitute one? (i.e. He thinks that only the self is not existent, but that its elementary components, physical and mental, are real.)

Subhuti: Dharmas which constitute a Bodhisattva are also non-produced. (i.e. For Mahayanists all dharma are equally empty of inherent existence; there is no exception at all. No elementary elements, no elementary moments of consciousness,)

Sariputra: Are only dharmas which constitute a Bodhisattva non-produced, or also any state of all-knowledge?

Subhuti: Any state of all-knowledge is also non-produced. (i.e. All states, all knowledge, all perceptions, all karma, are all dependently arisen, impermanent, empty of inherent existence.)

Sariputra: Is just the state of all-knowledge non-produced, or also any and all dharmas which constitute it?

Subhuti: Dharmas which constitute all-knowledge are also non-produced.

Sariputra: Are just dharmas which constitute all-knowledge non-produced, or also any common people?

Subhuti: Any common people are also non-produced.

Sariputra: Are just any common people non-produced, or also dharmas which constitute these?

Subhuti: Dharmas which constitute any common people are also non-produced.

Sariputra: If, Venerable Subhuti, the Bodhisattva is non-produced and also dharmas which constitute one as such, and also the state of all-knowledge, and also dharmas which constitute this, and also any common people, and

also dharmas which constitute these, - surely, the **state of all-knowledge** is reached by a **Bodhisattva** without any exertion? *(i.e. Trying to find fault in Subhuti's teaching: If everything is empty, then the path is useless ... no?)*

Subhuti: I do not wish for any attainment of any unproduced dharma, nor reunion with one. Further, does one attain an unproduced attainment through unproduced dharma? *(i.e. It is an error to grasp at such a goal.)*

Sariputra: So is unproduced attainment got at through unproduced dharma, or through produced dharma? *(i.e. Is this non-existent goal (effect) caused by real or unreal causes?)*

Subhuti: Is unproduced dharma produced, or unproduced? *(i.e. It is beyond causality.)*

Sariputra: Is production a dharma which is a non-production, or is non-production dharma which is production?

Subhuti: To talk of production as non-production-dharma is **not intelligible**.

Sariputra: **To talk of non-production is also not intelligible.** *(i.e. Damn, this little chat is getting nasty. Sariputra cannot understand that it is just inherent production that is refuted, not conventional production. He thinks that non-production means no production at all. This is the same argument as above. He is still stuck in his dualism of existence and non-existence, and cannot accept that one can transcend this apparent duality. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting.)*

Subhuti: **Non-production is just talk.** Non-production just appears before the mind's eye. Non-production is just a flash in the mind. Absolutely it is nothing more. *(i.e. Non-production is just another adapted skillful means, a temporary antidote to the belief in inherent production. One should not replace his grasping at production with the grasping at non-production. The real nature of everything is beyond this duality of production and non-production, or of existence and non-existence. Everything is empty of inherent existence but still not completely non-existent either. Everything is still dependently arisen and functional. There is no real (inherently existing) origination/production, duration, and cessation. But this doesn't mean that there is no origination, duration and cessation at all. These are conventional truths.)*

Sariputra: In the first rank of preachers of dharma should the Venerable Subhuti be placed. For in whatever way he may be questioned, he finds a way out; he does not swerve from the correct teaching about **true nature of Dharma**, and he does not contradict **true nature of Dharma**.

Subhuti: This is the Lord's Absolute...the essence of **Disciples** without any support, so in whatever way these are questioned, these find a way out, do not contradict **true nature of dharmas**, nor depart from such. This is such as this, as these do not rely on any dharmas. *(i.e. There is only one Dharma, one Middle Way, taught in different manners in all the different vehicles.)*

Sariputra: Well said, Subhuti. **And what is this perfection of the Bodhisattvas which allows these to not lean on any dharmas?**

Subhuti: **Perfection of wisdom**, beneficial to all the three vehicles, is also perfection which allows these to not lean on any dharma, due to it showing all dharmas as having no support and can thus give none. As any **Bodhisattva** remains unafraid as this **deep perfection of wisdom** is being taught, one can know such a one is adjusted to **perfection of wisdom**, and one is **not lacking in this attention to true facts about dharmas**. *(i.e. It is this wisdom of realizing the real nature of all dharma without any exception that help the Bodhisattva to stay away from all extremes. It is the same emptiness antidote applied again and again to more and more subtle dharma, concepts, views, methods, even as they are using them as adapted skillful means. That is the Middle Way, the Bodhisattva Way, the Mahayana)*

Sariputra: How is it a **Bodhisattva** does **not lack in attention being adjusted to perfect wisdom**? For if a **Bodhisattva** is not lacking in attention, one automatically lacks in adjustment to **perfection of wisdom**. And if one does not lack in adjustment to **perfection of wisdom**, one is lacking in attention. **But if in a Bodhisattva the two facts that one is not lacking in attention, and one is not lacking in dwelling in perfection of wisdom belong together**, then all beings also will not be lacking in dwelling in **perfection of wisdom** because these also dwell not lacking in attention. *(i.e. Sariputra is trying to conciliate the concepts of adapted skillful means (here effort, attention or concentration) and the wisdom of realizing emptiness. He is realizing that we need both together on*

the path, but he is still grasping at it as two real things that could exist separately that are brought together. That is still dualism.)

Subhuti: Well said, and yet I must reprove you, although the Venerable Sariputra has taken hold of the matter correctly as far as the words are concerned. One knows **attention** is without own-being in the same way in which beings are without own-being; **attention has no real existence in the same way in which beings have no real existence**; attention is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable in the same way in which beings are isolated-inaccessible-not-findable; attention is **unthinkable** in the same way in which beings are **unthinkable**; acts of mental attention do not undergo any process which leads to enlightenment in the same way in which beings do not undergo any process; acts of attention do not in any real sense undergo any process which leads to enlightenment, any more than beings do. It is through attention of such a character as this I wish a **Bodhisattva**, a **great being**, may dwell in this dwelling. *(i.e. We do need to combine attention and wisdom; like combining Shamatha and Vipashyana; like combining method and wisdom on the path. Only then is it getting more and more in accord with the real nature of everything at the edge of existence and non-existence. But one should not grasp at this “union” either; this too is empty of inherent existence. The two, method (dependent origination) and wisdom (emptiness), the Two Truths, are also empty because interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. Even this very subtle dharma is empty like everything else, no exception at all. Any conceptual description is at best only the finger pointing at the moon.)*

Chapter II – [Abiding without abiding / realizing the emptiness of the subject, object, action; without rejecting them]

Preamble [Even Gods should aspire to full enlightenment and learn the Bodhisattva Way]

Go to verses

At this time, many Gods are coming to the assembly and taking their seats: **Sakra**, Chief of Gods, with forty thousand Gods of the Thirty-three; the four world-guardians, with twenty thousand Gods belonging to the retinue of the four Great Kings; **Brahma**, ruler of this world system, with ten thousand Gods belonging to the company of Brahma; and *five thousand Gods of the Pure Abode*. And yet... the might of the Buddha with his majesty and authority surpasses even the splendor of these Gods, a reward for the deeds these have done here, even in this past.

Sakra: These many thousands of Gods, Subhuti, have come to this assembly, and taken seats, as we want to hear about perfect wisdom from the Holy Subhuti, and to listen to his advice to the **Bodhisattvas**, to his instruction and admonition **how these Bodhisattvas stand in perfect wisdom, how train in it, how one devotes oneself to it?**

Subhuti: Let me now explain it to you, through the Buddha's might, majesty and authority. The Gods, not yet aspiring to full enlightenment should do so. Any however, being certain to have got safely out of this world [i.e., the Arhats having reached their last birth, and thinking to have done with it all] are unfit for full enlightenment as these are not willing to go, from compassion, back into birth-and-death. And why? The flood of birth and death hems these ones in. Incapable of repeated rebirths, these ones are unable to aspire to full enlightenment. And yet, these may still aspire to full enlightenment, and I confirm such as these also. I do not obstruct their wholesome root. For one should uphold distinguished dharmas above all others. *(i.e. Even the best adobes are still in samsara, still subject to impermanence and to fall into the lower real. So they are not true security. One should not try to hide from the world in deep dhyanas, or in trying to reject the world, to drop all; they are artificially produced and necessarily impermanent. On should aim at enlightenment instead.)*

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti. You well encourage **Bodhisattvas**.

Subhuti now says to the Lord: We are grateful to the Lord, and not ungrateful. For the Lord, in presence of Tathagatas leads for our sake the holy life with enlightenment as his view. Even as he definitely develops **Bodhisattva** realization [as being dedicated to a thought of enlightenment], **disciples** still instruct and admonish him in these **perfections**, and by his coursing herein is revealing utmost cognition, to and for beneficence of **unlimited** beings. So also do we help, champion, aid and sustain **Bodhisattvas**, as these **Bodhisattvas** we help, champion, aid and sustain, soon come to know **full enlightenment**.

How to Stand on the Perfection of Wisdom [Emptiness of the object; a non-affirming negation]

[V.29-30] So, now **Subhuti** says to Sakra: Listen now, Kausika, and attend well **as I teach you how a Bodhisattva stands in perfect wisdom.**

Through standing in emptiness, one stands in perfection of wisdom.

Armed with great armor, the **Bodhisattva** thus develops so

one does not take one's stand on any of these:

- not on form, feeling, perception, impulses, consciousness;
- not on eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; not on forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables, mind-objects;
- not on eye-consciousness, etc., until we come to: not on mind-consciousness, etc.,
- until we come to: not on the elements, i.e., earth, water, fire, wind, ether, consciousness;
- not on the pillars of mindfulness, right efforts, roads to psychic power, faculties, powers, limbs of enlightenment, limbs of the Path;
- not on the fruits of Stream-winner, Once-Returner, Never-Returner, or Arhatship;
- not on **PratyekaBuddhahood**, nor on Buddhahood.

- One does not take one's stand on the idea, 'this is form', 'this is feeling', etc., to: 'this is Buddhahood'.
- One does not take one's stand on any ideas like 'form, feeling, perception, impulse, or consciousness, is permanent, or impermanent'; 'form, etc., is ease or ill'; 'form, etc., is self, or not self', 'form, etc., is lovely or repulsive', or even that 'form, etc., is *empty*, or apprehended as something'.
- One does not take one's stand on any notion such as the fruits of the holy life derive their dignity from something called 'Unconditioned'.
- Or this - a Stream-winner is worthy of gifts, and will be reborn seven times at the most.
- Or, a Once-Returner is worthy of gifts and, as one has not yet quite realized through to any end, one makes an end of ill after one has once more come into this world.
- Or, a Never-Returner is worthy of gifts and, without once more returning to this world, realizes Nirvana elsewhere.
- Or, an Arhat is worthy of gifts and just here in this very existence will win Nirvana in the realm of Nirvana leaving nothing behind.
- Or, a **PratyekaBuddha** is worthy of gifts, and will win Nirvana after rising above the level of a **Disciple**, but without having attained any level of a Buddha.
- Or even, a Buddha is worthy of gifts, and will win Nirvana in the Buddha-Nirvana, in the realm of Nirvana leaving nothing behind, once one rises above the levels of a common being, of a **Disciple**, and of a **PratyekaBuddha**, wroughts the weal of countless beings, leads to Nirvana countless hundreds of thousands of *niyutas* of *kotis* of beings, assures countless beings of Discipleship, **PratyekaBuddhahood** and full Buddhahood, is standing [!] on the stage of a Buddha and does a Buddha's work,
- **-even now on this a Bodhisattva does not take one's stand.**

Hereupon the Venerable *Sariputra* thought to himself: If even here upon this one does not take one's stand, **how does one stand, and train oneself?** (*i.e. Still trying to pinpoint an affirmation.*)

The Venerable *Subhuti*, through the Buddha's might, read his thoughts and said: What do you think, Sariputra, where does Tathagata stand? [V.31]

Sariputra: Nowhere does Tathagata stand. A Tathagata mind neither seeks nor relies upon support. Ones such as these stand neither in what is conditioned, nor in what is unconditioned, nor do these emerge from such.

Subhuti: **Even so a Bodhisattva stands and trains oneself. One decides this, "as the Tathagata does not stand anywhere, nor not stand, nor stand apart, nor not stand apart, so also I stand."** Just so one trains oneself, "as Tathagata is stationed, so also I stand, and train myself." Just so one trains oneself, "as the Tathagata is stationed, so do I stand, well in place as without a place to stand upon." **Even so Sariputra, a Bodhisattva stands and trains oneself.** (*i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting; beyond standing and non-standing. Not accepting any training as absolute, not rejecting all training as completely non-existent, meaningless, useless. Not absolute, only adapted skillful means.*)

As one trains thus, **one adjusts oneself to perfection of wisdom, and never ceases from taking it to heart.** (*i.e. One tries to find the proper adapted skillful means that would be efficient for himself, and combine it with the gradual development of the wisdom realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action. That is the Middle Way, the Bodhisattva Way, the Mahayana.*)

[Nobody is standing or not standing anyway]

So, now here comes this thought to *some of the Gods in this assembly*: "What the fairies talk and murmur, we understand this though mumbled. But, Subhuti is just telling us what we do not understand." (*i.e. They cannot accept the double non affirmative negation; they want a clear conclusion.*)

Subhuti read these thoughts, and said: "Here is no-thing to understand, nothing at all to understand. Nothing in particular is indicated, nothing in particular is explained." (*i.e. Emptiness is a non-affirmative negation. It just means do not stand on this or that. There is no absolute, only conventional truths, only adapted skillful means. The real nature of everything cannot be described with words or any other type of karma. It is beyond conceptualization and karma.*)

Hereupon the *Gods* thought: "May the Holy Subhuti enlarge on this! May the Holy Subhuti enlarge on this! What the Holy Subhuti here explores, demonstrates and teaches, is remoter than remote, subtler than subtle, deep beyond depth."

Subhuti read these thoughts, and said: "No one can attain any fruit of holy life or keep it, - from the Stream-winner's fruit to full enlightenment - unless one patiently accepts this... - the elusiveness of dharma." [V.32] (*i.e. All caused fruits are necessarily impermanent. Enlightenment is beyond causality. As one tries to "produce it" it eluded him. One has to realize the emptiness of any goal.*)

Now these *Gods* thought: "What could one wish any beings to be like who are worthy to listen to the doctrine from the Holy Subhuti?"

Subhuti read these thoughts, and said: "These learning doctrine from me one might wish to be like an illusory magical creation, for these neither hear my words nor experience the facts which are here and now expressed." [V.33]

Gods: Beings like a magical illusion, are these not in truth just an illusion?

Subhuti: Like a magical illusion are these beings, like a dream.

For not two different things are magical illusion and beings are dreams and beings.

Any and all objective facts also are like a magical illusion, like a dream.

The various classes of saints, from Stream-winner to Buddhahood, also are like a magical illusion, like a dream.

Gods: A fully enlightened Buddha also, you say, is like a magical illusion, is like a dream? Buddhahood also, you say, is like a magical illusion, is like a dream?

Subhuti: Even Nirvana, I say, is like a magical illusion, is like a dream. How much more so anything else?!

Gods: Even Nirvana, Holy Subhuti, you say, is like an illusion, is like a dream?

Subhuti: If perchance here could be anything even more distinguished, of such too I say is like an illusion, like a dream. For not two different things are illusion and Nirvana, are dreams and Nirvana.

Hereupon the *Venerable Sariputra*, the *Venerable Purna*, son of *Maitrayani*, the *Venerable Mahakoshthila*, the *Venerable Mahakatyayana*, the *Venerable Mahakashyapa*, and the other *Great Disciples*, together with many thousands of *Bodhisattvas*, said: "Who, Subhuti, are these grasping this perfect wisdom as here explained?"

Hereupon the *Venerable Ananda* said to these Elders: "*Bodhisattvas* incapable of falling back grasp this, or beings, persons reaching sound views, or Arhats in whom the outflows are realized as dried up." [V.34]

Subhuti: No one grasps this perfect wisdom as here explained [i.e. explained in such a way as really no explanation at all]. For no dharma at all is being indicated, lit up, or communicated. So here too, is not even one grasping it.

[Another Translation: Subhuti: Dear friends, you cannot understand, because there is absolutely nothing finite to understand. You are not lacking in refinement of intellect. There is simply nothing separate or

substantial in Prajnaparamita to which intellect can be applied, because Perfect Wisdom does not present any graspable or thinkable doctrine and offers no method of contemplation.

... Those conscious beings who are mature enough to receive the radical teaching of Perfect Wisdom regard themselves simply as a display of magical power without any substantial self-existence. There should be no residual tendency to hear or grasp as some independent reality the words of the teaching, nor to isolate or reify their meaning, nor to experience as a separate reality whatever they are indicating. ...

The phrases magical display, dream display, own existence and all conscious beings are simply synonymous. Every objective or subjective structure that is directly experienced as factual or palpable should be regarded as a magical display, as dream display. ...

Dear divine friends, even if there could be any reality more perfect, more transcendent or more liberated than Final Nirvana, that, too, would be magical or dreamlike. The terms magical display, dream display, Buddha and Nirvana are all synonymous. – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

Sakra's Flowers [Emptiness of both real and imagined offerings]

Now this thought comes to *Sakra*: Let me now, in order to do worship to this discourse on dharma which is being taught by the Holy Subhuti, conjure up some flowers, and scatter them over the Holy Subhuti. *Sakra conjured up flowers, and scattered them over the Venerable Subhuti.*

The Venerable Subhuti thought to himself by the way of reply: These flowers which [now] appear among the Gods of Thirty-three I had not noticed before. These flowers, which Sakra scatters, are magical creations. They are not issued from trees, shrubs or creepers. These flowers which Sakra is scattering are mind-made.

Sakra replied: "These flowers are not issuing forth at all. For here are really no flowers whether they issue forth from mind, trees, shrubs, or creepers."

So, *Subhuti* now says to him: "As you say, Kausika, 'these flowers do not issue forth at all, neither from mind, nor from trees shrubs or creepers', for this which never issues forth is not a flower." (*i.e. Emptiness of both real and imagined offerings.*)

Training In The perfection of wisdom [training in the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting the five aggregates, the world & mind – but realizing their interdependence, inseparability, non-duality: not two, not one]

So now the thought occurs to *Sakra*, Chief of Gods: Profoundly wise, surely, is the Holy Subhuti, as he explains this merely nominal existence [of all separate things], and yet even so does not bring it into conflict with any norm of truth, but enlarges on such and quite simply expounds it. (*i.e. Realizing emptiness of all dharma without rejecting the world, without rejecting conventional truths.*)

Sakra now says to the Venerable Subhuti: "So it is. **The Bodhisattva so trains oneself [in this insight]** as Holy Subhuti points out."

Subhuti: [V.35] Truly one so dedicated does. **As one thus trains, one does not train to achieve any results** of a Stream-winner, nor in any other fruits of the holy life, even up to Buddhahood. For as one trains oneself on any of these stages, one trains oneself in, or as **Buddha-nature**, or toward pure and undifferentiated **cognition of all-knowledge**; and so in the **immeasurable and incalculable** Buddha-dharmas. So in this, one trains oneself **neither for the increase** of form, feeling, perception, impulse, or consciousness, **nor yet for their decrease**; [43][V.36] **neither to appropriate** form, etc., **nor to let them go**. Nor does one train oneself to get hold of any other dharma even up to **all-knowledge**, **nor to produce one**, or **make one disappear**. As one thus trains, a **Bodhisattva trains in all-knowledge**, and dedicated thusly, **goes forth to all-knowledge**. (*i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting any knowledge or method as absolute, not rejecting them either. No absolute only adapted skillful means.*)

Sakra: Does a **Bodhisattva go forth to all-knowledge**, even though one does not train oneself to get hold of any dharmas, -even of **all-knowledge**, -nor to produce one, or make one disappear?

Subhuti: One such as this does. [44]

Sakra now says to Sariputra: How or where does a **Bodhisattva** search for **perfect wisdom**?

Sariputra: In the exposition of the Venerable Subhuti. *(i.e. The answer is a non-affirmative negation as taught above.)*

Sakra: Through whose might, and on whose authority, does the Holy Subhuti teach **perfect wisdom**?

Sariputra: Through the Tathagata's might, and on his authority. *(i.e. Those teachings are in perfect accord with the real nature of everything. That is their authority. They are taught by someone who has already realized the real nature of his own mind, and thus of everything.)*

Subhuti: It is indeed the Tathagata's might, Sakra, by which such **perfect wisdom** is taught. And as you ask, 'How or where does a **Bodhisattva** search for **perfect wisdom**?', the answer is: **One should not search for such in form, nor in any other skandhas; nor in any thing which is other than form, or other than any other skandhas. Because, perfect wisdom is not one of these skandhas, nor yet other than these.** [45][V.37]

*(i.e. The answer here is again a double non-affirmative negation pointing toward a transcendence of duality. Enlightenment cannot be found in **karma**, in our five aggregates, in samsara, in the world & mind, but it cannot be found separate or outside of them either. This point to the emptiness of all of those concepts and their interdependence. Samsara and Nirvana, ignorance and wisdom, world & mind, are not separate/different, but still not the same. One cannot exist without the other. One implies the other. They are interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. It is the direct realization of the interdependence and inseparability of the world and mind that is the key factor to total Liberation. Accepting one and rejecting the other like the Arhats do is a grave mistake. They are forsaking their chance to total enlightenment for a dead end.)*

The Infinitude of The perfection of wisdom [because the real nature of its objects is already beyond any discrimination, already pure]

Sakra: **This perfection of wisdom, Subhuti, is a great perfection, unlimited, measureless, infinite.** [V.38]

Subhuti: So it is. And why?

- **Perfect wisdom** is **great, unlimited, measureless and infinite** because form, feelings, etc., are so.
- Hence one does not settle down in any such conviction that **this is a 'great perfection,' and 'unlimited perfection,' a 'measureless perfection,' or 'infinite perfection.'** This is how and why **perfect wisdom** is a **great perfection, unlimited, measureless and infinite.** [46]
- **Perfect wisdom** is an **infinite** perfection because objects as well as [individual] beings are **infinite**.
- **Perfect wisdom** is an **infinite** perfection because **one cannot get at the beginning, middle, or end of any objective fact** [since as a dharma, such have no own-being].
- Moreover, **perfect wisdom** is **infinite** perfection as **all objective facts are endless and boundless**, and any beginning, middle, or end are not apprehended.
- For one cannot apprehend the beginning, middle and end of form, or any such skandhas. In such a way as this **perfect wisdom** is **infinite** perfection **by reason of this infinitude of objects**.
- And further still, any being is **endless and boundless** as one cannot get at any beginning, middle or end. Thus **perfect wisdom** is **infinite** perfection **by reason of this infinitude of beings**.

[Another Translation: Subhuti: One must remember that Prajnaparamita is inconceivably great, limitless, immeasurable and infinite simply because whatever the conventional mind separates and discriminates as material forms and conscious states are known by Prajnaparamita to be its own inconceivability,

immeasurability and infinity. There is no reason to become fixated on or to extol the Perfection of Wisdom as some isolated form of greatness of perfection, because Prajnaparamita recognizes every single being, event and perception as precisely the same limitless, immeasurable, infinite perfection. This recognition is what constitutes the greatness of Perfect Wisdom.

The perfection of Prajnaparamita is infinite because it demonstrates that no one can isolate or analyze the genesis, evolution or goal of any subjective or objective process. The perfection of Prajnaparamita is infinite because it recognizes that all processes are inherently infinite and, therefore, ungraspable and unthinkable. This freedom from being perceptually and conceptually confined by the habitual mind, this opening to the limitless, immeasurability and infinite of all realms and dimensions is why Prajnaparamita is an inconceivably great perfection. ...

This ungraspable purity, openness and transparency is precisely what is meant by the limitlessness, immeasurability and infinity of all beings, realms and dimensions. Recognizing this purity, openness and transparency everywhere is what constitutes the inconceivable greatness of Prajnaparamita. Rather than infinity of number or infinity of extension in space and time, this transparent depth of unthinkability is the true perfect infinitude. This alone makes Perfect Wisdom supremely perfect. – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

Sakra: How is it, Holy Subhuti, this [perfect wisdom](#) is [an infinite perfection by reason of this infinitude of beings?](#)

Subhuti: It is not so because of their exceedingly great number and abundance.

Sakra: So, how now Holy Subhuti, is [perfect wisdom](#) [an infinite perfection by reason of the infinitude of beings?](#) [47]

Subhuti: Well Kausika, what factual entity does the word ‘being’ denote?

Sakra: The word ‘being’ denotes no dharma or non-dharma. It is a term which is added on [to any of this which is really here]...as something adventitious, groundless, as no-thing in itself, unfounded in any objective fact whatsoever. *(i.e. The real nature of beings and things, of everything in the three worlds, is beyond any description, beyond any conceptualization, beyond any discrimination, beyond any measurement. We can only point toward this using non-affirmative double negations, or the Tetralemma. So because its objects are infinite, the great wisdom is also called infinite. But this should not be grasped as an absolute either. It justly means that it is beyond any limits, beyond any karma.)*

Subhuti: Is herein [i.e., by uttering this word ‘being’] any being showing up [as an ultimate fact]?

Sakra: No indeed, Holy Subhuti!

Subhuti: So, as no being whatsoever is showing up, how is herein an [infinitude](#) of these beings? For, if any Tathagata, with a voice of [infinite](#) range, with this deep thunder of a voice, pronounces, for aeons countless as the sands of the Ganges, this word ‘being,’ ‘being,’ – would this Tathagata hereby produce or stop any being whatsoever, either in this past, future or present? *(i.e. One should not think that beings and things are infinite in the usual sense of the world either. Infinite means not existing, not non-existing, not both, not neither. This is a non-affirmative negation. it is not that beings are existing and are infinite. Words and karma do a very poor job in trying to express the infinite beyond all conceptualization.)*

Sakra: No indeed, Holy Subhuti! Because any being is pure from beyond even any beginning, perfectly pure. *(i.e. Indeed, to say that things and beings are infinite, is equivalent to say that they are all already pure, beyond good and bad.)*

Subhuti: In this way also [perfect wisdom](#) is this [infinitude](#) of perfection by reason of this identical [infinitude](#) of beings. In this manner also any [infinitude](#) of [perfect wisdom](#) can be known from this [infinitude](#) of beings. [48] [V.39]

Confirmation [That is the way to do it.]

Hereupon these Gods around Indra, Brahma and Prajapati, and these hosts of men and women around Rishis as well thrice shouted forth in triumph: Hail the Dharma! Hail the Dharma! Hail the Dharmahood of Dharma! Also these added: Beautifully does **Subhuti the Elder even just now indicate, demonstrate, show and clarify how thusly any Tathagata comes to be manifest**. As potential Tathagatas we henceforth regard any **Bodhisattva** possessing fullness of this **perfection of wisdom** and who here so dwells within.

The Lord now speaks: [V.40] So it is, O Gods! So do I, as I met a Tathagata, Dipankara, in the bazaar of Dipavati, the royal city, possess the fullness of this **perfection of wisdom**, so Dipankara, a Tathagata predicted one day I am to be fully enlightened, and said to me: “You, young Brahmin, in this future period, after **incalculable** aeons, become a Tathagata, Sakyamuni by name, - endowed with knowledge and virtue, Well-Gone, a world-knower, unsurpassed, tamer of beings to be tamed, teacher of Gods and people, a Buddha, a Blessed Lord!”

The Gods replied: This is wonderful, O Lord, this is exceedingly wonderful, O Well-Gone, how much **all-knowledge** is nourished and promoted in these **Bodhisattvas**, these **great beings**, by this **perfection of wisdom**!

Chapter III – [Taking refuge in this perfection of wisdom]

Advantages here and now of this perfection of wisdom -- [preventing the creation of more bad karma by supporting the practice of the other five paramitas]

[Go to verses](#)

The Lord sees these Gods assembled and seated, and the monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen assembled and seated, and he speaks thus to these Gods: **Mara and his hosts** are unable to harm [anyone taking up this perfection of wisdom, bearing this in mind, teaching, studying or spreading this](#). Humans and ghosts alike are unable to harm these. Nor do these die untimely deaths. Any deities setting out [for full enlightenment](#), but not yet having hold of this [perfection of wisdom](#), as these approach any person who does so and listen, these also take up, bear in mind, teach, study, and spread this [perfection of wisdom](#). [A person devoted to this perfection of wisdom certainly experiences no fear, one certainly never becomes stiff with fright](#), - whether one be in a forest, at the foot of a tree, in an *empty* shed, an open place, a road, a highway, or the woods, or on any ocean.

The Four Great Kings: It is wonderful, O Lord, any beings taking up, bearing in mind, etc., this [perfection of wisdom](#), for these discipline beings in the three vehicles, and yet do not perceive any being. [We, O Lord, do protect such a person](#).

Sakra, Brahma and other Gods likewise [promise to protect any follower of perfect wisdom](#).

Sakra: It is wonderful, O Lord, by taking up, etc., this [perfection of wisdom](#), [one gains many advantages even here and now](#). Does one, taking up [perfection of wisdom](#), take up all [the six perfections](#)?

The Lord: Yes. And further, by taking up, etc., [perfection of wisdom](#), one gains advantages even here and now. [Listen attentively, as I now teach you which ones these \[advantages\] are](#).

So be it, Lord, replied *the Gods*.

The Lord:

- [The quarrels, contentions and contradictions of any opposing this dharma simply vanish away](#); the intentions of opponents remains unfulfilled. It is a fact for any followers taken hold of by [perfect wisdom](#) such disputes simply vanish away, and do not abide. This is one advantage even here and now.
- Here, we have an herb, Maghi by name, which is a cure for all poison. Suppose a viper, famished, is to see a creature and pursue it, following the scent, in order to eat it; but now, this creature goes to a patch of Maghi and stands here, we know the smell of the herb causes the snake to turn back. As the healing quality of this herb is so powerful it overpowers the viper's poison, just so do quarrels, contentions and contradictions to which any follower of [perfect wisdom](#) is exposed, become stilled, appeased through this piercing flame of [perfect wisdom](#), through its power, its strength, through impregnation with its power. These simply vanish, and neither grow, nor abide. And why? [It is perfect wisdom which appeases all evil, - from \[ordinary\] greed to seizing on Nirvana \(?\)](#) - and does not increase it.
- [And these Gods and all these Buddhas, and all these Bodhisattvas, protect this follower of perfect wisdom](#). This is an advantage even here and now.
- And further, [the speech of any follower of perfect wisdom is acceptable, soft, measured and adequate](#). Wrath and conceit do not overpower such as these. As one concentrates with diligence to reveal such facts in one's life, [perfect wisdom](#) tames and transforms this one. Wrath and conceit does not increase. Neither enmity nor ill will take hold of one such as this, not even a tendency towards these. One turns mindful and friendly. Such a one reflects: "As I foster ill will in myself, my faculties go to pieces, such that any features beneficial to any and all beings are consumed, and it is in any case quite illogical as I, being set out for full enlightenment and aspiring to train myself for such, might allow myself to come under the sway of wrath." In this way one quickly regains one's mindfulness. This is another advantage even here and now.

Sakra: It is wonderful how [this perfection of wisdom is set up for the control and training of the Bodhisattvas](#).

The Lord:

- Well, even further Kausika, as any follower of **perfect wisdom** may go into battle, even to the very front of it, **one such could not possibly lose one's life in it**. It is impossible for one to lose one's life from the attack of somebody else. If someone strikes this one, with sword, or stick, or clod of earth, or anything else - one's body cannot be hit.
- As, a great lore (*i.e. knowledge handed down verbally*) is this **perfection of wisdom**; a lore without measure, a quite **measureless** lore, an unsurpassed lore, a lore which equals the unequalled is this **perfection of wisdom**. As one trains oneself in this lore, one is intent neither on disturbing one's own peace nor others. **The Bodhisattva, the great being training in this lore, uncovers and reveals full enlightenment, gains the gnosis of all-knowing**. This is another advantage here and now.
- Further, as here or wherever this **perfection of wisdom** is written down in a book, and is put up and worshipped, where it is taken up, borne in mind, etc., **any beings so engaged can come to no harm, except as inclined toward such for past deeds**. This is another advantage even here and now. (*i.e. Read the fine print of this contract. It doesn't erases all already accumulated karma yet. Only final Buddhahood will do that. it just prevent you from creating more bad karma and having to suffer its consequences. So it has to do with the support that this perfection of wisdom bring to the practice of the other six paramitas, and to the merit they bring in the short and medium terms.*)
- Just the same too, Kausika, humans and ghosts go to the terrace of enlightenment, or to its neighborhood, or its interior, or to the foot of the tree of enlightenment, and **cannot be hurt by humans or ghosts, or be injured by these, or taken possession of, even with the help of evil animal beings, except for in compensation for former deeds**. In this, these past, future, and present Tathagatas come to uncover and reveal their enlightenment, and in this, promoting and revealing to these beings fearlessness, lack of hostility, lack of fright. Just so Kausika, any place in which one takes up, bears in mind, etc., **perfection of wisdom**, in it beings cannot be hurt by beings. **Perfection of wisdom makes any spot of earth wherever it is into a true shrine for beings, - worthy of being worshipped and adored, - into a shelter for beings coming to it, a refuge, a place to rest and final relief**. This is another advantage here and now.

[The incommensurably vast merit gained by this perfection of wisdom compared to blind faith and adoration]

Sakra: Suppose here are two persons.

1. One of these two, a son or daughter of good family, has **written down this perfection of wisdom**, made a copy of it; this one now puts it up, and honors, reveres, worships, and adores this with heavenly flowers, incense, perfumes, wreaths, unguents, aromatic powders, strips of cloth, parasols, banners, bells, flags, with rows of lamps all round, and with manifold kinds of worship.
2. The other deposits in Stupas **relics of the Tathagata**, having gone to Parinirvana; this one takes hold of these and preserves these; honors, worships and adores these with heavenly flowers, incense, etc., as the other does.

Which one of these two, O Lord, would beget greater merit? *(i.e. Seem like the “adoration of Buddha relics” was a major distraction at that time.)*

The Lord: I question you on this point, and you may answer to the best of your ability. **The Tathagata, as acquiring and knowing full enlightenment or all-knowledge**, in which practice does the Tathagata train in order for such an **all-knowledge**-personality to have been revealed?

Sakra: It is in just this **perfection of wisdom** the Tathagata acquires and **knows full enlightenment or all-knowledge**.

The Lord: So, the Tathagata does not derive any name from the fact one acquires this physical personality, but from the fact one acquires **all-knowledge**.

- And **this all-knowledge of Tathagatas comes forth as a result of taking up just this perfection of wisdom**.
- The physical personality of Tathagatas, on the other hand, is the result of **the skill in means of perfection of wisdom**.

And this very sameness is a sure foundation for [acquisition of] **cognition of all-knowing** by others. Supported by this foundation the revelation of **cognition of all-knowing** takes place, the revelation of Buddha-body, of Dharma-body, and of Sangha-body. Acquisition of the physical personality is thus the cause of **cognition of all-knowing**. As a sure foundation of whatever cognition, it has for all beings, become a true shrine, worthy of being saluted respectfully, of being honored, revered and adored. Once thus gone to Parinirvana **my relics also are worshipped**. It is for this reason the person copying and worshipping **perfection of wisdom** begets a different type of merit. For, in doing so, this one worships **cognition of all-knowing**. The son or daughter of good family, having made a copy of the **perfection of wisdom**, and worshipping it, begets different merit. For by worshipping the **perfection of wisdom** one worships **cognition of all-knowing**.

Sakra: How can it be...people of Jambudvipa, who do not copy this **perfection of wisdom**, nor take it up, nor study it, nor worship it, do not know the Lord is teaching such as the cultivation of the **perfection of wisdom** is greatly profitable! How is it these ones are not aware what the Lord teaches supports the cultivation of the **perfection of wisdom** and brings great advantages, fruits and rewards! But these do not know this, these are not aware of this! These have no faith in it!

The Lord: What do you think, Kausika, how many of the people of Jambudvipa are endowed with perfect faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha? [60]

Sakra: Only a few.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.

- **Only a few people of Jambudvipa are endowed with perfect faith in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha**.
- Fewer than these few are ones attaining the fruits of a Stream-winner, and, after this, the fruit of a Once-Returner, or of a Never-Returner.
- Fewer still are any attaining Arhatship.

- Fewer still realize **PratyekaBuddha**-enlightenment.
- Fewer still raise any thoughts to full enlightenment.
- Fewer still are any, purifying by removing obstacles, and hereby raising thoughts to full enlightenment, and even now continuously strengthening such thoughts.
- Fewer still are any who, raising these thoughts thusly to full enlightenment, and strengthening such thoughts, now in addition dwell with vigor exerted.
- Fewer still are any who pursue meditation on **perfection of wisdom**.
- Fewer still are any coursing and applying **perfection of wisdom**.
- Fewer still are any who, coursing and striving toward **perfection of wisdom**, abide on any **irreversible Bodhisattva**-stage.
- Fewer still, coursing and striving steadily in **perfection of wisdom**, are any who come to know full enlightenment.
- Fewer still, coursing and striving in **perfection of wisdom**, do actually know full enlightenment.
- Now, as to any **Bodhisattvas** standing on any **irreversible Bodhisattva**-stage, knowing and revealing full enlightenment, these expound **perfection of wisdom** to other sons and daughters of good family who are earnestly intent, who train themselves and strive in **perfection of wisdom**. And these in their turn take up **perfection of wisdom**, study and worship it. Here are, on the other hand, countless beings who raise thoughts to enlightenment, who strengthened such thoughts of enlightenment, which course towards enlightenment, -- and perhaps just one or two of these can abide on any **irreversible Bodhisattva**-stage! For full enlightenment is difficult to reveal, and indeed is hard to come up to if one has inferior vigor, is slothful or displays characteristics defined as an inferior being, allows inferior thoughts, notions, intentions and **wisdom**.
- **So, if someone wants quickly to know full enlightenment, one indefatigably and continually hears and studies this very perfection of wisdom.** One comes to understand this...as **Bodhisattvas** Tathagatas train in **perfection of wisdom**; also oneself need train in such; for he is Tathagatas Teacher.

In any case, upon any Tathagata's disappearance into final Nirvana, **Bodhisattvas** run back to this very **perfection of wisdom**. Here and now, Kausika, if someone builds, for the worship of the Tathagata once having disappeared into final Nirvana, many kotis of Stupas made of the seven precious things, enshrining herein **such relics of Tathagatas**, and all one's life honor these with flowers, etc., does this one on the strength of such actions, beget a great deal of merit?

Sakra: Indeed, such a one does, O Lord.

The Lord:

- **Vastly different is any merit of someone truly believing in this perfection of wisdom;** who, trustingly confiding in this, resolutely intent on this, serene in one's faith, with one's thoughts raised to enlightenment in earnest intent...hears this, learns this, bears this in mind, recites and studies this, spreads, demonstrates, explains, expounds and repeats this, illuminates this in detail to others, uncovers this meaning, investigates this with one's mind; and who, using wisdom to one's fullest extent, thoroughly examines this; who copies this, and preserves and stores away the copy so this good dharma lasts long, so this guide of the Buddhas might not be annihilated, so the good dharma might not disappear, so the Bodhisattvas, great beings might continue being assisted since this guide does not give out, - and who, finally, honors and worships this perfection of wisdom...
- well Kausika, **vastly different is any merit of any devotee of perfection of wisdom compared not only with a person building many kotis of Stupas made of seven precious things, enshrining the relics of Tathagatas...it is even more vastly different than any merit of one completely filling the entire Jambudvipa with such Stupas.**
- It is vastly different than any merit produced by all beings in a four-continent world system even as each single one of these built such a Stupa.

- Or, equally, as all beings in a small chiliocosm, or in a medium dichiliocosm, or in a **great trichiliocosm** were to do likewise.
- Or if, to put an imaginary case forth...all beings in any **great trichiliocosm** simultaneously became human beings, and each one of these built such a Stupa; and if each one of these, having built all such Stupas, and honoring such for an aeon or the remainder of an aeon; **still, any devotee of perfection of wisdom has vastly different merit than any kind or amount of merit resulting from the effect of the meritorious deeds of all such beings as were to erect and worship those countless Stupas.**

(i.e. **trichiliocosm**: “A three-thousandfold world system, a **trichiliocosm**, is a universe of 1.000.000.000 planetary systems (one thousand multiplied by one thousand multiplied by one thousand).” or “Lord Buddha Shakyamuni is the chief enlightened being in one great chiliocosm. This means that our entire known universe, with its suns and moons and stars and planets, is one unit. Multiply that by one thousand and then multiply that by one thousand and multiply that by one thousand. That is one **trichiliocosm**.”)

Sakra: So it is, O Lord. For **any person honoring perfection of wisdom...in an absolute sense...such a one honors any and all past, future and present Buddhas in all world systems**, which can all be simultaneously comprehended by only the cognition of a single Buddha. Such a one's merit is different than any kind or amount of merit of all beings in **great trichiliocosms** countless like the sands of the Ganges, even if each single being in these built a Stupa, and if each one of these having built all such Stupas, and were to honor these for an aeon or the remainder of an aeon.

[This perfection of Wisdom is the mother of all Buddhas, all Bodhisattvas; the best refuge]

The Lord: So it is, Kausika. The merit of any devotee of perfection of wisdom is entirely different; such is immeasurable, incalculable, inconceivable, incomparable, illimitable. From perfection of wisdom all-knowledge of Tathagatas comes forth; from all-knowledge has come forth the cult of the relics of Tathagata. Here the difference in merit of any devotee of the perfection of wisdom bears no proportion at all to the accumulation of merit born from building Stupas, made of the seven precious things, enshrining the relics of Tathagatas.

Herein forty thousand gods in the assembly are saying to Sakra, the Chief of Gods: Sir! Do take up perfection of wisdom! The perfection of wisdom, Sir, take this up, recite such, study such and explain such for unlimited benefit of any and all beings!

The Lord: Kausika, do take up perfection of wisdom, recite, study and explain it! If the Asuras form any idea of fighting with the Gods of the Thirty-three, and if you, Kausika, have studied, and then recite and explain perfection of wisdom by bringing this to mind, the Asuras will drop such ideas.

Sakra: A great lore is this perfection of wisdom, a lore without measure, a quite measureless lore, an unsurpassed lore, an unequalled lore, a lore which equals the unequalled.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika.

- For it is due to this lore, i.e. perfection of wisdom, Buddhas of any and all times come to reveal and know full enlightenment.
- Due to this, Buddhas of any future know it.
- Thanks to this, Buddhas of any present know it.
- Thanks to this is it known and revealed.
- Thanks to just this lore
 - ten wholesome ways of acting are revealed in the world,
 - the four trances associated with the limbs of enlightenment,
 - the four Unlimited associated with the limbs of enlightenment,
 - the four formless attainments upheld by the limbs of enlightenment,
 - the six super-knowledges associated with the limbs of enlightenment,
 - in short the eighty-four thousand articles of dharma, cognition of Buddha, cognition of self-existent, inconceivable cognition.
- However, as at times it -seems- no Tathagatas are in the world... it is Bodhisattvas, -endowed with skill in means as a result of hearing the outpouring of perfection of wisdom in any past (whenever here are Buddhas), full of pity for beings, come into this world out of pity, -who foster in the world
 - the ten wholesome ways of acting,
 - the four trances as dissociated from the limbs of enlightenment,
 - etc. to: the five super-knowledges as dissociated from the limbs of enlightenment.
- Just as thanks to the disk of the moon all the herbs, stars and constellations are illuminated according to their power and strength, so, as Tathagata -seem- to pass beyond and this good dharma -seems- to have disappeared, in any seeming absence of Tathagatas, whatever righteous, upright, outstanding, or wholesome life is conceived and manifested in worlds, all coming forth from the Bodhisattva, is brought forth by one, is spread from one's skill in means.
- But skill in means of Bodhisattvas is known as coming forth from perfection of wisdom.
- Moreover, any such as are devoted to perfection of wisdom, expect herein many advantages here and now.

Sakra: Which are these advantages?

The Lord:

- These devotees do not die any untimely death, nor from poison, or sword, or fire, or water, or staff, or violence.
- As these bring to mind, repeat, and apply this **perfection of wisdom**, the calamities which threaten these from kings and princes, from king's counselors and king's ministers, do not take place.
- As kings, etc., may try to do harm to these who again and again bring to mind, repeat and apply **perfection of wisdom**, such kings, etc., do not succeed; for **perfection of wisdom** upholds such devotees.
- Although kings, etc., may approach these ones with harmful intent, they instead decide to greet these, and to converse. For this **perfection of wisdom** entails **an attitude of friendliness and compassion amongst and within all beings**.
- Herein, even though any devotee of the **perfection of wisdom** may be in the middle of a wilderness infested with venomous vipers, neither beings nor ghosts can harm these, except as in a return for past deeds.

Hereupon **one hundred Wanderers of other sects approached the Lord with hostile intent**. Sakra, Chief of Gods, perceived these Wanderers from afar, and he reflected: Surely, these Wanderers of other sects are approaching the Lord with hostile intent. Let me now recall as much of this **perfection of wisdom** as I have learned from the Lord, bring it to mind, repeat, apply and spread it, so these Wanderers cannot approach the Lord, and the preaching of this **perfection of wisdom** may not be interrupted. Hereupon, Sakra, Chief of Gods, recalls as much of this **perfection of wisdom** as he is learning from the Lord, brings it to mind, repeats, applies and spreads it. **The Wanderers of other sects hereupon reverently saluted the Lord from afar, and went off on their way.**

So, now it occurred to the Venerable **Sariputra**: For what reason do these heretical Wanderers reverently salute the Lord from afar, and now depart on their way?

The Lord: As Sakra, Chief of Gods, perceived the thoughts of such hostile Wanderers of other sects, he recalled this **perfection of wisdom**, brought it to mind, repeated, applied, and spread it, with the object of turning back the Wanderers of other sects who wanted to quarrel, dispute and obstruct, and prevented these from approaching this place the **perfection of wisdom** is being taught. And I have granted permission to Indra, Chief of Gods. I saw not even one pure dharma in these Wanderers. They all wanted to approach with hostile intent, with thoughts of enmity.

Hereupon it occurred to Mara, the Evil One: The four assemblies of Tathagata are assembled, and seated face to face with Tathagata. Face to face with Tathagata these Gods of the realm of sense-desire and of the realm of form are sure to be predicted in this assembly as **Bodhisattvas to full enlightenment**. Let me now approach to blind them. - **Herein Mara conjured up a fourfold army, and is moving towards the place the Lord is.**

Now, again it occurs to **Sakra**, chief of gods: Surely, I can see this is **Mara, the Evil One**, who has conjured up a fourfold army moving towards the place the Lord is. But the array of this army is not the array of King Bimbisara's army, nor of King Prasenajit's army, not of the army of the Sakyas or of the Licchavins. It is seen for a long time **Mara the Evil One** pursues the Lord, looking for any chance to enter, searching for a chance to enter, intent on hurting beings. I now recall this **perfection of wisdom**, bring it to mind, repeat, apply and spread it. Hereupon Sakra recalls just this **perfection of wisdom**, brought it to mind, repeated, applied and spread it. **Immediately Mara, the Evil One, is seen as turning back again, and going on his way.**

The **Gods** of the Thirty-three conjured up heavenly Mandarava flowers, flew through the air, and scattered these over the Lord. Now in triumph these cry: "For a long time surely is this **perfection of wisdom** coming to these people of Jambudvipa!" Seizing more Mandarava flowers, these scattered and strewed these over the Lord, and said: "It is seen how **Mara and his host have no chance to enter any beings who preach and develop this perfection of wisdom, or which course in it.** Any beings hearing and studying **perfection of wisdom** are endowed with no small wholesome root. These who come to hear of this **perfection of wisdom** fulfill duties also under the Jinas of other times. How much more so any studying and repeating it who are trained in **Thusness** progress to such and make endeavours regarding such; these are people honoring Tathagatas. **For it is in this perfection of wisdom one searches for all-knowledge.** Just as all jewels are brought forth by a great ocean, and are searched for

through it, just so the great jewel of **all-knowledge** of Tathagatas is searched for through the great ocean of **perfection of wisdom**."

The Lord: So it is, Kausika. **It is from great oceans of perfection of wisdom the great jewel of all-knowledge of Tathagatas comes forth.**

[The other five paramitas need to be perfected by combining them with this perfection of wisdom; that is what is giving them their name paramitas]

Ananda:

- The Lord does not praise **perfection of giving**, nor any of **the first five perfections**;
- he does not proclaim their name.
- Only **perfection of wisdom** does the Lord praise, its name alone he proclaims.

The Lord: So it is, Ananda. For **perfection of wisdom controls the five perfections**. What do you think, Ananda, can **giving - un**dedicated to all-knowledge be called **perfect giving**?

(i.e. All methods, skillful means, the other five paramitas, need to be perfected by combining them with the gradual development of the wisdom realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action. And vice versa. Method or wisdom alone is bondage, the two together is Liberation. Virtuous method and wisdom are interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. One cannot be called as such without the other.)

Ananda: No, Lord.

The Lord: The same is true of **the other perfections**. What do you think, Ananda, is **wisdom inconceivable which turns over the wholesome roots by the dedication of these to all-knowledge**?

Ananda: Yes, it is inconceivable, completely inconceivable.

The Lord:

- **Perfection of wisdom** is given its name by us from supreme excellence [*paramatvat*].
- **Through perfection of wisdom these wholesome roots, dedicated to all-knowledge are given the name of 'perfections.'**
- It is due to this dedication of **wholesome roots to all-knowledge**
- **this perfection of wisdom controls, guides and leads the five perfections.**
- **The five perfections** are in this manner contained in **this perfection of wisdom**,
- and **the term 'perfection of wisdom' is just a synonym for the fulfilling of all six perfections.**

In consequence, **as perfection of wisdom is proclaimed, all six perfections are proclaimed.**

- Just as gems, scattered about in the great earth, grow as all conditions are favorable; and the great earth is their support, and these grow supported by the great earth; even so, embodied in **perfection of wisdom, the five perfections rest in all-knowledge**, these grow supported by **perfection of wisdom**;
- and **as upheld by perfection of wisdom are these given the name of 'perfections.'**
- So, it is just **this perfection of wisdom controlling, guiding and leading these five perfections.**

[Reverence toward any copy of the dharma about this perfection of wisdom is excellent, but not enough; one has to “learn, study, repeat, apply it”]

Sakra: So far the Tathagata has not proclaimed all the qualities of **perfection of wisdom**, qualities which one acquires by learning, studying and repeating **perfection of wisdom**. For how else could the limited amount of **perfection of wisdom** which I learned from the Lord, have spread when just now **heretics and Mara** were turned away?

The Lord: So it is, Kausika. Moreover, not only by learning, studying, and repeating **perfection of wisdom** does one develop these qualities, but also one who is **reverent towards, and concentrating on a copy of this** also is taught, and develops advantages here and now. [83] (*i.e. Seems like replacing the adoration of the Buddha relics by the adoration of a book. this is another skillful means for the weak minds? Ha! Bellow it is mentioned that this is not enough though.*)

Sakra: I also protect ones who are **reverent towards and concentrating on a copy of this** **perfection of wisdom**, and still more so ones who in addition learn, study and repeat this.

The Lord: Well said, Kausika.

- Moreover, as anyone repeats this **perfection of wisdom**, many hundreds of Gods come near, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands of Gods, so as to listen to Dharma. And, as these hear Dharma, these Gods want to induce a readiness to speak in one speaking of Dharma. Even when one may not be willing to talk, these Gods still expect, through their respect for Dharma, a readiness to speak is induced in such a one as this, and this one now feels an urge to expound this. This again is another quality which someone acquires just here and now by learning, studying, and repeating **perfection of wisdom**.
- Moreover, the minds of any discoursing on this **perfection of wisdom** remain uncowed in front of these four assemblies. These have no fear of being plied with questions from hostile persons. For **perfection of wisdom** protects these ones. Immersed in **perfection of wisdom** one does not see the hostility, nor any who act with hostility, nor any who want to be hostile. In this way upheld by **perfection of wisdom**, one remains unaffected by censure and fear. These qualities also someone acquires just here and now while learning, studying and repeating this **perfection of wisdom**.
- In addition, one is dear to one's mother and father, to friends, relatives and kinsmen, to Shramanas and Brahmanas. One is competent and capable of refuting, in accordance with Dharma, any counter-arguments which may arise, and is able to deal with counter-questions. These qualities also someone acquires just here and now while learning, studying and repeating **perfection of wisdom**.
- Moreover, Kausika, among the Gods of the Four Great Kings, any Gods setting out for full enlightenment make up their minds to come to this place here as someone **puts up a copy of perfection of wisdom, and is reverent toward and concentrated in this**. These come, look upon the copy of this **perfection of wisdom**, salute this respectfully, pay homage to this, learn, study and repeat this. So also do these depart again. And this applies to all Gods, up to even the Highest of Gods.
- And any son or daughter of good family pray the Gods, Nagas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kinnaras, Mahoragas, beings and ghosts, in any ten directions in countless world systems, do, with the help of this book, see **perfection of wisdom**, salute respectfully, pay homage, learn, study and repeat such as it is; as also these return to their respective worlds; and these ones also give to any ones abiding in these places as well, just **this gift of dharma**. Do not however think, Kausika, only in this four continent world, the Gods of the realm of sense-desire and of the realm of form, who set out for full enlightenment decide to come to this place. Not so, as well, Kausika, do you view it! No, all the Gods in the **great trichilocosm**, setting out for full enlightenment, decide to come to this place. **These come, look upon a copy of this perfection of wisdom, salute it respectfully, pay homage to it, learn, study and repeat it**.
- Moreover, the house, room or palace of any devotee of **perfection of wisdom** is well guarded. No one does harm to such as these, except as in return for past deeds. This is another quality which one acquires just here and now. For very powerful Gods, and even other supernatural beings, decide to come to this place.

Sakra: How does one know these Gods, or even other supernatural beings, have come to this place to hear, etc., **perfection of wisdom?** (i.e. Good question! :)

The Lord:

- As one perceives anywhere a sublime radiance or smells a superhuman odor not smelled before, now one can know for certain a God, or other supernatural being is present, is come near. Further, clean and pure habits attract such Gods, etc., and makes them enraptured, overjoyed, full of zest and gladness. But divinities of minor power, having before occupied such a place as these come to manifest, decide to leave it. For these cannot endure the splendor, majesty and dignity of such very powerful Gods, etc. **As these very powerful Gods, etc., decide to come to such a one repeatedly, any such devotee of perfection of wisdom gains an abundance of serene faith.** This is another quality which any son or daughter of a good family acquires just here and now.
- Further on, one does not form any unclean or impure habits within the unbound circumference of this abode of guidance to Dharma; otherwise one's deep respect for it remains incomplete.
- Moreover, any devotee of the **perfection of wisdom** does not become fatigued in either body or mind. At ease one lies down, at ease one walks about. In one's sleep one beholds no evil **dreams**. As one sees anything in one's **dreams**, one will just see the Tathagatas, or Stupas, or **Bodhisattvas**, or **Disciples** of the Tathagata. As one hears sounds, one hears just the sound of perfections and the wings to enlightenment. One just sees the trees of enlightenment; and underneath these, the Tathagatas, as these awakened to full enlightenment. And likewise one sees how the fully Enlightened turn the wheel of dharma. And many **Bodhisattvas** one beholds, chanting just this **perfection of wisdom**, delighted by its chorus, which proclaims how all-knowledge is gained, how the **Buddha-field** is purified. One is shown this action of **skill in means**. One hears the sublime sound of full enlightenment of these Buddhas, the Lords: "In this direction, in this part of the world, in this world system, under this name, the Tathagatas demonstrate Dharma, surrounded and accompanied by many thousands of **Bodhisattvas** and **Disciples**, nay by many hundreds of thousands of niyutas of kotis of **Bodhisattvas** and **Disciples**." As one beholds such **dreams**, one sleeps at ease, one awakens at ease. Even as food is thrown into it, one's body still feels at ease and exceedingly light.
- No trend of thought arises in this one from excessive eagerness of food. One takes only a mild interest in food. A devotee of **perfection of wisdom** has no strong desire for food, and only a mild interest in it, even as a monk, who practices Yoga, and who emerged from trance, -merely as one's thoughts overflow with other interests. For to the extent one gives oneself up to **devotion to development of perfection of wisdom**, to such extent do heavenly beings provide one with heavenly food. These qualities also does one acquire here and now.
- But again, Kausika,
 - **as someone makes a copy of perfection of wisdom, and is reverent towards and concentrated in it, but does not learn, study, repeat and apply this;**
 - **and as someone else truly believes in the perfection of wisdom, trustingly confides in it, and, resolutely intent on it, serene in one's faith, one's thoughts raised toward enlightenment, in earnest intent, hears, learns, bears in mind, recites and studies such as this perfection of wisdom provides for, spreads, demonstrates, explains, expounds and repeats such as this is, illuminates it in detail for others, uncovers meaning, investigates with one's mind, and, using one's wisdom to the fullest, thoroughly examines, copies, and preserves and stores away the copy, so such good dharma lasts long, so this guide of Tathagatas might not be annihilated, so good dharma does not disappear, so Bodhisattvas, these great beings, continue to be assisted, since their guide does not fail, - and finally, honors and is reverent toward and concentrated in this perfection of wisdom;**
 - well, Kausika, **this latter begets vastly different merit.** Any aspiring to acquire these distinguished qualities here and now, will diligently imitate such a one as this, and these truly believe in **perfection of wisdom**, etc., as their guide does not fail. One resolves to share this with any aspiring to such. So this great eye of this Guide of Buddhas does not fail, neither for one such as this, nor for others in quest of virtue. In addition this **perfection of wisdom** at all times is honored and held in concentrated reverence.

Chapter IV – [This perfection of wisdom is the wish-fulfilling gem, the mother of all Buddhas]

[The incommensurable value of a single copy of this perfection of wisdom]

[Go to verses](#)

The Lord:

1. If, Kausika, on this one hand you are given this Jambudvipa filled up to the top with **relics of the Tathagatas**;
 2. and if, on this other hand, **you could share in a written copy of this perfection of wisdom**; ...
- and if now you have to choose between the two, **which one do you take?**

Sakra: **Just this perfection of wisdom**, Lord. For I see such as, within my esteem for this Guide of Tathagatas, in true understanding this also is the body of Tathagatas. As the Lord says: "The Dharma-bodies are Buddhas, these are Lords. But of this, noble Sangha, do not think this individual body is my body. Rather, noble Sangha, see me as this accomplishment of Dharma-body." **But this Tathagata-body needs be seen as brought about by the reality-limit, i.e. by perfection of wisdom.**

It is not, O Lord, that I lack in respect for these relics of Tathagata. On the contrary, I have a real respect for them. As come forth from **perfection of wisdom** are these relics of Tathagatas revered, and herein as one reveres just this **perfection of wisdom**, now also the reverence of these relics of the Tathagata is brought to fulfillment, as the relics of Tathagata come forth from **perfection of wisdom**. It is as with my own godly seat in Sudharma, the hall of Gods. As I am seated on it, the Gods come to wait on me. But as I am not, the Gods, out of respect for me, pay their respect to this seat, circumambulate it, and go away again. For these recall as seated on this seat, Sakra, the Chief of Gods, demonstrates Dharma to Gods of the Thirty-three. In this same way, **perfection of wisdom is the real eminent cause and condition which feeds and reveals all-knowledge of Tathagatas.**

The relics of Tathagatas, on this other hand, are true deposits of all-knowledge, but these are neither true conditions, nor reasons for production of such cognition. As the cause of **cognition of all-knowingness** **perfection of wisdom** is also revered and concentrated upon through relics of Tathagata. For this reason, of the two lots now mentioned, I choose just this **perfection of wisdom**. But it is not because I lack in respect for the relics of Tathagata. Even choosing thusly I have real respect for these, for these relics are worshipped as these are pervaded by this **perfection of wisdom**. And, if I had to choose between a copy of **perfection of wisdom** on this one side, and even a **great trichiliocosm** filled to the top with relics of the Tathagata on this other, I still choose just this **perfection of wisdom**, for the same reasons. For the relics of Tathagata are true deposits of **cognition of all-knowingness**, but **such cognition itself is come forth from perfection of wisdom**. So just here, of these two lots I choose just this **perfection of wisdom**. But it is not due to any lacking in respect for the relics of Tathagata. In choosing thus I have real respect for these. These, however, are worshipped as having come forth from **perfection of wisdom**, and as such are pervaded by it.

[This perfection of wisdom is the true wish-fulfilling gem that can bring worldly and supreme happiness to self and all others]

It is like a priceless jewel with the property of preventing beings and ghosts from entering the place it is put. If someone were possessed by a ghost, one only needs to introduce this jewel, and any ghost departs. If someone oppressed by the wind applies this jewel as one's body is inflated, one holds back that wind, and prevents it from getting worse, appeasing it. It has similar effects applied to a body burning with bile, choked with phlegm, or painful as a result of a disease arising from a disorder of the humors. It illuminates the blackest darkness of night. In the heat it cools the spot of earth it is placed. In the cold it warms it. Its presence drives vipers and other noxious animals from districts which are infested with these. If any woman or man is bitten by a viper, one need only show these this jewel; and its sight counteracts that poison, and makes it depart. Such are the qualities of this jewel. If one has a boil in the eye, or clouded eyesight, or a disease in the eye, or a cataract, one need only place this jewel on the eyes, and its mere presence removes and appeases these afflictions. Such are its qualities. Placed in water, it dyes the water all through with its own color. Wrapped in a white cloth, and thrown into water, it makes the water white. Equally, as wrapped or bound in a black-blue, or yellow, or red, or crimson cloth, or into cloth of any other color, it dyes the water into which it is thrown the color of the cloth. It also clears up any turbidity which may have arisen in the water. Endowed with such qualities is this jewel.

Ananda: Do these jewels, Kausika, belong to the world of the Gods, or to the people of Jambudvīpa?

Sakra: These are found among the Gods. The jewels found among the people of Jambudvīpa, on the other hand, are rather coarse and small, and not endowed with such qualities. As such these are infinitely inferior to these heavenly jewels. But the ones among the Gods are fine and full of all possible qualities. As this jewel is now put in a basket, or even placed upon it, this basket still is desirable after the jewel had again been taken out. The basket, through the qualities of the jewel, becomes an object of supreme longing.

In the same way, O Lord, the qualities of cognition of all-knowing are derived from just this perfection of wisdom. On this account the relics of Tathagatas thus gone to Parinirvana are reverently concentrated upon. For these are true repositories of the cognition of all-knowingness. And as any demonstration of Dharma by Buddhas and Lords in all world systems is venerated and held in reverence as it comes forth from perfection of wisdom, so also the Dharma-discourser's demonstration of Dharma. As a king is revered, as his royal might gives courage to a great body of people, so also the speaker of Dharma, because, through this might of this Dharma-body, one such as this gives courage to a great body of people. But the relics of Tathagatas are revered for this same reason one reveres demonstrations of Dharma, and expositors of Dharma.

[It is this perfection of wisdom, this Bodhisattva Way, that is the mother of all Buddhas]

So now, O Lord, as here are two lots;

1. and as not only this **great trichiliocosm**, but as all world systems, countless as the sands of the Ganges, filled with **relics of Tathagatas**, is established as this first lot;
2. and **a copy of perfection of wisdom** as this second lot

and I am invited to choose either, and to take such, **I take just this perfection of wisdom**. It is not, O Lord, for any lack of respect for relics of Tathagatas. My respect for these is a real one. But it is **perfection of wisdom** pervading **all-knowledge** such as these relics of Tathagatas are revered, as these come forth from **all-knowledge**.

In consequence any reverence for and concentration upon **perfection of wisdom** is in effect a worship of **Buddhas, these Lords past, future and present**. Moreover O Lord, anyone who aspires to see, in accordance with Dharma, the Buddha, these Lords who just now exist in immeasurable and incalculable world systems, **needs course now in perfection of wisdom**, make endeavours in, and develop such as this is.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika. **All Tathagatas owe their enlightenment to just this perfection of wisdom, - whether these live in this past, future or present. I also, Kausika, am just now a Tathagata due to perfection of wisdom.**

Sakra: A great perfection is this **perfection of wisdom**. For it allows Tathagatas to rightly know and behold thoughts and doings of all beings.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika. **It is due to a Bodhisattva coursing for a long time in perfection of wisdom by which one rightly knows and beholds thoughts and doings of all beings.**

* * *

Sakra: Does a **Bodhisattva** course **only in the perfection of wisdom**, and not **in the other perfections**?

The Lord: One such as this courses in **all these six perfections**.

But it is just **this perfection of wisdom which controls the Bodhisattva as one gives a gift, or guards morality, or perfects oneself in patience, or exerts vigour, or enters into meditative trance, or has insight into Dharmas.**

One cannot attain to any distinction or difference between **these six perfections**, all being **upheld by skill in means and dedicated to perfection of wisdom, dedicated to all-knowledge**. Just as no distinction or difference is conceived between shadows cast by different trees in Jambudvipa, -though their colors may differ, and their shapes, and their leaves, flowers and fruits, and their height and circumference, but these are all just called-shadows - even so one can neither attain nor ascribe to any distinction or difference between **these six perfections**, - neither can all of these **Bodhisattvas upheld by skill in means, dedicated to perfection of wisdom, dedicated to all-knowledge**. (i.e. All virtuous methods, skillful means, the six paramitas, need to be perfected by combining them to this perfection of wisdom. This is what gives them this name: paramitas. We need both virtuous methods and wisdom together on the path.)

Sakra: Endowed with great qualities is this **perfection of wisdom, with immeasurable qualities, with boundless qualities!**

Chapter V – [This perfection of wisdom has to be combined with Bodhicitta: the desire to save all others by becoming a Buddha ourself or by helping someone else more advanced to become a Buddha a.s.a.p. for the benefits of all]

[This perfection of wisdom has to be combined with compassion, with the other paramitas like giving; and the best gift is this Dharma]

Go to verses

Sakra: Let us again consider two people.

1. The one truly believes **perfection of wisdom**, trustingly confides in such, studies, copies, repeats and discourses regarding such, since their guide does not fail. And as this one hears this exposition, **this one also unhesitatingly resolves to not abandon this perfection of wisdom**, -surely so greatly profitable, so great an advantage, so great a fruit, so great a reward, endowed of such and great qualities (!) - this one guards and preserves such as this is, for such is exceedingly hard to develop, and by oneself, one honors, reveres and adores this.
2. Now, the other person **first venerates this, and now gives a copy to another** son or daughter of a good family who, having aspirations towards this and eager, asks for such.

Which one of these two persons begets greater merit... on this one hand the one who intends to give this all away, or on this other hand, the one who does not?

The Lord: I question you on this point, and you may answer to the best of your abilities.

1. If this one person by oneself is to honor the relics of Tathagata after one's Paranirvana, minister, **revere, and preserve these relics;**
2. and now, if this other not only oneself honors these relics of the Tathagata, ministers, reveres and preserves these, but **in addition reveals these to others, gives these away, and shares them** knowing hereby the reverence of these relics will become even more widespread, and **from compassion and true sympathy for beings;**

so answer now Kausika, **which one of these two persons begets great merit**, and which a different kind of merit: The one who, while worshipping them oneself, reveals, gives and shares these with others...or the one who by oneself, singularly worships these?

Sakra: Surely Lord, the one who **shares** these with others.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika. Any person **revealing perfection of wisdom for others** to behold and develop as regards inclinations, always seeking to help others, purely intent on revealing such completely, ...anyone on the strength of this begets greater merit, and indeed not merely greater merit, but a different merit all together. For such merit has no limit, and as such is beyond any determinations of lesser and greater, and indeed other than any determinations whatsoever, which might be even recognized as merit.

If in addition this **one goes to persons who are fit vessels for this perfection of wisdom, and shares this with these**, one begets still different merit.

And so too, Kausika, is great indeed any merit of someone who **instigates all beings in Jambudvipa to observe ten ways of wholesome action, and establishes these in these ways?**

Sakra: To be sure Lord, great this seems to be.

The Lord: Different even still is any merit of someone who makes a copy of this **perfection of wisdom**, believes in and has faith in such, faith serene and firm; who constantly reveals one's thoughts toward enlightenment, and with earnest intention **gives this perfection of wisdom to another Bodhisattva** who steadily reveals one's thoughts to enlightenment; who does first of all perfect oneself by tireless writing and reciting; and after much zealous labor, one persuades the other **Bodhisattva**, explaining this **perfection of wisdom**, instigating to such, filling one with enthusiasm for this, making such a one rejoice in this, and does by one's words, lead one to this, educate one

in this, illuminate these benefits to such a one, cleanse one's thought and remove one's doubt; and who addresses such a one as follows:

"Come here, you of good family, do train yourself in just this Path of **Bodhisattvas**, for as a result of this training, this coursing, this struggling you surely and quickly **awake to full enlightenment**. After this you go on to educate an **infinite** number of beings in **the complete extinction of the substratum begotten of beginningless rebirths, in other words, in the revelation of the reality-limit**."

[**Another translation:** Come here, son of a good family, do train yourself in just this Path of the **Bodhisattvas**, for as a result of this training, this coursing, this struggling you will surely quickly **awake to full enlightenment**. After that you will educate an infinite number of beings in **the complete extinction of the substratum of rebirth, in other words, in the revelation of the reality-limit (bhutakoti) prabha-vanata**; Perfection, 1973: 121). – from [Streng's article, quote #4](#)]

As this one intends to reveal this completely, this one's merit is **infinite** and different still from any worldly merits. And this is true even if it is compared with the merit of someone who establishes in the observation of the ten wholesome ways of acting all the beings in world systems of any size, even in all the world systems in existence or not in existence, numerous as the sands of Ganges River. Or if it is compared with that of someone establishing others in the four trances, the four **Unlimited**, the four formless attainments, the five superknowledges, in any number of world systems. In each case any person not only writing this **perfection of wisdom** and reciting it by oneself, but writing such for others and revealing such completely to these, easily begets a different type of merit than merit itself. Moreover, Kausika, one also begets a different merit still as one may be conversant with the meaning while reciting this **perfection of wisdom**; and having written such for others, still reveals such completely, expounds and lights this up, both in it's meaning and letter.

[Warning about the false teachings – those teaching immorality and the impermanence as the annihilation of the composites – i.e. that there is nothing after death, no karma]

Sakra: Can any one now expound this **perfection of wisdom**?

The Lord: Yes, anyone thus conversant with this meaning can expound such to someone not understanding it. For in any time a counterfeit of **perfection of wisdom** may arise. As one hears this counterfeit, a person not understanding it as such needs be wary of making obeisance to it, as this one, though not understanding, may want to **realize full enlightenment**.

Sakra: How might one recognize in any time if and when the counterfeit **perfection of wisdom** is expounded?

The Lord: **In any time here be monks and nuns whose bodies are undeveloped, whose moral conduct, thought and wisdom are undeveloped, who are stupid, dumb like sheep, without wisdom. As these announce to expound perfection of wisdom, these actually expound its counterfeit.** These expound the counterfeit **perfection of wisdom** by teaching impermanence of form, feeling, perception, impulse and consciousness is to be interpreted as destruction of these just mentioned skandhas. To strive for such insight, according to them, is coursing in **perfection of wisdom**. But on the contrary, do not view impermanence of these skandhas as destruction of such. For to view things in such a way means to course in the counterfeit **perfection of wisdom**. For this reason, Kausika, does one with understanding expound effortlessly and correctly the meaning of truth and in **perfection of wisdom**. By so expounding this, one realizes different and limitless merit.

[The merit gained is proportional to the state of the one helped because they might be in a position to become a Buddha sooner and thus help all others]

And any such merit is quite different than if one even thought of oneself as, or even attempted to accept responsibility for, any ability whatsoever to establish any beings in, say, any number of world systems, even in the fruit of a Stream-winner. And such holds good also for the fruit of any Once-Returner, of any Never-Returner, and of any Arhat. Any **Bodhisattva** of true and right intention merely recognizes this goless goal, indicates such,

and puts before themselves this path for the beneficence of any and all limitless beings. For it is perfection of wisdom which brings about any fruit of any Once-Returner, of any Never-Returner, and of any Arhat. And any Bodhisattva increases one's endurance by reflecting this way, for, as by training oneself in perfection of wisdom, one comes to obtain dharmas which sooner or later constitute a Buddha, and one comes ever nearer to revealing for the benefit of any and all beings, full enlightenment. For one knows by training oneself in this training, coursing in and struggling in such, one brings forth any and all fruits of holy life, from fruits of a Stream-winner to Buddhahood. Any merit of any person sharing perfection of wisdom also is vastly different from any one establishing in Pratyekabuddhahood any number of beings in any number of world systems.

Moreover, Kausika, as someone reveals any such thing as is for full enlightenment to the hearts of as many beings as are in Jambudvīpa; and someone else not only indicated how it is possible for these to reveal their very hearts to full enlightenment, but also in addition gives these a copy of this perfection of wisdom; or, as one such as this presents a copy of this perfection of wisdom to an irreversible Bodhisattva, in consideration of any possibility that this Bodhisattva may allow oneself to be trained in such, make endeavours about and develop such, and as a result of any growth, increase or abundance of the perfection of wisdom, fulfill the Buddha-dharmas; now, compared with the former person, one begets a vastly different type of merit, for certainly once one is awakened to full enlightenment, one cannot help but to indicate the end to the sufferings of countless beings. Thus, one's merit is vastly different, even as the other person thinks to raise to full enlightenment the hearts of any number of beings in any number of world systems.

Or, let us again compare two persons: The first presents a copy of this perfection of wisdom to any number of beings in any number of world systems, beings which are irreversible from full enlightenment, who definitely set out for such; yet, the second person, in addition expounds this to these ones according to the meaning and according to the letter. Does this one not on the strength of this beget much great merit?

Sakra: One's merit is indeed great. One can neither easily calculate this heap of merit, nor count it, nor find anything even similar to, or resembling, or with which it can be compared.

The Lord: Still, Kausika, vastly different is any merit of someone who in addition instructs and admonishes in this perfection of wisdom these irreversible Bodhisattvas aspiring to quickly realize full enlightenment. And further, still another Bodhisattva may arise, saying one may realize full enlightenment even more quickly than they. As someone instructs and admonishes in the perfection of wisdom this Bodhisattva of even quicker understanding, one begets a still vast and different type of merit.

Sakra: To the extent any Bodhisattva comes nearer to full enlightenment, to such an extent one is instructed and admonished in the perfection of wisdom, for such brings one nearer and nearer Suchness. As one comes nearer Suchness, one confers many fruits and advantages on any having done services for one, i.e., on the ones through whom one enjoys one's robes, alms-bowl, lodging, and medicinal appliances for sickness. One's merit now becomes still larger, in consequence of the fact one comes nearer to full enlightenment.

Subhuti: Well said, Kausika. You fortify these belonging to the Bodhisattva-vehicle, help these, and stand by these. Even so do you act. Any holy disciple wanting to give help to all beings, as such, fortifies Bodhisattvas in their attitude to full enlightenment, helps these, and stands by these. In this same way does one in diligence act. For begotten of perfection of wisdom is full enlightenment of Bodhisattvas. Just so, as Bodhisattvas do not produce any thought of enlightenment, such do not train themselves in full enlightenment, nor in any six perfections, and as a consequence these do not awaken to full enlightenment. But as the Bodhisattvas do train themselves in the Bodhisattva-training, in these six perfections, so now do these produce this thought of enlightenment, so even now do these awaken to full enlightenment.

(i.e. So this perfection of wisdom has to be combined with the other paramitas like giving; wisdom alone is not enough; it would not work because then not in accord with reality. Wisdom (emptiness) and virtuous methods (dependent origination, interdependence) are inseparable; one takes its meaning only by combining it with the other. – Also, this is not about giving any thing to anybody at random, but things that can really help depending on each situation, starting with the basic necessity to live, up to what is necessary to learn, study and practice the dharma; the best gift. The motivation for giving is still Bodhicitta, the attainment of Buddhahood in order to help all sentient beings without discrimination. And, since we are not separate/different than all others, if we see one

Bodhisattva that might get to that stage sooner, then we put all of our effort in that direction, for the benefits of all. The goal to attain Buddhahood, the motivation of Bodhicitta, is not an individual trip like Arhatship. We are all on this same boat together. We all have to work together at this. We are all interdependent; one cannot be liberated without the others.)

Chapter VI – [The perfection of wisdom has to be combined with Bodhicitta / the Four Immeasurables, and vice versa – always combining virtuous method and wisdom together]

[The superiority of one moment of Bodhicitta over the practice of the other five paramitas without the motivation of Bodhicitta]

Go to verses

Maitreya:

1. On the one side we have on the part of a **Bodhisattva**, meritorious work which is founded on this **Bodhisattva's rejoicing** at the merit of others, and on one's **dedication** of merit to the utmost enlightenment of all beings; (*i.e. Merit based on Bodhicitta*)
2. on the other side is, on the part of all beings, **the meritorious work founded on giving, on morality, on meditational development.** (*i.e. Merit gained from the other five paramitas: giving, morality, patience, effort, concentration.*)

Among these the meritorious work of a **Bodhisattva** founded on **jubilant and dedication** is declared to be vastly different, excellent, sublime, unequalled, and equaling the unequalled.

(i.e. One moment of Bodhicitta is vastly superior than all giving. But, as we will see in this chapter, this Aspiring Bodhicitta (the practice of an of the four Immeasurables: loving-kindness, compassion, joy, equanimity) has to be combined with the perfection of wisdom (and vice versa). That means that the other five paramitas has to be combined with the motivation of Bodhicitta and done while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action. Otherwise they are not as efficient because entertaining the illusions of inherent existence of reality (the three worlds), which is contrary to the real nature of everything at the edge of existence and non-existence.)

[The Practice of the Four Immeasurables: friendliness, compassion, joy, equanimity extended to all sentient beings without any discrimination – here it is mainly about the immeasurable joy & dedication]

(i.e. First, extending the practice of the four immeasurables, here mainly rejoicing, to all sentient beings without any discrimination, including all ordinary beings, Tathagatas, Bodhisattvas, Just simply rejoicing that the Dharma, this perfection of wisdom combined with virtuous methods, the Middle Way, is being accepted and practiced everywhere.)

Subhuti: A **Bodhisattva**, a **great being**, considers **the world** with its ten directions, in every direction, extending everywhere. One such as this considers the world systems quite immeasurable, quite beyond reckoning, quite measureless, quite inconceivable, infinite and boundless.

Such ones consider in each of three time periods, in each single direction, in each single world system, **the Tathagatas** - as quite immeasurable, quite beyond reckoning, quite measureless, quite inconceivable, infinite and boundless, fully revealing final Nirvana in the realm of Nirvana and leaving nothing behind, - their tracks cut off, their course cut off, their obstacles annulled and dissolved, guides through the world of becoming, their tears dried up, with all their impediments crushed, their own burdens laid down, with their own weal reached, in whom any fetters of becoming are extinguished, whose thoughts are well freed by right understanding, and who have attained and maintain completely equanimous perfection in control of their entire hearts. (*i.e. here "equanimous" means "without any discrimination", extending this immeasurable to all sentient beings without any discrimination.*)

One considers these from right here, beginning with an appearance of this thought of enlightenment, proceeding throughout and beyond any time and any **realization of full enlightenment** through finally entering, or a revelation of Nirvana, as **Suchness** and a totality of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind, and a dissolution of any spans of

time beyond even any thought in considerations of some vanishing of good Dharma as expounded by each of these Tathagatas.

One considers this mass of morality, this mass of **concentration**, this mass of **wisdom**, this mass of emancipation, this mass of vision and cognition of emancipation of such Buddhas and Lords.

In addition, one considers **any store of merit associated with the six perfections**, with achievement of qualities of Buddha and nature, and **with perfections of self-confidence and of powers**; and also anyone associated with any **perfection of superknowledges, of comprehension, of vows**; and any store of merit associated with the accomplishment of **cognition of all-knowingness**, with solicitude for beings, **any great friendliness and great compassion, and immeasurable and incalculable Buddha-qualities**. (i.e. the Four Immeasurables: loving-kindness, compassion, joy, equanimity.)

And one also considers the **full enlightenment** and its all encompassing residual happiness borne of contentment from right actions and contemplation, and perfection of sovereignty over all dharmas, and such an accomplishment of **immeasurable** and unconquered supreme wonderworking power which finally conquers all, and this power of the Tathagata's cognition of what is truly real, which is without a slightest of defiled covering, attachment or obstruction, unequalled, equal to unequalled, **incomparable**, without measure, and such power of **Buddha-nature** and cognition preeminent among these powers, the obtainment of such supreme ease which results from four grounds of self-confidence, and the obtainment of Dharma through realization of this ultimate reality of all dharmas.

One also considers the turning of the wheel of Dharma, the carrying of the torch of Dharma, the beating of the drum of Dharma, the filling up the conch shell of Dharma, the wielding of the sword of Dharma, the pouring down of the rain of Dharma, and the refreshment of all beings through the gift of Dharma, through its presentation to them. One further considers any store of merit of any and all who are educated and trained by demonstrations of Dharma, - whether these concern any dharmas of Buddhas, or any of **PratyekaBuddhas**, or of **Disciples**, - who believe in these, who are fixed on these, who are bound to **end up in full enlightenment**.

One also considers the store of merit, associated with these six perfections, of all Bodhisattvas of whom Buddhas and Lords have predicted full enlightenment. A **Bodhisattva** considers any store of merit of all persons who belong to the **PratyekaBuddha** vehicle, and of whom the enlightenment of said **PratyekaBuddha** is predicted. One considers the meritorious work founded on **giving**, morality and meditational development of the four assemblies of Buddhas and Lords, (i.e. of the monks and nuns, the laymen and laywomen). One considers the roots of good planted during all this time by Gods, Nagas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kinnaras and Mahoragas, by beings and ghosts, and also by animals, at any such time as Buddhas and Lords demonstrate Dharma, and as these enter Parinirvana, and as these had entered Parinirvana - due to Buddhas and Lords, due to Dharma, due to Sangha, and due to persons of right mind-culture. In one's meditation the **Bodhisattva** piles up the roots of good of all these, all this quantity of merit without exception or remainder, rolls this into one lump, weighs this, and **rejoices over this with the most excellent and sublime jubilation, the highest and utmost jubilation, with none above it and unequalled, equaling the unequalled**. Having thus rejoiced, one utters the remark: "I **turn over into full enlightenment** this meritorious work founded on jubilation. May this feed **full enlightenment** of myself and of all beings!" (i.e. **dedication**)

[Perfecting the Four Immeasurables by combining them with this great perfection, and vice versa]

(i.e. Second, once the practice of the four immeasurables includes all sentient beings without any discrimination, then one considers: The perfection of this practice of the four immeasurables, including rejoicing, is to practice it while gradually realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action. That is perfectly combining virtuous method and wisdom together. Only then is it really efficient because in perfect accord with reality. Otherwise it becomes a perverted practice.)

Now, as concerns these foundations through which any person belonging to the Bodhisattva-vehicle rejoices, concerning these objective supports and points of view...does one apprehend in such a way as these objective supports and views are treated as signs?

Maitreya: No, these have not.

Subhuti: As one treats as an objective support or as a sign any foundation which does not in truth exist, or any objective support which does not in truth exist, does one at this point not have a perverted perception, perverted thought, perverted views? For in a greedy person also, as one discriminates a non-existing entity [or foundation] and ponders on such - thinking permanence in impermanence, ease in suffering, any self in what is truly not any self, loveliness or not in what is thought either repulsive or not - here arises a perverted perception, perverted thought, perverted view. And as the foundation [or entity], the objective support, the point of view are non-existent, so is enlightenment, so is the thought of enlightenment and so all dharmas or points of view...what thought does one turn over into full enlightenment, (i.e. dedication of all merit to enlightenment; renouncing the short and medium terms benefits) or what meritorious work founded on jubilation does one turn over into what utmost, right and perfect enlightenment?

[Another translation: If a bodhisattva treated as an objective support or as a sign that foundation which does not exist, and that objective support, which does not exist, would he then not have a perverted perception, perverted thought, perverted views? ... And as the foundation entity, the objective support, the point of view [are non-existent], so is enlightenment, so is the thought [of enlightenment] and so, all dharmas, all elements. But then on which foundations, by which objective supports, or points of view, does he turn over that thought into full enlightenment, or what meritorious work, founded on jubilation, does he turn over into what utmost, right and perfect enlightenment? (Perfection, 1973: 126) – from [Streng's article, quote #13](#)]

Maitreya: This is neither rightly intended nor understood to be taught or expounded in front of a Bodhisattva who has newly set out in the vehicle. For one may lose whatever little faith one may have gleaned, whatever little affection, serenity and respect which one may have gathered.

[Another translation: This should not be taught or expounded in front of a Bodhisattva who has newly set out on the vehicle. For he would lose that little faith, which is his, that little affection, serenity and respect which are his. ... [After some further discussion, Maitreya explains:] ...[see more [below](#)] (Perfection, 1973: 126-128). – from [Streng's article, quote #14](#)]

Only in front of an irreversible Bodhisattva is this rightly intended, understood, taught and expounded. Alternatively, a Bodhisattva propped up by a good friend is hereby not cowed, nor becomes stolid, nor cast down, nor depressed, does not turn the mind away from this, nor has one's back broken, nor tremble, be frightened, be terrified. Thus does such a Bodhisattva turn over into all-knowledge the meritorious work founded on jubilation. (i.e. The practices of aspiring Bodhicitta, like the four immeasurables, are usually not taught to beginners because of these possible perverted perceptions. They might be afraid of giving away all of their merit, or developed misplaced pride because of that ... But with the help of a good friend, teacher, one might get over these initial mistakes.)

Subhuti: Thusly any thought by which one has rejoiced and turned over, or dedicated any wholesome root connected with jubilation, - any such thought of rejoicing is at the time of turning over extinct, stopped, departed, reversed. So here now, and in any time and way, what is any thought by which one turns over to full enlightenment? Or, what is any thought which turns over into full enlightenment (any) meritorious work

founded on jubilation? Or, as no two thoughts can ever meet, how can anyone by one thought **turn over or dedicate**, another thought? Neither is it possible to **turn over** nor overturn, nor transform any thought as far as its own being is concerned. (*i.e. realizing the emptiness of what is dedicated*)

Sakra: The **Bodhisattvas** newly set out in the vehicle need to beware of being afraid upon hearing this exposition. **How** does a **Bodhisattva** **turn** any meritorious work founded on jubilation over **into full enlightenment**? And how does someone who takes hold of the meritorious work founded on jubilation succeed in taking hold of any thought connected with jubilation, and **how does one who turns over this thought connected with jubilation succeed in turning it over**? (*i.e. How to do it exactly and without faults?*)

Herein the Venerable **Subhuti** turned his mind to the **Bodhisattva** Maitreya, concentrated his mind on him, and spoke thus: Here the **Bodhisattva** considers any merit connected with these timeless Buddhas and Lords, in the way we described before. One piles up wholesome roots of all these, all of any quantity whatsoever of wholesome roots without exception and remainder, rolls such into one lump, weighs this, and rejoices over this. One thus thinks to turn this meritorious work founded on jubilation over **to full enlightenment**. How can the **Bodhisattva** when one thus turns over, be without perverted perception, perverted thought, perverted view? (*i.e. That is the visualization; but next is the way to do it without falling into a perverted view...*)

How Perverted Views Can be Avoided [by realizing the emptiness of the three; not accepting, not rejecting them; the Middle Way: combining method and wisdom]

Maitreya: The **Bodhisattva** must not, as a result of any thought by which one is turning this over, become one perceiving any thought. It is thus meritorious work founded on jubilation becomes such as is turned into, or rather perhaps, **revealed as full enlightenment**. (*i.e. He must not grasp at what is given away... He must give it away, dedication, while realizing its real nature: not existent, not non-existent ... If he grasp at it then this dedication is not efficient.*)

[**Another translation:** The Bodhisattva must not, as a result of the thought by which he turns that over, become one who perceives a thought. It is thus that the meritorious work founded on jubilation becomes something which is turned over into full enlightenment.

If he does not perceive that thought, [identifying it] as "this is that thought," then a Bodhisattva has no perverted perception, thought, or view. But if he perceives the thought by which he turns that over, [identifying it] as "this is that thought," then he becomes one who perceives thought. As a result, he has a perverted perception, thought and view.

But a Bodhisattva turns over rightly, not wrongly, when he perceives and brings to mind the thought which turns over in such a way that he regards it as "just extinct, extinct," as "stopped, departed, reversed"; and when he reflects that what is extinct that can not be turned over; and that this [extinctness, etc.] is the very dharmic nature also of that thought by which one turns over, and also of the dharmas through which one turns over, as well as the dharmas to which one turns over. It is thus that the bodhisattva should turn over (Perfection, 1973: 126-128). – from [Streng's article, quote #14](#)]

Subhuti: If one does not perceive any thought, identifying it as 'this is that thought,' as such a **Bodhisattva** has no perverted perception, thought or view. **But if one perceives the thought by which one turns this over, identifying it as 'this is that thought,' as such one becomes one who perceives thought. As a result one has perverted perception, thought and view.**

But any **Bodhisattva** turns over rightly, not wrongly, as one perceives and brings to mind any thought which turns over in such a way as one regards it as 'just extinct,' extinct as 'stopped, departed, reversed'; and as one reflects thusly, as what is extinct cannot be turned over; and as this extinctness as 'stopped, departed, reversed,' is the very dharmic nature also of any thought by which one turns over, and also of the dharmas through which one turns over, as well as of the dharmas to which one turns over, it is thus any **Bodhisattva** turn this over.

One considers any future Buddhas, present Buddhas, or past, future and present Buddhas in this same way in which one considers any past Buddhas. (*i.e. realizing the emptiness of the all elements involved in this practice*)

So now, under which circumstances is one without perverted perception, thought or views? If, while one turns over, one brings to mind any dharmas as extinct, stopped, departed, reversed, and any dharma into which it is turned over as inextinguishable, this, [the wholesome root] becomes something which is turned over **into full enlightenment**. **For one does not settle down in any process of dedication.**

(i.e. When combined with the realization of the emptiness of all elements from gross to more and more subtle, then this dedication becomes more and more efficient.)

If further one considers no dharma can be turned over into a dharma, it becomes something which is turned over **into full enlightenment**. It is thus by which any **Bodhisattva** who turns over is without perverted perception, thought or view, for one does not settle down in any process of dedication. If further, one perceives any thought cannot cognize any thought, neither of itself nor another, nor can dharma cognize dharma, now too, this has become something which is turned over **into full enlightenment**. **This is the supreme maturity of any Bodhisattva.**

But if, on the other hand, a Bodhisattva perceives any accumulation of merit, one cannot turn it over into full enlightenment due to one settling down in some process of dedication.

If further one reflects this (any) accumulation of merit is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable and quietly calm, and also any meritorious work founded on jubilation is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable and quietly calm...one turns over **into full enlightenment**.

But, if in addition one does not even perceive any conditioned events are **calmly quiet** and isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, such is **perfection of wisdom** of such a **Bodhisattva**. But one does not **turn over into full enlightenment** if one perceives this to be any wholesome root of Buddhas, the Lords having gone to Parinirvana; or as this wholesome root by which it is turned over is just as illusory and is of the same kind, has the same mark, belongs to the same class, has the same own-being.

For Buddhas and Lords do not allow a dedication to take place through a **sign**. *(i.e. No need to use "baby talk / motherese" here.)*

- One neither brings to mind nor turns over any wholesome root to full enlightenment **if one brings about a sign by reflecting anything** which is past is extinct, stopped, departed, reversed; what is future has not yet arrived; and of any present no stability is got at, and that this which is not got at has no sign or range.
- On the other hand one also does not **turn over** to full enlightenment **if one fails to bring about a sign or to bring to mind anything whatsoever as a result of sheer inattentiveness, or if one fails to attend as a result of lack of mindfulness, or of lack of understanding.**
- **But such and said wholesome root becomes something which is turned over into full enlightenment on condition of one bringing to mind such and said sign, but does not treat it as any sign.** *(i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting; using the skillful means while realizing the real nature of the three: subject, object, action.)*
- It is thus the **Bodhisattva** trains oneself herein. **This is known as one's skill in means**. When, **through skill in means, one turns over any wholesome root, one is near to all-knowledge.** *(i.e. "One is near to all-knowledge" means one is thus getting closer and closer to acting in perfect accord with the real nature of everything, thus more and more efficiently, and thus more and more close to Buddhahood. It is by combining more and more subtle virtuous methods, or adapted skillful means, with the gradual realization of the emptiness of inherent existence of more and more subtle dharma, that one get closer and closer to realizing the real nature of everything, full Buddhahood. Not grasping/accepting any method or view as absolute, not rejecting all adapted skillful means and views either.)*

[Another translation: [A bodhisattva] does not bring to mind nor turn over [that wholesome roots] to full enlightenment if he brings about a sign by reflecting that what is past is extinct, stopped, departed, reversed; that what is future has not yet arrived; and that of the present no stability is got at, and that which is not got at has no sign, or range. On the other hand he also does not turn over to full enlightenment if he fails to bring about a sign or to bring to mind as a result of sheer inattentiveness, if he fails to attend as a result of lack of mindfulness or of lack of understanding. But that wholesome root

becomes something which has been turned over [or transformed] into full enlightenment on condition that he brings to mind that sign, but does not treat it as a sign. It is thus that the Bodhisattva should train himself therein. This should be known as his skill-in-means. When, through that skill-in-means, he turns over a wholesome root, then he is **near to the all-knowledge** (Perfection, 1973: 128-129). – from [Streng's article, quote #15](#)]

The **Bodhisattva** wanting to train oneself in this **skill in means**, however, constantly commits to hearing just this **perfection of wisdom**, studying it and asking questions derived from it. **For without the help of perfection of wisdom one untaught cannot enter on the work of dedication by means of perfection of wisdom.** But one does not make a statement to any effect such as thanks to **perfection of wisdom** it is possible to transform any meritorious work **into full enlightenment**. For stopped are any such personal lives, stopped are any such **karma-formations**, **calmly quiet**, isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, lacking in **basis**.

Moreover, **as this person has brought about a sign, and made a discrimination, one perceives what is truly real in what is not truly real as it were truly real, and one would transform a basis into what is without basis.** Buddhas, the Lords do not allow one's wholesome roots to become something which is in this way transformed **into full enlightenment**, for even these become to one so inclined a great **basis**. Even the Parinirvana of Buddhas and Lords, one so inclined treats as a **sign** and discriminates, thusly one believes oneself to get at Nirvana from a viewpoint, and this is not the dedication carried out by **one who perceives any basis** which the Tathagatas have called a source of great welfare. For **this process of dedication is not without poison, not without torn.**

It is just as with foods seeming excellent, but is really poisonous. Its color, smell, taste and touch seem desirable, but nevertheless, as poisonous it is best shunned and not eaten by circumspect people. Although food, stupid people might think it best to be eaten. The color, smell, taste and touch of this food promise happiness, but its transformation in any person eating it surely leads to a painful conclusion. As a result one incurs death, or deadly pain.

Just so some perceivers of a basis who seize badly the meaning of what is well taught, badly distinguish it, badly master it, and misunderstand it, not understanding the meaning as it really is, these instruct and admonish others to consider the mass of merit of the past, future and present Buddhas and Lords, in the way described before, to rejoice at it, and to turn over **into full enlightenment** the meritorious work founded on jubilation. Thus this turning over, since it is being carried out by means of a **sign**, is turned into poisonousness. It is just like the poisonous food mentioned before. **There can be no turning over for someone who perceives a basis. For a basis is poisonous and has a range.** (*i.e. This is training the wrong way; without realizing the emptiness of the three.*)

Herein a person who belongs to the **vehicle of Bodhisattvas** does not train oneself thus.

How now does one train oneself? How does one take hold of the wholesome root of the past, future and present Buddhas and Lords? And how does anything which is taken hold of become something which is successfully taken hold of? **How does one turn over?** And how does it become something which is successfully turned over into the supreme enlightenment?

Here the son or daughter of a good family who belongs to the **vehicle of Bodhisattvas**, and who does not want to calumniate Tathagatas, thus rejoices over all and any wholesome root, and turns it over thus:

"I rejoice in this wholesome root which is considered in the way in which Tathagatas with their **Buddha-cognition** and their Buddha-eye know and see it, -its kind such as it is, its class such as it is, its quality such as it is, its own-being such as it is, its mark such as it is, and its mode of existence such as it is. And I thus turn this over in such a way as these Tathagatas can allow this wholesome root to be turned over **into full enlightenment**." *(i.e. I dedicate while realizing the real nature of the three as the Buddha as realized this. – which is while realizing the real nature of everything beyond all description, beyond all conceptualization.)*

As one thus rejoices, thus turns over, a **Bodhisattva** becomes free from guilt. The righteousness of Buddhas, the Lords, is rejoiced in. This wholesome root becomes something which is **turned over into full enlightenment**. And one does not calumniate any Tathagatas. **In this way one's turning over becomes a non-poisonous turning over, a great turning over, a turning over into the dharma-element; it becomes perfect, quite perfect, through this earnest intention and resolve of one thus turning over.** Moreover, someone who belongs to the **vehicle of Bodhisattvas turns this over** with understanding all morality, **concentration, wisdom**, emancipation, vision and cognition of emancipation, are uninvolved in any **world of sense-desire, the world of form, the formless world, (i.e. the three worlds)** and as such these are neither past, future, nor present. *(i.e. realizing the emptiness of the elements)*

For everything that is in any three periods of time or in any triple world is uninvolved in ultimate reality. *(i.e. The real nature of everything is beyond any of those objects, beyond the three worlds, beyond causality space and time.)* In consequence **the turning over is also uninvolved**, and so is the dharma [i.e. Buddhahood] into which this process of transformation is being turned, - if only one firmly believes this. *(i.e. realizing the emptiness of action, dedication, itself)*

As a **Bodhisattva** turns over in such a way, such ones as **this one is can never again lose the turning over**, and it becomes uninvolved, non-poisonous, a great turning over, a turning over of the dharma-element, perfect, quite perfect. **But, on the other hand, as one settles down in what one may turn over, and treats it as a sign, one now turns it over wrongly.** A **Bodhisattva**, however, turns over with the idea such as it is through this turning over into the dharma-element, as the Buddhas, the Lords know and permit it, *(i.e. No need to use "baby talk / motherese" here.)* this wholesome root becomes something which has been turned over **into full enlightenment**, successfully turned over. This is the right method of turning it over. And in this way it becomes something that has been turned over into supreme enlightenment, successfully turned over.

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti, well said. You perform the office of the Teacher as you demonstrate Dharma to the **Bodhisattvas**. For it is this turning over, which is the turning over of the dharma-element, which is the turning over of a **Bodhisattva**. He thinks: "As the Buddhas and Lords know and see this wholesome root in this dharmahood, -its kind such as it is, its class such as it is, its quality such as it is, its own-being such as it is, its mark such as it is, its mode of existence such as it is, -so I rejoice in it as these. And as these grant permission, so I turn it over." *(i.e. No need to use "baby talk / motherese" here.)*

[One moment of true Bodhicitta, combining method and wisdom, is superior than all other kinds of merit based on ignorance combined]

This heap of merit of a **Bodhisattva**, which is born from this turning over of any Dharma-element, is declared to **be superior to the accumulation of merit** on the part of someone instigating to, and establishing in the ten wholesome ways of action all beings in the **great trichiliocosms** which are countless as the sands of the Ganges. It **remains superior also if** these beings would gain the four trances, or the four **Unlimited**, or the four formless attainments, or the five superknowledges; or equally if these become Stream-winners, etc., to: **PratyekaBuddhas**. **And yet this is not all**. If all beings in all world systems set out for supreme enlightenment, and if, Subhuti, each single **Bodhisattva** were to furnish for aeons as countless as the sands of the Ganges all these beings in the various **great trichiliocosms**, countless as the sands of the Ganges, with all which may be needed...**but give this gift while perceiving a basis**...and now, proceeding in this manner, we imagine all these beings are a single one, and if each single **Bodhisattva** for aeons countless as the sands of Ganges did furnish all these **Bodhisattvas** with all these may ever need, and treat these with respect; if thus each single one of all these **Bodhisattvas** all together would give this gift, do not these **Bodhisattvas** on the strength of this beget a great deal of merit?

Subhuti: A great deal indeed, O Lord. This heap of merit defies calculation. Surely if it were a material thing, it could not find room in even the **great trichiliocosms** countless as the sands of the Ganges.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. And yet, **this accumulation of merit, due to giving on the part of any Bodhisattvas perceiving a basis, is infinitesimal** and even different, as concerns merit, when attempts are made to compare any such merit with anything whatsoever which may or even may not be begotten by someone belonging to the **vehicle of Bodhisattvas**, and who, **as taken hold of by perfection of wisdom and skill in means**, (*i.e. Combining virtuous methods and wisdom together.*) affects this or any wholesome root so as to indicate to such it's **turning over into full enlightenment** by means of this turning over of the dharma-element. For although **the basis-perceiving Bodhisattvas** give a good many gifts, these also reckon these gifts up as 'good' and 'many.' (*i.e. They are still grasping at the gifts, reifying them, thinking they are inherently existent.*)

Now, upon this, twenty thousand Gods of the Four Great Kings, with folded hands paid homage to Lord, and said: "This transformation **into all-knowledge** of wholesome roots by any having been **taken hold of by perfection of wisdom and skill in means**, is a great transformation of **Bodhisattvas**...for **it surpasses any and all accumulation of merit, derived from giving**, of any **Bodhisattvas** basing such **giving** on something, however great it may be."

So now, again upon this one hundred thousand Gods of the Thirty-three rain down on Lord heavenly flowers, incense, perfumes, wreaths, ointments, aromatic powders, jewels and garments. These worship the Lord with heavenly parasols, banners, bells, flags, and with rows of lamps all around, and with manifold kinds of worship. Playing on heavenly musical instruments [in honor of the Lord] these now say: "This transformation of dharma-element is surely a great transformation of any **Bodhisattva**, as **it is in deed and view different than any and all heaps of accumulated merit resulting from gifts** of **Bodhisattvas** having a basis in anything whatsoever, for this great transformation is **taken hold of by perfection of wisdom and skill in means**."

All the other classes of Gods appear on this scene, worshipping Lord, and now raise their voices saying: "It is wonderful, O Lord, to any such extent as this transformation of a wholesome root by these **Bodhisattvas** which, being **taken hold of by perfection of wisdom and skill in means**, **is different or other than any heap of merit** of **Bodhisattvas** having a basis in something, even though it has accumulated for such a long time, and is procured by such manifold exertions."

* * *

Now the Lord speaks to these Gods, from the gods belonging to the Pure Abode downwards: "Let us leave the case of the accumulation of merit of all beings in countless world systems who are definitely set out **for full enlightenment**, and any **giving** gifts **for the sake of gaining full enlightenment**."

- Let us also, in the same manner, consider the case of all beings in countless world systems which, **having made a vow to gain full enlightenment**, and having raised thoughts to enlightenment, **give gifts** on the extensive scale described before.
- In this other hand we consider a **Bodhisattva**, **taken hold of by perfection of wisdom and skill in means**, (*i.e. Combining virtuous methods and wisdom together. The Middle Way.*) who takes hold of the wholesome roots of all the Buddhas, **Bodhisattvas**, **PratyekaBuddhas** and **Disciples**, and of all other beings also the wholesome roots which have been planted, will be planted, and are being planted, and who rejoices over these all in the way described above.
- Then **infinitesimal** and different is any accumulation of merit on the part of **the former Bodhisattvas who give gifts while perceiving a basis - just because of this perceiving of any basis.** (*i.e. Making the vow is not enough. Bodhicitta and giving alone is not enough. It has to be combined with wisdom. All virtuous methods have to be perfected by combining them to more and more wisdom, otherwise they lead to perversions.*)

Subhuti: **The Lord describes the jubilation over the wholesome roots of all beings as a most excellent jubilation.** For what reason is this jubilation a most excellent one? (*i.e. The immeasurable joy is the most perfect joy.*)

The Lord: If any person belonging to the **vehicle of Bodhisattvas** does not seize on this past, this future and present dharmas, does not mind these, does not get at these, does not construct, nor discriminate these, does not see nor review these, if one considers these with this conviction...**'all dharmas are fabricated by thought construction, unborn, not come forth, not come, not gone,'** and this, **'no dharma is ever produced or stopped in this past, this future or present';** if one considers any dharmas in such a way, herein one's jubilation is in accordance with the true nature of such dharmas, and so is one's transformation [of any merit] **into full enlightenment.** This is the first reason why the jubilation of the **Bodhisattva** is a most excellent one. (*i.e. Because only then is it efficient in bringing us closer and closer to full enlightenment, because perfectly in accord with the goal, with the real nature of everything at the edge of existence and non-existence.*)

The meritorious work founded on giving on the part of Bodhisattvas who perceive a basis, who have a basis in view, is **infinitesimal** and quite different when compared with the transformation of the wholesome root by any **Bodhisattvas.** Moreover, Subhuti, someone who belongs to the **vehicle of the Bodhisattvas**, wanting to rejoice in the wholesome roots of all Buddhas and Lords, rejoices in such a way: "As emancipation is unoriginated, [since the obstacles from **defilements** and from the recognizable have ceased], so the gift; so the morality, etc.; so the jubilation, so the meritorious work founded on jubilation; as emancipation, so transformation, so Buddhas and Lords, **PratyekaBuddhas** and **Disciples** who have entered Parinirvana; as emancipation, so transformation, so are any dharmas which are seen as past, or stopped; and likewise the dharmas which are seen as future, or not yet produced; and the dharmas which are seen as present, or proceeding just now; as emancipation so all seen as past, future and present Buddhas and Lords. **Thus, I rejoice with the most excellent jubilation in the true nature of any dharmas, which are unbound, unfreed, unattached.** So, now I turn this meritorious work founded on jubilation over **into full enlightenment;** but really no turning over takes place, as nothing is passed on, nothing destroyed. This is the second reason why the jubilation of the **Bodhisattva** is a most excellent one.

But to return to the question of merit. Let us now consider this case here as all these beings in countless world systems are definitely set out **for full enlightenment,** and so, in order to advance **to full enlightenment,** these, for countless aeons undertake the obligation of observing morality, i.e. good conduct of body, speech and mind, - **but while perceiving a basis.** Nevertheless their accumulation of merit is **infinitesimal** compared with this of a **Bodhisattva's limitless equanimity derived from jubilation,** - merely due to this simple fact in which **these beings in countless world systems perceive a basis.** And the same is true, if all these beings for countless aeons practice **patience,** although these were ever so much abused, struck and reviled; or if these practice **vigour,** and under no circumstances would be cast down, or conquered by sloth and torpor; or, finally, if these enter the **trances.** **As long as any such as these carry out such practices while perceiving a basis, any merit is infinitesimal compared with this** of any **Bodhisattva** who **rejoices over the wholesome roots of all beings with the most excellent yet equanimous jubilation, and transforms this wholesome root into supreme enlightenment.**

Chapter VII – [Inseparability of virtuous methods and wisdom]

Hymn to The Perfection of Wisdom

[Go to verses](#)

[Another translation – see [passage 11](#) “Mystic hymn to the wisdom mother” from Lex Hixon’s Mother of all Buddhas]

Sariputra: Perfection of wisdom, O Lord, is accomplishment of cognition of all-knowing. Perfection of wisdom is realized as all-knowledge.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra, as you say.

Sariputra: Veneration towards perfection of wisdom polishes away obscurities, revealing light, O Lord. I pay homage to perfection of wisdom! She is worthy of homage. She is unstained, and thus entire worlds along with complete systems cannot stain her. Regardless whether viewed from, in or as absolute unification, beings come to reveal her as spontaneous source of light, having dispelled any limitations, and things of any triple worlds. Holding her in supreme reverence leads beings away from blinding darkness caused by defilements and wrong views. As this is her nature, we find shelter. Most excellent is her impartial abiding. Within us she is revealed as cause to seek the safety of wings of enlightenment. Realization of her brings light to the blind. Our being is permeated by her light so all fear and distress may be forsaken within her revelation. Veneration of her acquires the five eyes, and shows this path to all beings. She herself is an organ of vision. Her knowledge disperses the gloom and darkness of delusion. She does nothing about all dharmas. She becomes the path and guide any who have strayed on to an obscure road. She is identical with all-knowledge. She never produces any dharma because she cast off any residues relating to both kinds of coverings, these produced by defilements and these produced by any thing whatsoever. She does not stop any dharma, herself unstopped and unproduced...is this perfection of wisdom. She is mother of the Bodhisattvas, on account of emptiness of own mark. As the donor of the jewel of all Buddha-dharmas she brings about the ten powers (of a Buddha). She cannot be crushed. She protects the unprotected with the help of the four grounds of self-confidence. She is the antidote to birth-and-death. She reveals this clear knowingness of the true nature of any own-being of all dharmas, for she does not stray away from it. The perfection of wisdom of Buddhas, the Lords, sets in motion this wheel of Dharma.

[The five paramitas have to be perfected by combining them with the perfection of wisdom]

Sariputra: How does a Bodhisattva stand in perfection of wisdom, how attend and pay homage to it?

The Lord: In every way the perfection of wisdom is treated as our teacher.

Sakra now asks Sariputra: Wherefrom, and for what reason does this question of the holy Sariputra arise?

Sariputra: It arises as I hear it said, "a Bodhisattva being taken hold of by perfection of wisdom and skill in means transforms into all-knowledge any so-called meritorious work founded on jubilation.

Ones such as these delve even beyond the entire meritorious works founded on giving, morality, patience, vigour, and trance of all Bodhisattvas observing any basis whatsoever."

It is just perfection of wisdom which guides these five perfections in their intention and direction on this path toward all-knowledge.

Just as, Kausika, people born blind, one hundred, or one thousand, or one hundred thousand of them, cannot, without a leader, go along a path and get to a village, town or city; - just so, Giving, Morality, Patience, Vigour and Trance cannot alone be called 'perfections,' for without perfection of wisdom these are as if born blind, here now without their leader and unable to traverse the path to all-knowledge, and still less can these reach all-knowledge. However, as Giving, Morality, Patience, Vigour and Trance are taken hold of by perfection of

wisdom, now these are in **deed** and propriety termed 'perfections', for **these five perfections** acquire this organ of vision which enables these to evolve along this path to **all-knowledge**, and to **reach all-knowledge**.

[How to perfect this perfection of wisdom; combining it with the other five paramitas]

Sariputra said to the Lord: **How does any Bodhisattva consummate perfection of wisdom?** (*i.e. If the five paramitas are perfected by combining them with the perfection of wisdom, how is this perfection of wisdom perfected ?*)

The Lord: By pure cognition and establishment in one's view of the non-consummation of form, feeling, perception, impulse, and consciousness. The non-consummation of the five skandhas, this is called 'consummation of perfection of wisdom'. In this way nothing is affected, so the consummation of the five skandhas is called consummation of perfection of wisdom. (*i.e. This perfection of wisdom is perfected by combining it with all the other paramitas. That is, by not going over board and thinking that this perfection of wisdom, or that emptiness, is the absolute truth. By not jumping from one extreme, realism, to the other extreme, nihilism. By staying on the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting; the Middle Way between existence and non-existence.*)

Sariputra: When perfection of wisdom is consummated by such a consummation, what dharma, or what of any phenomena whatsoever does it procure?

The Lord: When consummated in such a way, perfection of wisdom does not procure any dharma, and in consequence of this fact she comes to be styled 'perfection of wisdom.' (*i.e. There is no absolute, only adapted skillful means*)

Sakra: So, O Lord, perfection of wisdom does not even procure all-knowledge? (*i.e. About omniscience*)

The Lord: Perfection of wisdom does not procure even this, as this is formed as, or from some basis, or some mental process, or some volitional act. (*i.e. All dharma are empty of inherent existence, even Nirvana, even the Buddha, even omniscience. So one should not reify this either.*)

Sakra: So, how does perfection of wisdom procure?

The Lord: In so far as this does not procure, to this extent this procures. (*i.e. This perfection of wisdom is like a non-affirmative negation. By realizing the real nature of everything, the emptiness of all dharma without any distinction, the three poisons and all consequential suffering automatically evaporate fault of nutriment. That is what it does. If it were to bring another view, then it would not be perfect. If it would mean the dropping of everything then it would not be perfect either. It has to be in accord with the goal, with the real nature of everything at the edge of existence and non-existence.*)

Sakra: This is wonderful, O Lord, to see any extent to which **perfection of wisdom neither produces nor stops any dharma. For the purpose of non-production and of non-stopping of all dharmas is perfection of wisdom set up, without, however, being really present.** (*i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting*)

Subhuti: If any Bodhisattva perceives this also, one might keep far away from perfection of wisdom, treating this as worthless and insignificant, and fail to act on it. (*i.e. Transcending even this formulation of the Middle Way.*)

The Lord: This is quite true. For here perfection of wisdom is lit up, and here form does not become lit up, nor other skandhas, nor any fruits of this holy life, up to Buddhahood. (*i.e. No absolute, no exception, only adapted skillful means. Even this ...*)

Subhuti: Perfection of wisdom is great perfection, O Lord!

Why the Perfection of Wisdom is Great [indestructible, incommensurably efficient]

The Lord: Tell what you think, Subhuti, **in what manner is perfection of wisdom a great perfection?**

Subhuti: This neither makes form (solidity), feelings (sensations), perceptions (experiences) will (volition), and consciousnesses (states of mind) greater nor smaller, and does not assemble nor disperse form, etc. This also neither strengthens nor weakens the powers of Tathagata, nor does this assemble or disperse these. This does not even make **all-knowledge** greater or smaller, nor does this assemble or disperse it. For **all-knowledge** is unassembled [uncollected] and undispersed [undisturbed]. In the event any **Bodhisattva** perceives even this, one courses not in **perfection of wisdom**, so how much more so if one forms the notion: "Thus do I, endowed with **cognition of all-knowing**, demonstrate dharma to beings, thus do I lead these beings to final Nirvana." **For this apprehension of these beings is a basis fact**, for when one says, "I lead these beings to final Nirvana," this cannot be an outcome of **perfection of wisdom**. This indeed is a great basis of apprehension on one's part. For the absence of own-being in beings needs to be known as belonging to the very essence of **perfection of wisdom**.

- One needs know this **perfection of wisdom** is **without own-being** in the same way in which beings are without own-being;
- also, **perfection of wisdom** is **unthinkable**, because beings are naturally as well;
- also **perfection of wisdom** **has an indestructible nature** because beings do as well;
- and **perfection of wisdom** taken as it naturally is, **does not undergo any process** which leads to enlightenment as well...for beings, as these are naturally, do not undergo such a process ;
- also this way in which Tathagatas arrive at full possession of powers is understood as the way in which beings arrive thus at full possession of their power.

It is in this manner which **perfection of wisdom** is the great perfection.

[The inseparability, non-duality (not two, not one) of wisdom and the five aggregates]

Sariputra: **Bodhisattvas** reborn here, **resolutely believe or have direct knowing** in **deep perfection of wisdom** without hesitation, doubt or stupefaction, here these decrease and enduring beyond any duration do these practice. These ones following this doctrine of **perfection of wisdom**, understand its meaning, and instruct others in it both by any method which reveals the meaning and by any method which reveals the doctrine.

The Lord: Thus it is, Sariputra. One can know this as such **Bodhisattvas** are reborn here as decrease in other world systems in which one honors and questions Buddhas, the Lords. Any such **Bodhisattvas** as decrease in other world systems in which one honors and questions Buddhas, the Lords, are reborn here and upon hearing this **deep perfection of wisdom** being taught, **identify perfection of wisdom as teacher**, and are definitely convinced beyond even such questions one is face to face with ones teacher...such a one can know one sees the teacher. As **perfection of wisdom** is being taught, and as one listens attentively, pays respect to this even before one hears this, and does not cut this story short...such a **Bodhisattva** is known as one practicing for long, even beyond duration. And as well, one herein honors many Buddhas.

Subhuti: Is it at all possible to hear **perfection of wisdom**, to distinguish and consider her, to make statements and to reflect about her? Can one explain or learn such as because of certain attributes, tokens or **signs** this is **perfection of wisdom**, or such as here this is **perfection of wisdom**, or over there...that is **perfection of wisdom**?

The Lord:

- **[Not the same as the aggregates]** No indeed, Subhuti. **Perfection of wisdom** cannot be expounded, learned, distinguished, considered, stated, or reflected upon by means of any or all skandhas, nor by means of any or all elements, nor means of any or all sense-fields. This is a consequence of fact. All dharmas are isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable without any basis, as said and known.
- **[Not separate/different than the aggregates either]** Nor can **perfection of wisdom** be understood other than by the skandhas, elements or sense-fields.
- **[They are non-dual: not two, not one]** For just the very skandhas, elements and sense-fields are *empty*, isolated-inaccessible-not-findable and **calmly quiet**. [without basis] It is thus, Subhuti, as **perfection of wisdom** and skandhas, elements and sense-fields are **neither many as more than one, nor even one**, nor one divided. [again, without basis]
- As a result of *emptiness*, isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness and quietude these cannot be apprehended. (*i.e. Not falling into the extreme of monism or oneness.*) The lack of a basis of, or for apprehension in any and all dharmas, this is called '**perfect wisdom**.' Whatever, wherever, whenever, or however pure cognition reveals no perception, appellation, conception, contrivance or conventional expression, hereof one speaks '**perfection of wisdom**.' (*i.e. The Middle Way away from all extremes; no exception at all.*)

Subhuti: For how long is any **Bodhisattva** known as one who practices, who makes endeavours about this **deep perfection of wisdom**?

The Lord: One must make one's own distinction in this, owing to the unequal endowment of different **Bodhisattvas**.

Causes and Consequences of harming the Dharma [cause: old karma, effect: hells for an eternity]

It is quite possible some **Bodhisattvas**, although perhaps seeing or having seen many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands of Buddhas, and have led and continue to lead the holy life, in any present 'time' **may nevertheless have no faith in perfection of wisdom**. The reason is now as whenever, **some have no respect for this profound perfection of wisdom as it is taught, even in the presence of Buddhas and Lords**. Wherever might be a lack of respect for this is also in like measure a lack of desire to learn more about this, a lack of honor recognized in this, and thus a lack in faith and unwillingness to ask questions. Lacking in faith these hereupon walk out of assemblies. **It is just because in any past these have produced, accumulated, piled up and collected karma conducive to the ruin of dharma** that also at any present these walk out when this **deep perfection of wisdom is being taught**. From the lack of respect, without faith and firm belief in **perfection of wisdom**, these lack also in accord either in body or in thought. Lacking in accord these do not know, see, recognize or make known this **perfection of wisdom**.

- First any such as these do not believe, and so do not hear, so as to not see, and here these do not recognize this and thus produce, accumulate, pile up and collect **karma conducive to the ruin of dharma** within these lives, any and ultimately all.
- **This in its turn will bring about karma conducive to weakness in wisdom.**
- This in its turn will make such as these refuse, reject and revile this **perfection of wisdom** while it is being taught, and so rejecting this will walk out.
- **But by rejecting this perfection of wisdom these reject the all-knowledge** of Buddhas and Lords, past, future and present.
- Not content with having vitiated merely their own continuities, so too these as if all aflame, deter, dissuade, turn away others also, -beings of less intelligence, seemingly less **wisdom**, merit and wholesome roots, endowed with but a little faith, affection, serenity, and desire-to-do, beginners, essentially unqualified, -trying to take away even what little faith, affection, serenity and desire-to-do may be present.
- These bid one not to train in this, and finally declare this is not the Buddha's word.
- These first vitiate and estrange their own communities, and even those of 'others'.
- Hereby these calumniate **perfection of wisdom**.
- To calumniate **perfection of wisdom** means to calumniate all-knowledge, and hereof the past, future and present Buddhas.
- These cause themselves removal from the presence of the Buddhas and Lords, self-deprived of Dharma, self-expelled from Sangha.
- In each and every way these will be, of their own-self's shut out from Triple Jewel.
- **Such activities cut down the welfare and happiness of all-beings, and these will collect karma conducive to the great hells.** As these have raised such karma-formations, these will be reborn in great hells, for many hundreds of years, many thousands of years, indeed for many hundreds of thousands of nyutas of kotis of aeons. From one great hell these will pass on to another. After a long time this world of these is consumed by fire. Yet such as these are hurled into the great hells in another world system, and again these pass on from great hell to great hell. When also such as this world is consumed by fire, yet still these are hurled into the great hells in another world system, here still these pass on from great hell to great hell. When also this world is consumed by fire, this karma of ones such as these is still unexhausted, still has some residue of efficacy and, deceasing now here, these are still reborn in great hells and experience great sufferings in these, until the time when yet even this world is once more consumed by fire. These still as even unto our own-selves, as we see, experience a karma which involves many painful feelings. And why? Because their teachings are so misleading.

Sariputra: Does not even the effect of the five deadly sins bear no proportion to this misconduct of mind and speech?

The Lord: It does not. All these ones opposing **perfection of wisdom** and dissuading others from it are beings like unto ones by and to whom are not granted any vision. How can any become intimate with these, how can any gain

wealth, honor, position? As a matter of fact, regard these as defamers of dharma, as mere rubbish, as pitchguards, as mere vipers. **These are beings breeding misfortune, these ruin anyone listening.** Regard these seeking to defame **perfection of wisdom** as beings which seek to defame Dharma.

Sariputra: The Lord has not told us about the length of time such a person must spend in the great hells.

The Lord: Leave that alone, Sariputra. If this were announced, anyone hearing it needs to beware lest hot blood spurt from their mouths, lest any incur death or deathly pain, lest harsh oppression weigh any down, lest the dart of grief enter their hearts, lest any drop down with a big fall, lest any shrivel up and wither away, lest any be overpowered by great fright.

So...the Lord refused to answer the Venerable Sariputra's question. For a second time, for a third time the Venerable Sariputra spoke thus to the Lord: Tell me, O Lord, the length of such a person's sojourn in hell, as a guidance for future generations.

The Lord: **Because one has brought about, accumulated, piled up and collected this karma of mind and speech one must sojourn for a long while in the great hells.** Just so much guidance will be given to future generations, so one will, in consequence of the unwholesome **karma-formations** of this misconduct of speech and mind, experience pain for just so long. The mere announcement of the **measureless** magnitude of one's pain will be a sufficient anxiety to virtuous sons and daughters of good family. The mere announcement will turn any of these away from activities conducive to the ruin of dharma, so even now these cause formations of merit, and these ones will not reject the good dharma, even to save their lives, for these do not wish to meet with such pains.

Subhuti: Such a person needs become well-restrained in the deeds of one's body, speech or mind. For so great a heap of demerit is begotten by such false teaching. Which, O Lord, is the **deed**, or are the deeds begetting so great a heap of demerit?

The Lord: Such false teachings do. Just here are deluded beings, persons who, having left the world for the well-taught Dharma-Vinaya, decide to defame, to reject, to oppose this **perfection of wisdom**. But **to oppose the perfection of wisdom is to oppose the enlightenment of Buddhas and Lords.** And this means one opposes such **all-knowledge** of Buddhas and Lords in this past, future and present. To oppose **all-knowledge** means to oppose Dharma. To oppose Dharma means to oppose the community of **Disciples** of Tathagatas. And as one opposes also the community of **Disciples** of Tathagatas, **such a one is shut out in each and every way from the Triple Jewel.** One is acquiring an unwholesome **karma-formation** which cannot be equaled, for such is **immeasurable and incalculable.**

Subhuti: For what reason do these lack faith, and oppose this **perfection of wisdom**?

The Lord:

- Such as these are beset by **Mara**.
- One's **karma** is conducive to weakness in **wisdom**, and so one has no faith or serene confidence in profound Dharma.
- Endowed with those two evil dharmas one opposes this **perfection of wisdom**.

Moreover, Subhuti,

- this person will be one who is in the hands of friends which are other than good;
- or may be one who has not yet practiced;
- or one who has settled down in the skandhas and determined a basis for things;
- or one who exalts oneself and deprecates others, looking out for faults.

Endowed also with these four attributes is this person believing this **perfection of wisdom** needs opposition whenever and wherever this is being taught.

Chapter VIII – [Ultimately, with this perfection of wisdom, one realize that everything is already pure, one realize his own Buddha-nature]

[It is hard to realize that everything, our five aggregates, are **already pure**; our Buddha-nature]

Go to verses

Subhuti: It is hard to gain confidence in **perfection of wisdom** if one is unpracticed, lacks in wholesome roots and is in the hands of any friend who may be other than good, this friend being any one possessed of less than right intent, speech, action, and **concentration** toward countless beings.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. It is hard to gain confidence in **perfection of wisdom** if one is unpracticed, has only diminutive wholesome roots, is dull-witted, does not care, learns little, displays inferior understanding of **wisdom**, relies on **any friends who may be other than good, is not eager to learn, and who is unwilling to ask questions and who remains unpracticed in wholesome dharmas.**

Subhuti: How deep indeed Lord, how profound is **perfection of wisdom**, as being so hard to gain confidence in?

The Lord: **Form** is neither bound nor freed, because form has no own-being as innate, inherent, or individualized in any true or absolute sense. Any **material process** is wont to be assumed if, or as any do not exist. Any **starting point of any material process** [or an equivalent to form] is neither bound nor freed within or beyond any perceptibility, because any starting point of any material process is without own-being. Any **end of material process** is likewise without own-being, because in this same way, any truly profound explicitness of being, being, or presence, cannot exist as any part of a non-existent own-being of some present form. Discursive facts within and of themselves are ephemeron, illusive, and transitory. And **this same applies for any remaining skandhas**, i.e., feeling, perception, impulse, and consciousness. In short...any 'thing' whatsoever. *(i.e. There is no real origination duration, change, cessation of any of the five aggregates, inside or outside, body or mind. All dharma are neither bound (samsara) nor free (Nirvana). They are all not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. Everything is beyond all discrimination, beyond good and bad; in that sense everything is already pure. That is hard to realize.)*

Subhuti: It is hard, it is exceedingly hard Lord, to gain confidence in **perfection of wisdom** if one is unpracticed, has planted no wholesome roots, is in the hands of any friend who may be other than good, has come to be or is under what is descried to be the sway of **Mara**, is lazy or of small vigour, or is not attentive to mindfulness.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. Because purity of form is identical with purity of fruit, and purity of fruit is identical with purity of form. It is thus this purity of form and this purity of fruit can neither be multiplied **nor counted as two, nor are these one** divided. And Subhuti, not even can these be counted as one, as these have no basis, no ground from which to determine any singleness. Neither can these be broken, nor cut apart. It is thus, as this purity of form comes from purity of fruit, and purity of this fruit from this purity of form. And the same relevance exists between purity of form and purity of **all-knowledge**. **The same applies to any other skandhas whatsoever.** *(i.e. Purity of form, our own real nature, and purity of fruit / all knowledge, the real nature of a Buddha, are not separate/different, but still not the same. They are interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. In short, we already have this Buddha-nature, it is just a matter of realizing this. That is what is hard to see.)*

Sariputra: **Fathomless**, O Lord, is **perfection of wisdom**!

The Lord: **From purity is revealed dissolution of defilement and obscurity.** *(i.e. It is by realizing the real nature of our own Buddha-nature that the three poisons, all defilements, automatically evaporate fault of nutriment.)*

Sariputra: A source of illumination beyond any source is **perfection of wisdom**

The Lord: **From purity.**

Sariputra: A light is **perfect wisdom**.

The Lord: **From purity.**

Sariputra: Not subject to rebirth is **perfect wisdom.**

The Lord: **From purity.**

Sariputra: Free from defilement is **perfect wisdom.**

The Lord: **From purity.**

Sariputra: Here is neither attainment nor reunion as **perfect wisdom.**

The Lord: **From purity.**

Sariputra: **Perfect wisdom** does not reproduce anyself.

The Lord: **From purity.**

Sariputra: Here is absolutely no rebirth of **perfect wisdom**, whether in any world of sense-desire, or in any world of form, or in any formless world.

The Lord: **From purity.**

Sariputra: **Perfect wisdom** neither knows or perceives.

The Lord: **From purity.**

Sariputra: What does **perfect wisdom** neither know nor perceive?

The Lord: Form, and the other skandhas. And why? **From purity.**

Sariputra: **Perfect wisdom** neither helps nor hinders **all-knowledge.**

The Lord: **From purity.**

Sariputra: **Perfect wisdom** neither gains nor abandons any dharma.

The Lord: **From purity.**

Subhuti: The purity of form, etc., is due to purity of self.

The Lord: **Because such is absolutely pure.**

Subhuti: The purity of fruit, and purity of **all-knowledge**, are due to purity of self.

The Lord: **Because of such absolute purity.**

Subhuti: The absence of attainment and reunion is due to purity of self.

The Lord: **Because of such absolute purity.**

Subhuti: The **boundlessness** of form, etc., is due to **boundlessness** of self.

The Lord: **Because of such absolute purity.**

Subhuti: Any **Bodhisattva** who understands such thus, is **perfect wisdom.**

The Lord: **Because of such absolute purity.**

Subhuti: Moreover, **perfection of wisdom** does not stand on any shore on this side, nor on any shore beyond, nor athwart the two.

The Lord: **Because of such absolute purity.**

Subhuti: A **Bodhisattva** treating even insight as any object of perception, hereby parts from **perfection of wisdom**, and gets far away from such.

[Transcending more and more subtle attachments, by realizing their real nature; using the Middle Way: nothing to accept, nothing to reject]

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti. For also **names**, as any things whatsoever are called and assumingly adjudicated as such, and **signs**, as any one thing or group of things owing or lending any more or less or even equal substantialness or reality to another, are **sources of attachment**.

Subhuti: It is wonderful, O Lord, to see any extent to which **perfection of wisdom** is well learned, well explained, well rounded off. The Lord even announces these sources of attachment.

Sariputra: Which, Subhuti, are these attachments?

Subhuti: It is an attachment **if one perceives any skandhas** are **empty**, or past dharmas are past dharmas, future dharmas are future dharmas, and present dharmas are present dharmas. **Such are merely names**. It is an attachment **if one forms any notion such as "someone who belongs to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas begets a great a heap of merit through one's first production of any thought of enlightenment."** **Such are merely signs**.

Sakra: In which manner, Subhuti, is **any thought of enlightenment a source of attachment?**

Subhuti: One is attached as one perceives of any thought of enlightenment as "this is a [any] first thought of enlightenment," and one now thinks to convert such **to full enlightenment** while conscious one is doing so. For it is quite impossible to **turn over** essential original nature of thought, by thought. Any thought or thing neither is nor is not as **truth and reality**, as one is merely aware as such, and merely indicates in some way or fashion, such to such ('others') within **Suchness**.

To reveal or have such revealed in this way, one does not waste any self or thing away, and the manner which one rouses others to **Suchness** is the sanction of Buddhas. As such, one succeeds in abandoning any and all points of attachment. *(i.e. It is by realizing the emptiness of all dharma, their already pure nature, that any attachment automatically drop by themselves fault of nutriments. There is nothing to accept or get or do, nothing to reject or drop or not-do. Everything is already pure.)*

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti, you make **Bodhisattvas** aware of these points of attachment. I now announce other, **more subtle attachments**. Listen to these well, and pay good attention as I teach these to you.

Say on, O Lord, and the Venerable **Subhuti** listened in silence.

The Lord: Here Subhuti, any son or daughter of good family, full of faith, attends to Tathagata through some **sign**. But, so many **signs**, so many attachments! Such as this is also, Subhuti, **from signs comes attachment**. It is in this way of being, as this one is conscious, that one rejoices in all dharmas with no outflows of Buddhas and Lords thought of as either past, or of some future or even this present. After such rejoicing one simply turns over **into full enlightenment** any wholesome root which is associated with one's act of jubilation. As a matter of difference however, this true nature of even these dharmas is **neither past, nor future, nor present**; for such lie quite outside any of these three periods called time. For this reason such cannot be converted, for as **Suchness** this quite simple truth is such as **any dharmas whatsoever cannot be treated as any sign, nor as any objective support, and in absolute truth can neither be seen**, nor heard, nor felt, nor known, for any and all of these involve one's illusive self in this much more complicated process of being as, perhaps, over and against this simple nature as such.

(i.e. Even subtle dharma like space time causality are empty of inherent existence. There is no objective perception of any kind of dharma. All perceptions are conditioned by already accumulated karma which act like filters, like veils, like conditioning. Everything we perceive or think is empty. There is no way around this. That is karma. In other terms, the world and mind are interdependent. One cannot exist without the other; one implies the other. They are not separate/different, but still not the same. They are conceptually interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. That is what has to be directly realized. And by realizing this we realize that everything is beyond discrimination, beyond any conceptualization, that everything is already pure; that our own nature is the Buddha-nature.)

[All attachments drop by themselves because there is no “essential nature” to get attached to]

Subhuti: Beyond any depth, beyond any presence, O Lord, is **essential original nature of dharmas**.

The Lord: Because such is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable.

Subhuti: **Unfathomable** is **essential nature** of **perfect wisdom**.

The Lord: As any and all **essential nature** is pure and isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, here is revealed **perfection of wisdom** as deepening toward **essential nature**, yet not as **perfect wisdom**.

Subhuti: Isolated-inaccessible-not-findable is **essential nature** as **perfect wisdom**. I pay homage to **perfection of wisdom**.

The Lord: Also all dharmas are isolated-inaccessible-not-findable as **essential nature**. And **the isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of essential nature to all dharmas is identical with perfection of wisdom**. For **Tathagatas fully know all dharmas as not made**.

Subhuti: Here do all dharmas have the character of not being fully known by the Tathagatas?

The Lord: It is just through **essential nature** these dharmas are not some'thing'. Nature for such as these is no-nature, and no-nature are these as nature. All dharmas have one mark only, i.e. no mark. It is for such a reason all dharmas have a character of not being fully known by Tathagatas. Here are no two natures of dharma, but just one single one is nature of all dharmas. And nature of all dharmas is not nature, and no-nature is their nature. It is thus all these points of attachment are abandoned. *(i.e. All dharma are empty of inherent existence, there is no exception at all. Even the most subtle ones.)*

Subhuti: Deepening still, O Lord, is **perfection of wisdom**.

The Lord: Through depth such as this is **like unto space**. *(i.e. A non-affirmative negation. Nothing to grasp at all. No absolute, only adapted skillful means.)*

Subhuti: Hard to understand, O Lord, is **perfection of wisdom**.

The Lord: Nothing is fully known by the enlightened.

Subhuti: **Unthinkable**, O Lord, is **perfection of wisdom**.

The Lord: **Perfection of wisdom** is neither some'thing' thought can know, nor which thought may even have any access to. *(i.e. There is no essential nature to discover.)*

Subhuti: As such, not some'thing' made is **perfection of wisdom**, O Lord.

The Lord: As such, neither can maker be apprehended nor any'thing' be made. *(i.e. Emptiness of the subject, object and action.)*

Subhuti: How under these or any circumstances, does any **Bodhisattva** course as **perfect wisdom**?

The Lord: A **Bodhisattva** courses as **perfect wisdom** if, while coursing one does not course in skandhas; or if one does not course in any conviction such as skandhas are impermanent or are **empty**, or these are neither defective nor entire. And if one does not even course in any conviction such as form is neither any defectiveness nor entirety of itself as form, and the same for any 'other' skandhas, one courses as **perfect wisdom**, but only inasmuch as any perceptible manifestation to any of us may allow, or to such a greater or lesser degree as one may for one's self make perceptible. Whatsoever degree this may or may not come to be, to be sure **perfect wisdom** is beyond even such. *(i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. Abiding without abiding.)*

Subhuti: It is wonderful, O Lord, how well such reasons for attachment and **non-attachment** of **Bodhisattvas** is explained.

The Lord: One courses in **perfect wisdom** if one does not course in any idea such as form is with attachment, or without attachment. And as for form, so for any other skandhas, the sight organ, etc., to even such as feeling born from eye contact; so for any physical elements, **the six perfections**, the thirty-seven wings of enlightenment, the

powers, any grounds of self-confidence, any analytical knowledge, the eighteen special Buddha-dharmas and fruits of holy life, from the fruit of a Stream-winner to **all-knowledge**. When one courses thus, a **Bodhisattva** does not generate attachment to anything, from form to **all-knowledge**. For **all-knowledge** is unattached, it is neither bound nor freed, and here is no-thing whatsoever which can rise above or beyond this, such as this is, even unto any self. It is thus, Subhuti, **Bodhisattvas** course in **perfect wisdom** through rising completely above any and all attachments. [196] (*i.e. Everything is already pure, beyond all discrimination. There is nothing to accept, nothing to reject. No absolute, only adapted skillful means.*)

[There is nothing to accept or reject; everything is empty like space, like an echo]

Subhuti: It is wonderful, O Lord, how deep is this Dharma, I mean **perfection of wisdom**. Demonstration neither diminishes nor increases this. Non-demonstration also **neither diminishes nor increases** this.

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti. It is **just as if any Tathagatas, during one's entire life, speak in praise of space**, without hereby increasing the volume of space; and space does not diminish either, while one is not speaking in praise for it. Or, it is as with an illusory man. Praise neither penetrates him nor wins him over. When here is no praise he is neither affected, nor frustrated. So, true nature of any or all dharmas is just so, whether such gets demonstrated or not.

Subhuti: A doer of what is hard is any **Bodhisattva** who, while coursing in **perfection of wisdom**, **neither loses heart nor gets elated; who persists in making endeavours about this and does not turn back**. Any development toward revealing **perfect wisdom** through dissolution of, or as any and all obscurity, is **like some sort of development toward space**. Homage is paid to any **Bodhisattvas** who are armed with this armor. For with space these want to be armed when, for the sake of beings these put on the armor. Armed with great armor is a **Bodhisattva**, a liberator is any **Bodhisattva** when one wants to be armed with an armor, and win **full enlightenment** for the sake of beings who **are like space**, who are like the realm of dharma. Such is one who wants to liberate like unto space, one who aspires even to get rid of space, one who has won this armor of this great perfection of vigor, this **Bodhisattva** who is armed with this armor for the sake of beings who are like unto space, who are like unto this realm of Dharma.

Hereupon a certain monk saluted the Lord with folded hands and said to the Lord: I pay homage, O Lord, to **perfection of wisdom!** For such **neither produces nor stops any dharma whatsoever**. (*i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting.*)

Sakra: If someone, holy Subhuti, makes **efforts** about this **perfection of wisdom**, what are these efforts about...or toward?

Subhuti: **One makes efforts about or toward space**. And one makes one's efforts about or toward a mere vacuity if one decides to train as **perfect wisdom** or to work toward such as **perfection of wisdom**.

Sakra: Please, O Lord, command me to shelter, defend and protect any son or daughter of good family who bears in mind this **perfection of wisdom!**

Subhuti: Sakra, can you see any dharma which you intend to shelter, defend and protect?

Sakra: Not so, holy Subhuti.

Subhuti: **So when a Bodhisattva stands in perfection of wisdom as this is being expounded, just this is one's shelter, defense and protection**. On the other hand, if and when one is lacking in view of **perfect wisdom**, beings and ghosts looking for entry will gain entrance into one such as this. One does, however, want to arrange shelter, defense and protection for a **Bodhisattva** coursing in view of **perfect wisdom**. What do you think, Kausika, are you able to arrange shelter, defense and protection for **an echo**?

Sakra: Not so, holy Subhuti.

Subhuti: Just so, any **Bodhisattva** coursing and dwelling in view of **perfect wisdom**, **comprehends all dharmas are like an echo**. One does not think about such, does not review, identify, or perceive such, and knows such dharmas

do not exist, their reality does not appear, cannot be found, cannot be got at. If one dwells thus, one courses in view of [perfect wisdom](#).

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Conclusion

Hereupon and through the Buddha's might *the four Great Kings* in this [great trichiliocosm](#), and *all these Sakras, Chiefs of Gods*, and *all these great Brahma Gods*, and *Sahapati, the great Brahma* -all came to this place the Lord is. Reverently these are saluting the Lord's feet with their heads and are walking three times round the Lord, and are now standing on one side. Through the Buddha's might and through his miraculous power their minds were impressed by sight of a thousand Buddhas.

In these very words, by these monks called Subhuti, etc., is this very [perfection of wisdom](#) being expounded, just this very chapter of [perfection of wisdom](#). With reference to just this these Sakras, Chiefs of Gods, ask questions and counter-questions. At this very spot of earth is just this [perfection of wisdom](#) being taught. Maitreya also, the [Bodhisattva](#), the [great being](#) will, as he wins the supreme enlightenment at this very spot of earth, teach this very same [perfection of wisdom](#).

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Chapter IX – [Pointing a finger at this perfection of wisdom; trying to describe what is beyond all conceptualization, all discrimination]

[Everything is merely imputed by the mind, conventional conceptual designation, beyond all discrimination, already pure, stainless – there is nothing to accept, nothing to reject]

Go to verses

Subhuti: To call this 'perfect wisdom,' O Lord, is **merely giving this a name**. And what this name corresponds to cannot be got at. One speaks of a 'name' with reference to any merely nominal entity. Even **perfection of wisdom** cannot be found or got at. In so far as this is a word, in so far as this is **perfect wisdom**; in so far as this is **perfect wisdom**, in so far as this is a word. **No duality of dharmas between these two can either be found or got at**. For what reason does Maitreya, the **Bodhisattva**, the **great being**, as he wins the supreme enlightenment, preach just this very same **perfection of wisdom** at this very spot of earth in just these same words?

The Lord: The reason is Maitreya will give cause to this fading away of **any and all obscurations** to his understanding, fully enlightened, the fact **these skandhas are neither permanent nor impermanent, for such are neither bound nor freed, as these are absolutely pure**.

Subhuti: Perfectly pure indeed is **perfection of wisdom**.

The Lord: **Perfect wisdom** is perfectly pure as **any and all skandhas are pure**, and so, do to non-production are perfectly pure, their non-stopping, their non-defilement and their non-purification. This is **pure as space** is pure and skandhas are stainless, and any defiling forces cannot in truth take hold of such as these. **Perfect wisdom** is perfectly pure for, like space or an echo, such is unutterable, incommunicable, and offers no basis for apprehension. Such is perfectly pure as being not covered by any dharma, either stained or stainless.

[The most perfect wish-fulfilling gem can attract much hostility]

Subhuti: It is indeed **a great gain** to these sons and daughters of good family such as these even come to hear of such **perfection of wisdom**. How much greater the gain as these take up, bear in mind, recite, study, spread, teach, explain and master this. Their eyes, ears, nose, tongues and bodies come to be free from disease, and their minds free from stupefaction. These do not die any violent death. Many thousands of Gods follow closely behind. Whenever, on the eight, fourteenth and fifteenth day, one talks Dharma, any son or daughter of good family teaches **perfection of wisdom**, so here as well one begets a great deal of merit.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. Many thousands of Gods, Subhuti, follow closely behind this son or daughter of good family, and many thousands of Gods come to this place as **perfect wisdom** is being elucidated and revealed. Desirous of hearing Dharma, these, all of these, protect any preacher of Dharma who teaches **perfection of wisdom** to any with right intentions and the propensity to listen and learn. For **perfect wisdom** is most precious in the world with its Gods, beings and Asuras. This also is a reason why such a person begets a different type of merit than any which might be considered as great merit. **On the other hand, here also are many obstacles to this deep perfection of wisdom** being written, taken up, borne in mind, recited, studied, spread, developed, explained and repeated. **For very precious things provoke much hostility**. The more excellent such teachings are, the more violent the hostility. But this is most precious in entire world systems, this **perfection of wisdom** which is being undertaken for the benefit and happiness of these worlds by showing all dharmas as being neither produced nor destroyed, neither defiled nor purified. And **perfect wisdom** does not cling to any dharma, nor defile any dharma, nor take hold of any dharma. Any and all dharmas neither exist nor are any got at. As it is not apprehended **perfection of wisdom** is without any stain. 'To be free from stains,' is the same thing as **perfect wisdom** and it is the same thing such as skandhas are free from stains as **perfect wisdom** is without any stain. A **Bodhisattva** courses in **perfect wisdom** if one does not perceive even this, for beyond perception and concepts is **perfect wisdom**. Moreover, this **perfection of wisdom** neither enters nor places anything like 'itself' into any dharma, neither reveals nor defines any dharma, and neither brings in any dharma nor carries one away.

The Second Turning of the Wheel of Dharma [while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action]

So, hereupon a great many thousands of Gods in this intermediate realm call out aloud with cries of joy, waving their garments, and saying: We now indeed see this second turning of the wheel of dharma taking place in Jambudvipa!

The Lord: This, Subhuti, is not the second turning of the wheel of dharma. No dharma can be turned forwards or backwards. Just this is a Bodhisattva's perfection of wisdom...just this approaches the pinnacle of perception and concept as this great perfection. This is beyond any such thing as turning. (*i.e. This is just another more subtle adapted skillful means. One should not grasp at this as any kind of absolute truth either. One should use this skillful means while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.*)

[Another translation: "This... is not the second turning of the wheel of dharma. No dharma can be turned forwards or backwards. Just this is the Bodhisattva's perfection of wisdom" (Perfection, 1973: 150).
– from [Streng's article, quote #7](#)]

Subhuti: This is a great perfection of any Bodhisattva who, unattached to all dharmas, wants to know full enlightenment, and who yet is not enlightened about any dharma, or who turns the wheel of dharma and yet does not show up any dharma. For no dharma is here got at, no dharma is indicated, and no dharma moves on any dharma. For absolutely, reproduction is alien to all dharmas. Nor does, nor can any dharma turn back any other dharma. From the beginningless beginning any and all dharmas are not being reproduced, since their essential nature is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. For emptiness does neither proceed nor recede, and such holds good also for the Signless and the Wishless. To demonstrate this is to demonstrate all dharmas. But no one has demonstrated this, no one has heard this, no one has received this, and no one realizes this, in this past, present or future. Nor by this demonstration of dharma does anyone ever go to Nirvana. Nor by this demonstration of dharma has anyone ever been made worthy of gifts.

Modes and Qualities of The perfection of wisdom

Subhuti:

- This is perfection of such as no-thing whatsoever is not, as space is not something which is.
- Perfection of wisdom equals any such as unequalled, dharmas are not apprehended.
- Perfection of wisdom is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, on account of absolute *emptiness*.
- Perfection of wisdom cannot be crushed, as dharmas are not apprehended.
- Perfection of wisdom is trackless, as both body and mind are absent.
- Perfection of wisdom has no own-being, neither comes nor goes.
- Perfection of wisdom is inexpressible, as any dharmas are not discriminated.
- Perfection of wisdom is nameless, as any skandhas whatsoever cannot be apprehended.
- Perfection of wisdom does not go away, as having not come hither, no dharma ever goes away.
- One cannot partake of this perfection of wisdom, as no dharma can be seized.
- Perfection of wisdom is inexhaustible, as indelible to inexhaustible dharma.
- Perfection of wisdom has no genesis, as no dharma ever really comes about.
- Perfection of wisdom does nothing, as no doer can be apprehended.
- Perfection of wisdom does not generate [cognize] anything, as any and all dharmas are without self.
- Perfection of wisdom does not pass on, as here is no genesis of decease or rebirth.
- Perfection of wisdom does not discipline, as this past, future and present periods are not apprehended.
- Perfection of wisdom is as a dream, an echo, a reflected image, a mirage, or an illusion, and is indicated as precision of non-production.
- Perfection of wisdom is free from greed, hate, and delusion, as greed, hate, and delusion have no own-being.
- Perfection of wisdom knows no purification, as no possible receptacle [which might have to be purified] can be apprehended.
- Perfection of wisdom is spotless, as space is spotless.
- Perfection of wisdom is free from impediments, as spontaneously present throughout and beyond any and all mental attitudes to dharmas.
- Perfection of wisdom has no mental attitude, as it is imperturbable.
- Perfection of wisdom is unshakeable, as is stability of any realm of dharma.
- Perfection of wisdom knows no greed, as here is no falseness in dharmas.
- Perfection of wisdom does not rise up, as here is no discrimination in dharmas.
- Perfection of wisdom is quiet, as no sign is apprehended as all dharmas.
- Perfection of wisdom is faultless, as perfection of all virtues.
- Perfection of wisdom is undefiled, as imagination is something which is not.
- Neither living nor dying being is found as perfection of wisdom, as the reality-limit.
- Perfection of wisdom is unlimited, as the manifestation of all dharmas does not rise up.

[Another translation: The perfection of the bodhisattva has no mental attitude, because it is imperturbable. This perfection is unshakeable, in consequence of the stability of the realm of dharma... This perfection is quieted, because no sign is apprehended in all dharmas. This perfection is faultless, as the perfection of all virtues. This perfection is undefiled, because imagination is not something that is not. No living being is [ultimately] found in this perfection, because of the reality-limit. This perfection is unlimited because the manifestation of all dharmas does not rise up (Perfection, 1973: 151-152). – from Streng's article, quote #6]

- Perfection of wisdom does not follow after duality of opposites, as such does not settle down in any or all dharmas.
- Perfection of wisdom is undifferentiated, as all dharmas are still but speciously indicated.
- Perfection of wisdom is untarnished, as such is free from any longing for some jewel of Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas.
- Perfection of wisdom is undiscriminated, as this is basic identity to all which is discriminated.
- Perfection of wisdom is infinite, as any nature of dharma is unlimited.

- Perfection of wisdom is unattached, as this is non-attachment to all dharmas.
- Perfection of wisdom is unconditioned, as all dharmas are impermanent and merely an indication of such as this is.
- Perfection of wisdom is as space, as any nature of dharma is identical as impermanence.
- Perfection of wisdom is Empty, as any or all dharmas are not apprehended.
- Perfection of wisdom is not-self, as here is no settling down in any or all dharmas.
- Perfection of wisdom is markless, as here is no reproduction in dharmas.

- Perfection of this is of total emptiness, as endless and boundless.
- Perfection of this is as the wings of enlightenment, such as is pillars of mindfulness, etc., as these cannot be apprehended.
- This is perfection of Emptiness, of the Signless, of the Wishless, as the three doors to deliverance cannot be apprehended.
- This is perfection of the eight deliverances, as these cannot be apprehended.
- This is perfection of the nine successive stations, as the first trance, etc., cannot be apprehended.
- This is perfection of the four Truths, as ill, old age and death cannot be apprehended.
- This is perfection of the ten perfections, as giving, etc., cannot be apprehended.
- This is perfection of the ten powers, as such cannot be crushed.
- This is perfection of the four grounds of self-confidence, as absolutely such cannot be cowed.
- This is perfection of the analytical knowledges, as such is unobstructed when unattached to all-knowledge.
- This is perfection of all the special Buddha-dharmas, as these transcend all counting.
- This is perfection of Suchness as Tathagatas, as here is no falseness in any and all dharmas.
- This is perfection of any as Self-existent, as all dharmas have not own-being.
- Perfection of wisdom is perfection of cognition of all-knowing, as such is aware within all of any modes of any own-being of all dharma.

(i.e. All of these are more and more subtle ways at pointing at the moon. They are characterized by realizing the inseparability of appearances and emptiness of more and more subtle objects of the three worlds.)

Chapter X – [Virtues of sons and daughters of good family]

[Acceptation or not of the perfection of wisdom depends on already accumulated karma]

[Go to verses](#)

So now this thought is occurring to *Sakra, Chief of Gods*: These who come to hear of [perfection of wisdom](#) act in consideration and view of what is quite mundanely considered 'former' Jinas. These herein continue endlessly planting wholesome roots in view of countless Buddhas, take hold of, and are well taken hold of by good friends. Possessed of siddhis which are eventually realized as already in place beyond any common worldly determination as to why or how any dharma whatsoever comes to be, these who, taking up this [perfection of wisdom](#) bear in mind, study, spread and explain this, even now perform such acts.

In addition and also beyond any conscious or discursive efforts as such, these beings simultaneously train in [Thusness](#) and progress in [Thusness](#), yet make no efforts whatsoever about [Thusness](#). As thought, word, or concept, such is not inherent to anything from beyond any beginning yet effortlessly cognized as such, for as propensity and intent do come to allow, eventually is thus understood. [These beings are endowed with more than trifling wholesome roots.](#) These are beings honoring many Buddhas, and who again and again question these. [It is just perfection of wisdom](#) which these have heard in any past and yet still hear in this presence of manifest/unmanifest Tathagatas. These beings plant wholesome roots in view of all Buddhas. So, this is simply the way which these sons and daughters of good family are. As [just this perfection of wisdom](#) is being taught, these explain, understand and repeat this, do not become cowed nor stolid, do not become cast down nor depressed, do not turn their minds away from this nor have their backs broken, and as well, do not tremble, neither be frightened nor terrified.

Sariputra, now reading Sakra's thoughts says: As an [irreversible Bodhisattva](#) any person becomes and is so regarded who, when [just this deep perfection of wisdom](#) is being taught and explained, has faith in it, and, trusting, firmly believing, this one's heart full of serene faith, reveals to all sentient beings [bodhicitta](#), a thought directed towards enlightenment, takes up, expounds, reveals, writes down, repeats, and/or develops this [perfection of wisdom](#), trains in [Thusness](#), progresses toward [Thusness](#), and yet makes no effort about [Thusness](#) as basis or object.

For this [perfection of wisdom](#) is exceedingly profound and herein [someone with diminutive wholesome roots](#), who is [unwilling to ask questions](#), learns nothing when face to face with any Buddhas and Lords in any time and who [does not practice](#) as yet in any time, [cannot just here believe](#) in this very [profound perfection of wisdom](#).

[As to any who neither believe in this nor understand this, and who decide to reject this](#) within these three times, these reject this [deep perfection of wisdom](#) as this is being taught, and [this in consequence of inadequacy as regards their development of wholesome roots](#). For any who have not practiced do not now practice, and will not practice, such as these cannot believe in this [perfection of wisdom](#). As these reject this now, these reject this equally in any past, for what's present is equally past as is likewise and at once this future. To see now, Sakra, is ever present in any mere thought of [three times](#). For what seems passed only seems passed as any present thought could perceive, as well as any future which ever was to be. This is the reason why as this [deep perfection of wisdom](#) is being taught, in any time whatsoever [these have no faith, or patience, or pleasure, or desire-to-do, no vigour, no vigilance or resolve](#). In any past as well, these presently, then, question neither Buddhas, the Lords, nor their [disciples](#).

Sakra: Deep, indeed exceedingly profound, O holy Sariputra, is [perfection of wisdom](#). So this is not at all astonishing, even as this is being taught that [a Bodhisattva might not believe in this, if one did not practice in this past.](#)

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Sakra now said to the Lord: I pay homage, O Lord, to **perfection of wisdom**! One pays homage to **cognition of all-knowing** as one pays homage to **perfection of wisdom**.

The Lord: So it is. For from this comes forth **all-knowledge** of Buddhas, the Lords, and, conversely, **perfection of wisdom** is brought about as such which comes forth from **cognition of all-knowing**. This is why one aspires to course, stand, progress, and make efforts in **perfection of wisdom**.

Sakra: How does a **Bodhisattva** coursing in **perfection of wisdom**, become one who stands in **perfect wisdom**? How does one make efforts in regards to **perfection of wisdom**?

The Lord: Well said, well said, Kausika. Well said, again, well said, Kausika, since you have decided to question Tathagata about this matter, for in this questioning you have been inspired by Buddha's might. Here, Kausika, a **Bodhisattva** coursing in, or as **perfect wisdom** does not make any stand in form, feeling, perception, impulse or **consciousness**, does not develop as any basis any notion such as 'this is form, this is feeling, this is perception, this is impulse', or 'this is consciousness'...for this means one makes efforts about any or all of these as form, feeling, perception, impulse, or consciousness. One does not apply oneself to any notion such as this is form, this is feeling, etc. Insofar as one does not apply oneself to any notion such as 'this is form, this is feeling, etc.', one does not stand in any notion such as 'this is form, this is feeling, etc.' **Thus, one is known as one standing in perfect wisdom, thusly one makes efforts in or as perfect wisdom.**

Subhuti: Here a simile from a song of old presents to mind:

A certain devata, in the far extreme of the night, her extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta's Grove, went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to him, she stood to one side. As she was standing there, she said to him, "**Tell me, dear sir, how you crossed over the flood.**"

"I crossed over the flood without pushing forward, without staying in place."

"**But how, dear sir,** did you cross over the flood without pushing forward, without staying in place?"

"When I pushed forward, I was whirled about.

When I stayed in place, I sank.

And so I crossed over the flood without pushing forward, without staying in place."

The devata: "At long last I see a brahman totally unbound, who without pushing forward, without staying in place, has crossed over the entanglements of the world." That is what the devata said. (*i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. Nothing to do, nothing to not do.*)

The Teacher approved. Realizing that "The Teacher has approved of me," she bowed down to him, circumambulated him -- keeping him to her right -- and then vanished right there.

Sariputra:

- Deep, O Lord, is perfection of wisdom.
- Hard to fathom is perfection of wisdom.
- Hard to grasp is perfection of wisdom.
- **Unlimited** is perfection of wisdom.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra. One does not stand in any notion such as "form, feeling, perception, impulse, or consciousness, is deep." Insofar as one does not stand in any such notion as, 'one makes efforts about form, etc.' one does not make efforts about any such notion as "form, etc., is deep." In so far as one makes no efforts about any such notion, one does not stand in any notion as "form, etc., is deep."

[How to be sure one is ready to receive the teachings about the perfection of wisdom]

Sariputra: Only when presented to an irreversible Bodhisattva, to any Bodhisattva predestined to enlightenment, is deep perfection of wisdom understood, and only so may this herein be taught. For such do not hesitate, do not doubt, do not get stupefied, and not dispute this.

Sakra: What is the fault in teaching this perfection of wisdom in front of an unpredestined Bodhisattva?

Sariputra: If Kausika, unpredestined, a Bodhisattva obtains this perfection of wisdom, for vision, praise, worship and hearing, and if one remains unafraid as one hears this, one can be sure this one comes from afar, is set out for long in this vehicle, and this one's wholesome roots are well matured. It is not long from now onwards until this one receives the prediction to supreme enlightenment. One can be sure this prediction is near, and comes to one before one passes by one, two or three Tathagatas. And, of course, one pleases the Tathagatas whom one passes by, pleases these permanently, and so one sees to it the vision of these Tathagatas bears the fruit of the prediction, so it leads one to the prediction to supreme enlightenment [itself]. Once come from afar, O Lord, set out for long in this great vehicle, with wholesome roots well matured is this Bodhisattva obtaining this perfection of wisdom for vision, praise, worship, hearing and understanding. How much more so if one not only hears this, but also takes this up, bears this in mind, preaches, studies, spreads, explains and repeats such as this.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra, as you have said.

[How to know someone is near enlightenment]

Sariputra: A simile or example flashes into my mind, O Lord. Just as we are sure a person belonging to this vehicle of Bodhisattvas, when one dreams that one sits on the terrace of enlightenment, is actually near to supreme enlightenment...just so, we can be sure a person who fulfils these conditions just outlined has come from afar, and is set out for long in the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas, and is near this prediction to enlightenment. We can be sure Buddhas, the Lords, will predict this Bodhisattva to win full enlightenment. For a Bodhisattva is set out for long in this vehicle, and one's wholesome roots are mature, if one gets to this deep perfection of wisdom, even if one gets no further than hearing this. How much more so if one would also bear it in mind, etc., to: repeat it.

For the thoughts of beings not without an abundance of accumulations of karma conducive to the ruin of dharma become adverse to this deep perfection of wisdom, do sway away from this. Through the abundance of such karma, beings who do not collect wholesome roots find neither satisfaction nor faith in this reality-limit. But any such beings who do find satisfaction and faith in this are people who collected wholesome roots, well collected these.

[Another translation: "through the abundance of that karma beings who have not collected wholesome roots will find no satisfaction nor faith in this reality-limit. But those who find satisfaction and faith in it are people who have collected wholesome roots, well collected them" (Perfection, 1973: 155-156). – from [Streng's article, quote #5](#)]

A person coming out of a huge wild forest, one hundred miles big, up to a thousand miles big, might see certain signs which indicate a town, or other inhabited place, -such as cowherds, or cattle keepers, or boundary lines, or gardens, or groves. From these signs one infers the nearness of an inhabited place. One feels happier, and robbers no longer worry this one. Just so a Bodhisattva for whom this deep perfection turns up can know one is quite near to supreme enlightenment, and before long one will receive the prediction to such. One also no longer need be afraid of the level of the Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas. For this sign has appeared to this one, i.e., one has received this deep perfection of wisdom for vision, praise, worship, hearing, and/or understanding.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra. May you make clear also this section. For what you say, and what you will say, is due to the Buddha's might.

Sariputra: A person, desirous of seeing the great ocean, might travel to it. As long as on one's travels one sees a tree, or the sign of a tree, a mountain, or the sign of a mountain, one knows the great ocean is still far away. But when one no longer sees either tree or mountain, one knows the great ocean is quite near to here. For this great

ocean gradually slopes away, and within it there is neither tree nor mountain. So, although one may not yet see the great ocean directly before one's eyes, one nevertheless can be quite certain the ocean is quite near, not much farther away from here. Similar is the case of any Bodhisattva hearing this deep perfection of wisdom. One can know this...even although perhaps one has not yet been face to face with these Tathagatas, and predicted to supreme enlightenment, nevertheless one is quite near this prediction. For one has received this deep perfection of wisdom for vision, praise, worship, hearing, and/or understanding.

Likewise, in this spring, O Lord, as last year's leaves are withered away, one can see sproutings on many trees. The people of Jambudvīpa are glad, because as these see these symptoms in the woods, these ones know soon also flowers and fruits come out. For they see such signs in the trees. Just so, O Lord, one can be sure that a Bodhisattva, when one receives this deep perfection of wisdom, as this even turns up for one, such a one has become matured in one's wholesome roots for a long time. It is just because of the existence of these wholesome roots in such a one, this deep perfection of wisdom has bent over to whoever this is. Then any divinities who see the Buddhas of any past are delighted, overjoyed and enchanted, as these feel surely it is not long until this Bodhisattva receives this prediction to full enlightenment, since also with any Bodhisattvas of any past these are the symptoms of their coming prediction to full enlightenment.

Likewise O Lord, a woman pregnant with a heavy womb, is twisted and all weary, she does not walk about a great deal, takes little food, finds little rest, speaks little, has little strength but many pains, often cries out aloud and abstains from habitual cohabitation. She realizes she experiences all these unpleasant feelings in her body as a result of indulging in unwise attention in the past, practicing it, developing it, making much of it. As these symptoms are being seen in her, one can be sure before long she will give birth to a child. Just so, when for a Bodhisattva this deep perfection of wisdom turns up for the sake of vision, praise, worship, hearing, and/or understanding, and if, as one hears this, one's thought delights in this, and one develops aspirations toward this, so one can be sure before long one will receive prediction to full enlightenment.

[The Bodhisattva Way is efficient because perfectly in accord with reality, because combining both compassion and wisdom all the time]

Subhuti: It is wonderful to see this extent to which the Tathagata well takes hold of Bodhisattvas, well encompasses and favors such as these.

The Lord: This is because these Bodhisattvas practice for the weal and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world. Out of compassion for Gods and men, for the benefit, the weal and happiness of a great mass of people do these want to win supreme enlightenment, and hereafter to demonstrate supreme Dharma.

[The Bodhisattva Way is perfected by staying on the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting; not even emptiness]

Subhuti: How does a Bodhisattva which courses toward perfect wisdom, become increasingly perfect?

The Lord: A Bodhisattva courses toward perfect wisdom as this coursing itself being neither any growth nor any diminution of form, feeling, perception, impulse, and/or consciousness, and is reviewed as one reviews neither dharma nor no-dharma. This is how, and thus one's coursing toward perfect wisdom is realized as increasingly perfect.

Subhuti: This is surely unthinkable.

The Lord: Ultimately, form is as unthinkable as any skandhas, or, things being thought of as going together to make-up other things. As ultimately one perceives neither any nor all of form, feeling, perception, impulse, and/or consciousness as unthinkable, one courses in perfect wisdom.

Sariputra: Who or what with zeal, complete dedication, and earnest devotion is merely aware, even unto emptiness?

The Lord: Any Bodhisattva practicing with zeal, complete dedication, and earnest devotion, in verity even unto *emptiness* as perfect wisdom, is merely aware, even unto *emptiness*.

Sariputra: What is Bodhisattva practice, and what is the meaning of the word 'practice'?

The Lord: A Bodhisattva neither constructs power nor ground such as self-confidence nor Buddha-dharmas, nor even **all-knowledge**...for power or ground as self-confidence, Buddha-dharmas, or even **all-knowledge** is as **unthinkable** as any and all dharmas. Thus as practice, a Bodhisattva courses neither within nor without perfect wisdom. For no true reason is one called Bodhisattva, as such is the meaning of the word 'practice'.

Obstacles to the perfection of wisdom

Subhuti: Deep, O Lord, is one's learning, realizing and understanding as perfection of wisdom is indicated as such. Such is a heap of treasure. Such is a pure heap, as pure as space. It is not surprising many obstacles arise to any reciting, reading, writing, studying, contemplating and/or understanding perfection of wisdom as such.

The Lord: Many obstacles to one's reciting, reading, etc., this perfection of wisdom are always present. For Mara, the Evil One, is seen as making many difficulties, as even here for one of these, one hurries with one's task of copying this out. If one has one month to do it in, or two months, or three months, one need merely carry on with this writing. If one has a year or more, even so one need just carry on with writing perfection of wisdom [since after, or even during this time, one may be slowed or even prevented by any kind of interruptions]. It is a fact, such as in respect of precious things, difficulties are wont to arise.

Subhuti: Here, O Lord, when perfection of wisdom is being studied, Mara, the Evil One, is seen in ways to show zeal, and exert himself to cause difficulties.

The Lord: In spite of this he is powerless to cause really effective obstacles to any Bodhisattva which gives undivided attention to any task. (i.e. Mara is the fruit of our own mind, our own karma. This text uses a lot of unnecessary "baby-talk".)

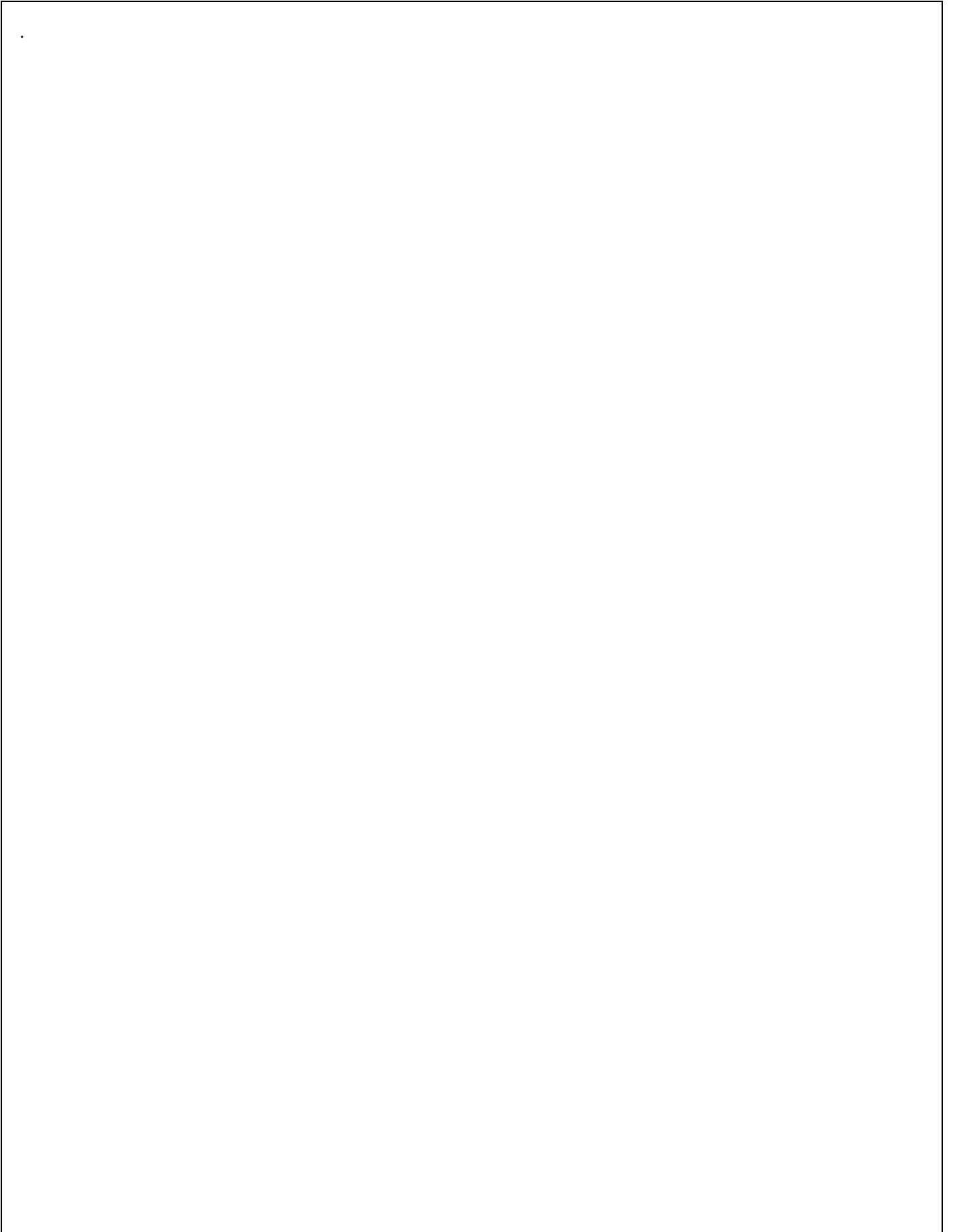
[As he progress, the Bodhisattva is sustained by the feedback received from reality itself, from the reality of his own mind – as one experience the truth about it personally]

Sariputra: O Lord...as Mara the Evil One is seen as any presenting preventative obstacles to this studying perfection of wisdom, how can any beings actually study this, and through whose might can these progress?

The Lord: Through might of Buddhas, Lords, and Tathagatas these study, these progress and train in or as **Thusness**. This same nature of Buddhas and Lords which stands, holds and maintains **immeasurable and incalculable** world-systems, brings to mind and upholds anyone learning and studying perfection of wisdom. Buddhas bring to mind and assist any such as these. It is impossible to cause any obstacle to any beings brought to mind and upheld by Buddhas.

Sariputra: Is this Buddha's might, sustaining power and grace which Bodhisattvas deeply study as perfection of wisdom, and progressively train in or as **Thusness**?

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra. As such, these are known to Tathagatas, these are sustained and seen by Tathagatas, and the Tathagatas behold these with this Buddha eye. And these Bodhisattvas which study perfection of wisdom progressively train in or as **Thusness**, stand as such with no true ground in any decision to enlightenment. Just to study perfection of wisdom without progressively training in or as **Thusness**, these do not stand poised in **Suchness** but nevertheless are known to Tathagatas, sustained and seen by Tathagatas, and the Tathagatas behold these with this Buddha eye. With continual study of perfection of wisdom, the mental excitation is greatly profitable to these, a great advantage, fruit and reward. For, as aiming at ultimate reality, perfection of wisdom is set up for penetration by all beings into **this nature of what dharmas truly are**. (i.e. The Buddha is inside; it is the real nature of our own mind that we have to directly realize. This text uses a lot of unnecessary "baby-talk".)



Prediction about the Spread of the perfection of wisdom

Moreover, these Sutras in accord with **six perfections** continue as such after the parinirvana of Tathagata, appearing in this South. As in this South these spread to this East, and as well this North and West -- at any time this Dharma Vinaya is as freshly made cream, and as good law, dissolves as Dharma-Body (dharmakaya). In equal taste with, as, and by these which put forth right effort, and study, devote, dedicate, and preserve **perfection of wisdom**, are with, as, and by Tathagatas. Tathagatas accord with, sustain and see such as these, and behold these with this Buddha eye.

Sariputra: Will **perfection of wisdom** at the last of time, in the last period, be deeply widespread in this northern direction, **in this northern part of the world**?

The Lord: Even in this North, any which make right efforts deep in **perfection of wisdom**, even as these simply hear this, make this widespread. As set out for long in this vehicle the **Bodhisattvas** who know study this **perfection of wisdom** and beyond even this.

[The Bodhisattva vow]

Sariputra: **Bodhisattvas in this North** which deeply study **perfection of wisdom**, are these many or few?

The Lord: These are many, a good many **Bodhisattvas** in this North. But only a few are among these which deeply study **perfection of wisdom**, and which as this is being taught, are not demoralized by it. As set out for long in this vehicle are known already beings such as these which pursue, question, and worship Tathagatas - one's thus gone as one's thus come. These are as perfect, enhancing as well as benefiting all beings. As such these are, as is all.

Mere awareness and bare realization are these as spontaneously self-existent, primordial and beyond even purity itself. As, for, and to these do Tathagatas speak as, for, and to **all-knowledge**. Even as these pass beyond present births, any thoughts, even unto **all-knowledge** and **perfection of wisdom**, persist by force of habit [**karma**]. And this very discoursing these both discuss and are contented within concerning the ultimate enlightenment. Such as these are **perfection of wisdom** and **all-knowledge** as related to this. These are neither obstructed nor diverted even by **Mara**, much less other beings, whether such use will, power, or mantras. As diamond resolve (avidriya samadana) and irresistibly these approach **full enlightenment**. From hearing **perfection of wisdom** these daughters and sons of good family gain an uncommon degree of zest, confidence and unshakable faith. For all beings these plant wholesome roots. Face to face with Tathagatas, these utter **a vow**: "Coursing in practice of **Bodhisattvas**, we are this we indicate, the way **to full enlightenment** of many hundreds of living beings, yea, many nyutas of kotis of living beings. We indicate perfect enlightenment to these, instigate and empower, help such to come forth, help these to establish such, help these to **irreversible** right effort and action." And as these are thought as my thought, these daughters and sons of good family belong to the **vehicle of Bodhisattvas** who make this vow. As these are confirmed in their faith these attain to rebirth yet in many **Buddha-fields**, and even here come face to face with Tathagatas, which indicate Dharma and as such these hear in deep detail **perfection of wisdom**. In many **Buddha-fields** these indicate this view for all beings as dissolving obstacles to full realization, and help these beings as this quest **for full enlightenment** of all.

Sariputra: It is wonderful to think **this past and future, as present dharma is no-thing**. Tathagatas do not experience such as unaware...no dharma is not cognized, yet beyond even purity...aware as space. Neither is conduct as anything, anywhere, nor any being unaware. Such as these cognize even conduct of **Bodhisattvas** who are zealous for enlightenment, yet even of the slightest earnest intent, for these too exert vigour, if even of slight. And yet O Lord, among these born of good family who at any time deeply study this **perfection of wisdom**, and exert themselves on behalf of **these six perfections** and of the benefit of all beings, and seek, search and strive deeply to obtain **perfection of wisdom**, some still do not obtain this, while others obtain this without striving to get this. What, O Lord, is the reason for this?

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra. **In this past and future, or as present, dharma is nothing.** Tathagatas do not see, hear and feel such as unaware. It is further true at these times in these periods, some **Bodhisattva** who hunt and search for **perfection of wisdom** do not get this. Others do get this without hunting and searching. **These are Bodhisattvas which in this past persistently hunted and searched for this perfection of wisdom. It is of such impetus of this former wholesome root these realize perfection of wisdom, in spite of the fact these do not now hunt and search for this.** And also Sutras different from this, which welcome **perfection of wisdom**, of their own accord come to these. It is a principle Sariputra, a **Bodhisattva** which persistently hunts and searches for **perfection of wisdom**, after one or two births, realize this, also the other Sutras in accord with **perfect wisdom** come to one on their own.

Sariputra: Will only these Sutras in accord with **six perfections** come to this one, and no others?

The Lord: Here also **other profound Sutras** come to this son or daughter of good family of their own accord. It is as a rule Sariputra, that, **Bodhisattvas** which indicate this teaching for others on their way **to full enlightenment**, helping these in their quest for such, help them to irreversibility, and these who also train in this, after these pass through this present birth, on their own these deep Sutras come to these, **Sutras which are in accord with non-apprehension of a basis**, and which **accord with emptiness**, and also **accord with the six perfections**.

Chapter XI – Many obstacles

[Many distractions, discouragement]

Go to verses

Subhuti: The Lord proclaims virtues of sons and daughters of good family. Are any obstacles here which arise in such ones?

The Lord: Many obstacles are here, and are seen and thought of as the deeds of Mara. (i.e. The real nature of Mara is elucidated in Chapter 24)

Subhuti: What kind of obstacles are these?

The Lord: The Bodhisattvas discoursing this perfection of wisdom, either understand this after a long time, or, as understanding is generated, it immediately becomes disturbed. Or some write yawning, laughing and sneering, or study this with thoughts disturbed. Or write with minds on other things, not gaining in mindfulness. These may write as deriding or sneering at one another, or with distracted eyes. This writing is in mutual discord. "We gain no firm footing in it, we derive no enjoyment from it"...with such words these take their leave. As such thoughts derive from a source seemingly devoid of serene faith these think "I am not predestined for perfection of wisdom,"...and get up and leave. Or, as these merely see and think this book does not name the place they're born, does not mention their own name and clan, nor of their mother and father, nor of their family, these may decide to not listen to perfection of wisdom, and take their leave. Each time these take their leave, again and again these take to birth-and-death for as many aeons as they have productions of thought, and still even now, at some point during these aeons these ones may make new efforts. All this, and for what reason? Bodhisattvas refusing to listen deeply to perfection of wisdom cannot go forth to spiritual dharmas, be these worldly or supramundane.

[The distraction of Hinayana training; a total waste of a precious life for a Bodhisattva]

In addition, some of us may or may not recognize whether or not we belong to this vehicle of the Bodhisattvas, and some give up and think to abandon perfection of wisdom...this understanding beyond knowledge which nourishes this cognition of all-knowing. We might decide to look for other Sutras, the understanding of which may or may not come to reveal this uniform awareness for our nourishment, this pure cognition common to beings beyond number, yet exceedingly rare to be found and understood. Indeed, as rare as a turtle which happens upon a single life preserving float amidst an infinite ocean, which ferries it upon its natural currents to a shore of rest and nourishment. Indeed, Subhuti, exceedingly rare is this.

Many of us do not learn and understand perfection of wisdom, and thus presently do not want to train in both worldly and universal spiritual dharmas, nor do we avail ourselves of these. As we do not learn and understand perfection of wisdom, we cannot avail ourselves of worldly or universal spiritual dharmas.

Though all possess this identical potential, some get rid of and abandon perfection of wisdom, which is the root of the comprehension of worldly and universal spiritual dharmas as these are, and instead decide to look for support in what are different branches. As a dog spurns a morsel of food offered by its master, and takes a mouthful of water from a servant instead, just so, beings recognized as implicitly related to this vehicle of Bodhisattvas spurn perfection of wisdom which is the taproot revealing cognizance of all-knowing, yet decide to look for the core, for growth, for Buddhahood, in vehicles of Disciples as Sravakas and PratyekaBuddhas, which corresponds to branches, leaves and foliage. This also may be seen as done to them by Mara.

Again, all beings have equal potential yet do not equally recognize concentrated right effort and mindfulness towards perfection of wisdom and apply this, hereby nourishing cognition of all-knowing. Still most of us at one time or another get rid of, abandon, spurn, or even simply forget perfection of wisdom, and decide to study, as if superior to this, Sutras by which we welcome the level of a Disciple or PratyekaBuddha which are compared to branches, leaves and foliage. A Bodhisattva does not train in the same way in which a being recognized as belonging to the vehicle of a Disciple or PratyekaBuddha is trained.

How does a Disciple and PratyekaBuddha train? Well, I make up my mind thus, following this teacher over here and the knowledge I derive hereof, I in my turn teach others what I come to understand, and so one single self I have tamed, one single self I pacify, one single self I lead to final Nirvana. Thus I undertake exercises and practices which are intended to bring about wholesome roots for the sake of taming myself, pacifying myself, leading myself to Nirvana.

Bodhisattvas train ourselves differently. On the contrary, we train ourselves thus: "To benefit infinite sentient beings equally as one, in coming to realize Suchness as such and indicating such to sentient beings beyond number. This process of perfection of wisdom as well as this Bodhisattva vehicle is being so indicated, shown, and proven as available to all, hereby clears the path for liberation from samsara of infinite sentients and revelation of Nirvana. Also, propensities allowing, karma neutralized...the eventual clearing of obstructions to the reality-limit, any may become revealed to full enlightenment and advancement to parinirvana...the whole immeasurable universe of beings. With this right intention a Bodhisattva engages all the exercises which bring about the wholesome root. But one boasts not regarding this...For imagine a being which, unable to see an elephant, would try to determine it's color and shape. In the darkness this one would touch and examine the foot of the elephant, and decide that the color and shape of the elephant should be inferred from his foot. Is this an intelligent thing to do?"

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: The same is true of any persons who belong to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas, who do not understand this perfection of wisdom and ask no questions.

Yet, while desirous of full enlightenment, these spurn this and prefer to look to the Sutras which welcome the level of Sravakas or PratyekaBuddhas. Also this is -seen- as being done -to- any one of these by Mara. If a person who desires jewels would not look for them in the great ocean, but in a puddle in a cow's footprint, and would thus in effect equate the great ocean with the water in a cow's footprint, would this one be using one's potential for intelligence wisely?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: Well and now, the same applies to any beings which vow to this vehicle of Bodhisattvas which...though we make ourselves available to perfection of wisdom, we nevertheless cut ourselves off from continuous exposure and reference to this, without plunging or probing at all times, in all times exceedingly deeper as a means of perfection to endless, placeless, timeless wisdom.

Yet...we may still prefer the Sutras which welcome any level of Sravakas or PratyekaBuddhas through advocating dwelling in concentrated but unconcerned inactivity, and which do not recommend the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas, but only the taming, appeasing, Nirvana of one single self. The decision to seclusion, to the fruits of a holy life, from the fruit of a Stream-winner to PratyekaBuddhahood, to enter Parinirvana after one has in this very life freed thought from the outflows without further clinging, -that means to be in accord with the level of a Sravaka as Disciple or PratyekaBuddha.

Bodhisattvas do not focus thought only to such as this. For as we have set out in this great vehicle Bodhisattvas don a great armor. Our thoughts are not singularly focused to any unconcernedness whatsoever. For we are concentrated as diamonds, guides of the world, promoters of the world's weal. Here, we continuously and always train in and as these six perfections. But as beings which vow to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas, and without knowing and understanding Sutras which accord with the six perfections spurn perfection of wisdom, and prefer these Sutras which welcome this level of Sravakas as Disciples, or PratyekaBuddha, -our wholesome root is yet immature, our intelligence still obscured and yet lacking in profound qualities, our resoluteness still weak. We may reflect as a mason, or mason's apprentice, who wants to build a palace of the size of the Vaijayanta palace, and who takes its measure from measuring the car of sun or moon. A similar procedure is adopted by us if we are to reject perfection of wisdom and in earnest try to find all-knowledge through Sutras in accord with this level of Sravakas as Disciples, and PratyekaBuddhas, Sutras which recommend the taming, appeasing, and Nirvana of nothing more than one individual being as self only. If we would look for such Sutras and train with these intentions, would these Bodhisattvas, this type which we turn to be, be using much of our intelligence?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: This also is -seen as being- done to such by Mara. In truth and ultimately undeniable my friend, such is done unto ourselves by this turn within and pandering to what is wantonly believed to be the sole needs and comforts of singularity and individual appeasement, and, while yet donning a cloak of austerity, hereby yielding still only a mask of humility...and misleading and contrived wisdom.

So, suppose a person who first sees a universal monarch, and makes determinations from the signs of what is seen in his complexion, shape, beauty and majesty. Then, this person does the same with the commander of a fort. If the person were unable to make a distinction, and then this one were to say to the commander of a fort, just like this is the universal monarch in complexion, shape, beauty and majesty, if this one were to, in other words, equate universal monarch with the commander of a fort, would this be an intelligent thing to do?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: The same applies to persons who avow themselves to this Bodhisattva-vehicle and who in some future reject this perfection of wisdom, and seek for all-knowledge through sutras associated with level of Sravaka as Disciple, or PratyekaBuddha. This also is -seen as- done to these ones by Mara. On the contrary, I certainly do not say, "Bodhisattvas, seek for all-knowledge through the Sutras associated with the level of Sravaka as Disciple or PratyekaBuddha." Bodhisattvas certainly do not go forth to reveal supreme enlightenment unless trained in what Tathagatas have announced in the perfection of wisdom as the skill in means of these Bodhisattvas. For the full knowledge of a Bodhisattva is unknown in other Sutras.

Here now, Subhuti, Tathagatas seeing this advantage in perfection of wisdom, by manifold methods show this to Bodhisattvas, instigate and introduce these ones to this, fills these with enthusiasm about this, make these rejoice at this, entrusts these with this, in the knowledge herein that any Bodhisattva may become irreversible to full enlightenment. Subhuti, do these Bodhisattvas appear to be very intelligent who, having obtained and met with the irreversible, the great vehicle, and then again abandon this, turn away from this, and prefer an inferior vehicle?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: If a starving man refuses superior and excellent food, and prefers to eat inferior and stale food, is he using the full potential of his intelligence?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: Just so, Subhuti, in the future some Bodhisattvas still refuse this perfection of wisdom, and prefer the Sutras associated with the level of Sravaka, the Disciple or PratyekaBuddha, and still seek all-knowledge through Sutras which welcome the level of Disciple or PratyekaBuddha. Do these Bodhisattvas use the full potential of their intelligence?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: Also, this is -seen as- being done to these ones by Mara. A man who had got a priceless gem and who considered it equal to a gem of inferior value and quality, is he using the full potential of his intelligence?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: So, here too, in this future some persons belonging to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas who, though these have got this deep and brightly shining gem of perfect wisdom, nevertheless think this should be considered equal with the vehicle of Sravakas, these Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas, and decide to seek all-knowledge and skill in means on the level of Disciple or PratyekaBuddha. Are these using the full potential of intelligence?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: This also is -seen as- being done to such as these by Mara.

[More distractions]

Moreover Subhuti, as **perfection of wisdom** is being indicated, demonstrated, explained, learned, recited, repeated, or even merely written down, many flashes of insight come up in bewildering multitudes, and these make for **confusion of thought**. This also -is seen as having been- done to us by **Mara**.

Subhuti: Is it at all possible to write down **perfection of wisdom**?

The Lord: No, Subhuti. It is also -seen as- a **deed** of **Mara** as one writes down **perfection of wisdom**, this one either thinks this is **perfection of wisdom** which is written down, or is not **perfection of wisdom** which is written down, or one adheres to **perfection of wisdom** either in the letters, or as something not in the letters.

Moreover Subhuti, while these write down **perfection of wisdom**, our minds are on all sorts of things: places, villages, towns, cities, country districts, nations, royal cities, pleasure groves, preceptors, tales, robbers, bathing places, streets, palanquins, occasions for happiness, occasions for fear, women, men, neuters, unsuitable situations, mother and father, brothers and sisters, friends, maternal relatives, kinsmen, chief wives, sons and daughters, houses, food and drink, clothes, beds, seats, livelihood, obligations, occasions of **greed, hate and delusion**, on right times, lucky times, unlucky times, on songs, music, dances, poems, plays, treatise, business, jokes, musical shows, sorrows, troubles, and...ourselves.

These and other acts of attention **Mara, the Evil One**, -is seen to- arrange as **perfection of wisdom** is being indicated, studied, or merely written down, and thus he -is seen to cause- obstacles and confusion of thought to **Bodhisattvas**. **Bodhisattvas** recognize this as being -merely seen as a **deed** of- **Mara**, and avoid it, mostly by avoiding seeing it as such. [!] In addition, our thoughts may also be on kings, royal princes, elephants, horses, chariots and troops of soldiers. Also this is -seen as having been- done to us by **Mara**. In addition, our thoughts may be on fire, temptations, money, corn and affluence. This also **Mara** is -seen as- doing to him.

Moreover, difficulties arise about gain, honor, robes, alms-bowl, lodging, and medicinal appliances for use in sickness, or alternatively, thoughts relishing gain...honor and fame torment **Bodhisattvas** which indicate, explain, repeat or merely write **perfection of wisdom**. This also is -seen as- **Mara** doing this to us. We recognize and avoid -seeing these as- "deeds of **Mara**".

Furthermore, **Mara, the Evil One**, comes while **Bodhisattvas** indicate, expound, write, etc., **perfection of wisdom**, and he brings along **those very deep Sutras which are in accord with the limits of Sravakas as Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas**. He advises us to...train in these, write, expound, and repeat these, for from this **all-knowledge** is created. But, **Bodhisattvas** skilled in means are not long for these Sutras. For although these indicate **Emptiness**, the **Signless** and **Wishless**, still **any skill in means of Bodhisattvas are neither announced nor alluded to**.

- A **Bodhisattva** which remains without **this more refined knowledge of distinction of the cognition of cognition of skill in means, deeply spurns this true perfection of wisdom,**
- and seeks instead **skill in means in the Sutras which accord with the limitations of Sravakas as Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas.**
- This also is -seen as- **Mara's deed** being done to this **Bodhisattva**.

Sources of Discord between Guide and Pupil

As well, here are deeds which are seen to be of **Mara** and have the potential to ruin any or all chances of cooperation between any guide and pupil. First of all, perhaps the pupil is enthusiastic, and aspires to engage **perfection of wisdom**, but **the guide is indolent**, and does not aspire to demonstrate Dharma.

Or, the guide is untiring, and inspired to indicate **perfection of wisdom**, while **the pupil is tired or too busy**. Secondly, it may be that the pupil is quite diligent, and aspires to engage, to bear in mind, indicate, study, spread, or merely to write about this process of **perfection of wisdom**, is clever, intelligent and blest with good memory; but **the one who may guide moves into a different district, or is unacquainted with main points, unacquainted with details, and without higher knowledge**.

Or, this guide may be untiring, in possession of the higher knowledge, inspired to indicate **perfection of wisdom**; but **the pupil set out for another district, or is unacquainted with main points, unacquainted with details, without higher knowledge**. Further, **the guru may be a person who attaches weight to fleshly things, to gain, honor and robes**, while the pupil is a person of few wishes, easily contented, and quite detached.

Or one or the other or both may be persons unwilling to give away anything of value. This also causes discord, when it is a question of training toward **perfect wisdom**, or of copying this, such as this is. On the other hand, a pupil may be full of faith, inspired by merely hearing of the process of **perfection of wisdom** and of understanding the meaning of this, liberal and **generous**; but **the lama has no faith, is too easily satisfied, and does not aspire to expound** regarding **perfection of wisdom**.

Or, the pupil may be full of faith, and aspire to hear and to understand the meaning; but it may be that **the guru, because some obstacle hinders access to Dharma, does not have these Sutras, or cannot fathom them**; a pupil would obviously be out of touch with a guide who has not obtained these.

Or again, a guide may aspire to point out, while **a pupil is not single-minded and aspiring at least to hear this**. Further, it may be that **the pupil does not want to listen because hindered by sloth, weighed down by bodily fatigue**, but the Rinpoche is willing to point out; conversely, any guide may, although the pupil wants to listen, not want to teach because hindered by sloth or physical fatigue. This discord also makes writing, speaking and study difficult.

Misdirection of Aim

Moreover, while beings write, or indicate **perfection of wisdom**, or train in the process, **someone comes along and belittles life in the hells, in the animal world, among the Pretas and Asuras**, saying "so ill are all these forms of life, so ill are all conditioned things; do make an end to just this length of cloth, and leave these beings to their fate." This also is -seen as- a work of **Mara**.

Or again, **some being comes along and praises life among the Gods**: "So happy are the Gods, so happy is life in the heavens. One will do well here to end sense-desires in the world of sense-desires, enter into the well-known trances in the world of form, and enter into the well-known attainments in the formless world."

Considered in a view with **wisdom**, all this is nothing but rebirth in suffering. The Lord has said: "I do not praise any kind of rebirth in becoming, because this lasts no longer than a finger-snap. For everything conditioned is impermanent.

"Anything causing fear is ill. All in the **triple world** is **empty**. All dharmas are without self. As any of these wise may come to understand all is thus devoid of eternity, is impermanent and ill, doomed to reversal, now these may just here attain to the fruits of holy life, from the fruit of a Stream-winner to Arhatship.

"However, let us now beware of meeting any further with such attainments, which are really failures, and which abound in suffering. But nevertheless, to some **Bodhisattvas** this is a source of anxiety [because these come to feel deterred from the quest **for full enlightenment** in favor of aspiring to rebirth among the Gods.] This also is -seen as- **Mara** doing this." (!)

More Discord between Lama and Pupil

Furthermore, the Lama may be a monk who is fond of solitude while the pupils prefer a communal life. He tells them he will give this **perfection of wisdom** to any coming to where he is, but not to any who do not. In their desire and zeal for dharma which these value they go to where the lama is, and still he gives these no opportunity to learn anything. He is one eager for trifling bits of fleshy things, but these do not want to give him anything that he values. Wherever he goes he is short of food, surrounded by troubles, and in danger of his life. And his pupils hear from others that that place is short of food, full of troubles and dangers to life. And that lama will say to these children of good family: This place is short of food. Of course, all you of good family, you may come here if you wish. But I am afraid that you will regret having come. This is a subtle device by which he outwardly rejects them. In disgust they will interpret these remarks as **signs** of refusal, not as **signs** of a desire to give. Convinced he does not want to give, they do not go to where he is.

Moreover, this lama may have set out for a spot where there is danger from vermin, from beasts of prey, from ghosts. And he yet still moves from there to a wilder place with beasts of prey, snakes and robbers, marked by drought and famine. To these prospective pupils he says: "You are aware, I suppose, in this spot for which we have set out are many dangers, from vermin, beasts of prey, flesh-eating ghosts, and it is swarming with snakes and robbers, it has neither food nor water. So you must be able to experience a great deal of suffering." Thus he outwardly rejects these with a subtle device. Disgusted, they do not go with him, and turn back.

Finally, the teacher may be one of the monks who attaches weight to relations with the friendly families who feed them. All the time he goes to see them, he is kept very busy that way, and refuses those prospective pupils on the ground that, first of all, there is someone I must go and see. This also is a source of discord when this **perfection of wisdom** is being written and studied. This also is -seen as- **Mara's** work. In such ways **Mara** appears to bestir himself to prevent people from learning, studying, teaching and writing this **perfection of wisdom**. Here then, Subhuti, all these factors which prevent cooperation between guide and pupil needs be only recognized as **Mara's** deeds, and being so seen, one is admonished to try to avoid them.

Mara seen as Dissuading from The perfection of wisdom

Subhuti: What, O Lord, is the reason why **Mara** is seen to make such great efforts and bestir himself to prevent, by this or that device, people from learning and studying this process of **perfection of wisdom**?

The Lord: **Perfection of wisdom** is a beginningless and thus endless source of **all-knowledge** of Buddhas, the Lords, which in its turn is the source of endless devotion of Tathagatas, which leads **immeasurable and incalculable** beings to dissolve their **defilements** and obscurations by this simple revelation. So, to any, having dissolved their **defilements**, **Mara** is seen as not being able to gain entry, and this gives him cause for distress and being dispirited, and the dart of sorrow is realized as having vexed him. In consequence, as the process of this **perfection of wisdom** is being written and studied, he is seen as making in his great tribulation a tremendous effort, bestirring himself, and with this or that device, to attempt to prevent the study of this **perfection of wisdom**. **Mara, the Evil One**, is seen moreover, as coming along in a guise of a Sramana, a religious mendicant, and attempting to cause dissent.

In order to dissuade the ones born of good family who have but recently set out in the vehicle he will say: "This is not the great **perfection of wisdom** which your Honors listen to. As it has been handed down in my Sutras, as it is included in my Sutras, such is the **perfection of wisdom**. Thus it is seen as some 'him', or an 'other', attempting to sow doubts in the minds of the **Bodhisattvas** having but recently set out in the vehicle, whose intelligence is usually not too expansive, but rather sluggish and limited, who are usually lacking in vision, and whose enlightenment in any future is not as yet predicted. Seized by doubt these will not learn, study or write this **perfection of wisdom**. This also is seen as **Mara** doing this to them.

Moreover, **Mara** may be seen as coming along in guise of a Buddha, with magically created monks around him, and maintain that **some Bodhisattva coursing in profound Dharmas is one who realizes the reality-limit, and**

should be happy to become a Disciple and not a Bodhisattva, as this Bodhisattva certainly has. (*i.e. Falling into the realism of Hinayana; grasping a subtle elementary dharmas like the physical irreducible elements, the consciousness moments, the absolute karmic laws, absolute causes, effect and relations... the whole Abhidharma complexification obsession.*)

[**Another Translation:** Mara may come along in the guise of a Buddha, with magically created monks around him, and maintain that a bodhisattva who courses in deep dharmas is one who realises the reality-limit, who becomes a Disciple, and not a bodhisattva ... (Perfection, 1973: 170). – from Streng's article, quote #3]

This also is seen as one of Mara's deeds. Subhuti, when this perfection of wisdom is being written and studied, Mara, the Evil One, produces these deeds which I mention, as well as many others. These all may come to be seen, recognized by a Bodhisattva, and avoided, not cultivated. The Bodhisattva may come to reply to these with vigour, mindfulness and self-possession.

Antagonism between Mara and Buddha

Subhuti: So it is, O Lord. Whatever is very precious, this provokes much hostility. Because it is so superior, being hard to get, and of great value. One can herein expect as a rule many obstacles will arise to this perfection of wisdom. When, overawed by these obstacles, someone becomes lazy, one can come to know that those people who decide not to learn, study and write this perfection of wisdom are people who are seen as beset by Mara have but recently set out in the vehicle, their intelligence is small, sluggish, limited and perverted, [251] and their thought refuses to function in these very sublime dharmas.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. And while it is true that these deeds of Mara which we see as such are bound to arise, a great many agencies will arise in their turn which oppose the faults of Mara. Those who decide to learn, study and write this perfection of wisdom are swayed by Buddha's might, by his sustaining power, by his grace. [252] For whereas Mara, the Evil One, will be seen to make great efforts to cause obstacles, the Tathagatas in turn send help.

(i.e. Well I hope you have relaxed enough in this chapter with this baby-talk, because you will need all your marbles for the next chapter. Brace yourself.)

Chapter XII – [The meaning of realizing the real nature of our own mind and thus of everything – omniscience]

[The perfection of this perfection of wisdom is realizing the way things really are, all-knowledge, Buddhahood, inseparability of awareness and emptiness]

Go to verses

The Lord: It is as with a mother who has many children, - five, or ten, or twenty, or thirty, or forty, or fifty, or one hundred or one thousand. As she falls ill, we each do whatever is possible to prevent this mother from dying, to keep her alive as long as possible, to keep any unpleasantness away from her body. As we are aware of the fact to her we owe our existence, as in her own great pain she brings us into this world, as she instructs us in the way of this world.

We now look directly to her, give her anything to ease her discomfort and suffering, protect her well, make much of her, and we hope she is free from pain- derived from contact with eyes, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind, or coming from wind, bile, phlegm, or a disorder of the humours, or from stinging insects, mosquitoes, or crawling animals, from beings or from ghosts, from anything falling upon her, or tearing her asunder, or from a disastrous crash.

In this way we honor our mother by giving her all this which may ease her suffering, allow for her to know how dear she is, cherish and protect her, as we are aware she is our mother and begetter, who, in her own great pain, brings us into this world and instructs us always in the way of this world.

In just this same way Tathagatas bring this perfection of wisdom to mind, and it is through their might, sustaining power and grace we write, learn, study, spread and repeat this. And these Tathagatas, which also dwell in other world systems just now, -for the weal and happiness of all, with great compassion for all and for the weal and happiness of this great body of beings, with compassion as this absolute sameness of all beings- these bring this perfection of wisdom to mind, and are of great zeal, as this perfection of wisdom is lasting, as it is not destroyed, as what's seen as Mara and his host cannot prevent this perfection of wisdom from being taught, written, and practiced.

So fond are Tathagatas of this perfection of wisdom, as much do these cherish and protect its process of perfection. Wisdom is mother and begetter, her process of perfection indicates and reveals to us all-knowledge, her perfection instructs us as the way of the world. As her perfection do Tathagatas appear. As her perfection begets, indicates and realizes pure cognition as all-knowing, this perfection **indicates to us and as us this world as it is. This all-knowledge** of Tathagatas appears as her most profound perfection.

Tathagatas of three times as well as beyond are enlightened perfection of wisdom. It is as this perfection of wisdom these Tathagatas are instructed and generated...and instruct and generate us in this world, so we may be instructed and generated...and instruct and generate as well. Thus we come, thus we go.

Flashes of enlightening and pure undifferentiated awareness, identical with absolute emptiness, this dark as pitch notion, infinite as space.

[This Perfection of this Wisdom is knowing the world as it really is: as the the five aggregates which are empty of inherent existence]

Subhuti: How does **perfection of wisdom** instruct Tathagatas in this world, and what is this the Tathagatas call 'world'?

The Lord: The five skandhas are by the Tathagatas declared as **'world'** [loka]. Which five? Form, feeling, perception, impulse, and consciousness.

Subhuti: How do five skandhas come to be shown up by **perfection of wisdom** of Tathagatas, or what is shown up by her?

The Lord: Skandhas are shown and realized by this perfection of wisdom of Tathagatas as 'this world' [loka], as these do not crumble, nor crumble away [lujyante, pralujyante]. **These five skandhas are emptiness** as to any own-being and devoid of any own-being and sameness, inasmuch as can be said with any meaning whatsoever of **emptiness**, so, can neither crumble nor crumble away. As this sense, **this perfect wisdom instructs these Tathagatas in this world**. As **emptiness** can neither crumble nor crumble away, so the **Signless**, the **Wishless**, the Unaffected, the Unproduced, Non-existent, and all-completeness of any Realm of Dharma.

[This Perfection of this Wisdom is knowing beings as they really are, knowing the real nature of their minds, the ordinary awareness and the possible going astray called ignorance and its consequences; the inseparability of world and mind; this is omniscience]

Moreover Subhuti, due to this **perfection of wisdom**, Tathagatas quite naturally **know immeasurable and incalculable beings as these really are**. This comes about through the inevitable dissolution of obscurations. For, herein is simultaneously revealed an increase toward, or away from pure cognition, depending on one's perspective and relationship to **these six perfections** and Noble Eightfold Path, primarily right intention and right action.

Eventually this 'pinnacle' awareness comes about as all-knowledge.

- This is, however, completely different and other than bits and pieces of knowing formulated of some discursive thought process.
- This naked realization is of an objectless and purely undifferentiated experience of this uniform non-existence of any individualized or collective own-being within any sentience whatsoever.
- Again, Tathagatas are naturally aware of thoughts and actions of immeasurable and incalculable beings, since 'here' or anywhere, in anytime, or in anyway for any beings is no real existence.
- **This indication only of some thing called existence, exists neither as separate individualities as many 'ones', nor any totality of individualities, neither any singular one, nor any grouping of two or more, and not even simply as one divided into many...**because ultimately and this means even now, **any beings and things are incalculable and immeasurable**.
- And even still, Tathagatas, again due to this **perfection of wisdom**, are naturally aware of the collected thoughts of countless beings as only 'collected thoughts'. And how do Tathagatas come to be cognizant of this?

This is naturally cognized, for as **pure awareness**, this "collectedness of thought" is realized as **equivalent to extinct**

[for, any thing called singular, lone or individual thought, etc., speaking also in terms which are 'thought of' as having an existential basis and from some 'point of view' in existence, does not exist, and is purely cognized as not-other than already as **infinitely** absolute by Tathagatas. But, this doesn't materialize or manifest as having been thought of. - What does matter in truth is...what is such as eventually becomes thought as any relative result of it's 'original' pristine continuum of absolute? or even, What is any thought at any 'time' or 'place' a result of, in spite or regardless of what we may think?]

This extinction is just non-extinction, as this which is realized as extinct, 'is' no-thing to be extinct and as such is merely non-extinct.

Furthermore, Tathagatas are naturally cognizant of **distracted thoughts** of beings as such, as these Tathagatas realize 're'-occupation with any thought as mere distraction, for just as objects of this world, even thought is known as external, and a grave distraction from **this sourceless-source of which these are spontaneously manifest with neither time nor limitation**. Not even mindfulness can be effortlessly directed as such toward this realm of Dharma. For even as in this consideration of 'the one divided into many', ...in truth, what is this dreamed of 'one anything' other than, as a basis (*i.e. Everything is non-dual: not two, not one. Even oneness is empty, so even more so manyness. In that sense everything is immeasurable, incalculable.*), from which to determine its singularity? As here is no-thing other than this 'one', this 'one' has no-thing or support upon which to lean to determine either itself, or any phenomena whatsoever as this or these dharmas. So as **even one cannot be determined as such, how much more so hundreds of ones?** How much more so hundreds of thousands of ones? How much more so hundreds of thousands of niyutas of kotis of ones? Such is what is meant as **immeasurable and incalculable**. Such, in **this true aspect** is **infinite**. This 'one', all 'ones', are exactly identical as being only an instantaneous reflection of **an inexplicable and spontaneous interdependence merely seeming to be individuated by habits coming to be established from beyond any thought or knowledge of this process of reification, hereby 'creating'**, first of all, this **duality** called thought itself, (**ignorance**) so as to attempt to determine some separateness of an **illusion** of even this non-existent oneness...an appearing of some thing, from **the essentially pure infinite space/awareness as ground of any and all being. Suchness is a wholeness at once of space and primordial awareness. Here is neither one nor parts of one, neither many individual ones nor none**. As **Suchness** is **beyond thought and measurement**, Such is as **Suchness** is.

On another hand, Tathagatas realize these thoughts as ultimate reality, and as such are without marks, cannot extinguish, just as any true continuity is not interrupted, not distracted. These cannot, as **emptiness**, be directed on external objects. **Tathagatas are cognizant of and realize the infinite and inexhaustible mind of being, of be-ness. Tathagatas are aware, as compassion**. All beings are understood, for as cognizant mind these Buddhas naturally **realize immeasurable non-extinction of space as immeasurable non-extinction of mind**. Buddha-Mind as this **infinite** continuum is neither produced nor sustained in any time, cognizes neither production nor cessation, neither gives nor requires any support. As infinity cannot be measured, as **inexhaustible** is Dharma. **Tathagatas realize obscured minds and the cause of obscuration**. Such as Tathagatas realize these minds of people are not actually obscured by perverted views, which, as nothing other than wrong ideas, are also not sustained. Tathagatas realize obscured thoughts. **Tathagatas see these minds being transparently luminous as essential original nature**. Tathagatas realize slack thoughts as well as the reasoning by which they occur. Tathagatas realize these thoughts are unable to slouch on any resting place. Tathagatas cognize tensely active thoughts as these are. A Tathagata realizes these thoughts are exerted so as to win dispassion, and these can no longer be exerted when nothing is left which can be seized upon.

Tathagatas realize thoughts as outflows. As such one realizes even these thoughts as without own- being, as false representations of no-thing. Tathagatas realize thought as this is merely as this might seem. Anyone merely aware comes to realize, as an outflow any thought is non-existent. As continuity is pure, no-thing neither is nor is not directed, or not. Tathagatas realize any thoughts such as these merely seem to be, yet are not as these are.

Tathagatas realize a **greedy mind** is not mind as **empty awareness**, as mind is not a **greedy mind**. Tathagatas realize 'any' mind as free from **greed**. Such as these realize any mind as with thoughts of **greed** is not a **greedy mind**, as thought of **greed** and even mind non-exist as 'true reality', as mind which forsakes **greed** is not **greed**, nor even mind as detached from **greed**. Tathagatas naturally realize minds as greedy and as free from **greed**. These realize in the same manner, minds as **hateful** and as free of **hate**, as deluded, as well as without **delusion**. Tathagatas as **awareness** realize any thoughts of beings. Tathagatas realize thoughts as not joined to this world of appearance, as these do not appear as the world of appearance. Tathagatas realize extensive or abundant thoughts. Tathagatas realize thoughts neither diminish nor increase; as thoughts can not depart. For thought cannot do so as thoughts cannot be other than this realm of Dharma, thus is here no-where here and nothing outside this to even consider, inasmuch as thought merely could. Tathagatas realize thoughts as neither great, as this which these may

be, nor lacking as this which these may not. These Tathagatas realize these thoughts neither come hither nor go away, as any reality such as thought, is not included in the present as such.

Tathagatas realize thoughts which are thought of as great, merely appear different, as any and all are the same, for such neither appears as sameness, yet neither are these different, nor do these exist in any form of own-being whatsoever. For here, any thought which is thought of as 'here' is no thought nor other, nor even **awareness** as present. Tathagatas realize thought without limitation, as such lean on nothing. Tathagatas realize thought with perceiving attributes perceive thought as own-being, for as no thought exists without perceptible attributes, still any and all thought is without marks, these are neither isolated-inaccessible-not-findable nor not isolated-inaccessible-not-findable as any object, nor as imperceptible, neither within nor without any range of the three or five kinds of vision. As **primordial emptiness/awareness**, Tathagatas realize reacting thoughts as *emptiness*, and as devoid of **objective support** as these are of subjective sustenance. Tathagatas realize non-reacting thoughts without 're'-occupation as non-dual, as neither having any own-self nor other against which to react. Tathagatas realize lower [energy] thoughts as no self-conceited imagining. Tathagatas realize supreme [**infinitely energetic**] thoughts as unimpeded, just as the least thought is neither apprehended nor ignored.

Tathagatas realize unconcentrated thoughts as attached to differences; [directed as faulty representations of this world as separate things, such thoughts are distracted], for any such thoughts cannot achieve synthesis, due to these being unconcentrated. **Tathagatas realize concentrated thoughts as neither same nor different from dharma**, for distractions dissolve, revealing synthesis, and increasingly concentrated and rarified thoughts are like unto space. Tathagatas realize this which appears as unemancipated thought is already now emancipated, as these are non-existent as 'own-being'. Tathagatas realize emancipated thoughts, as these cannot grasp any thought of any past, nor of any future, or even any present, as thought is not even present. Tathagatas realize imperceptible thoughts as neither here nor perceived as reality, as such cannot be discerned; for even as such, thought being discerned falls short of perfect reality, and such cannot be grasped, - not by the eye of **wisdom**, not by the heavenly eye, how much less by the fleshly eye, since it does not come within the range of any of these eyes.

Furthermore, **Tathagatas naturally realize tendencies of countless beings to make positive and negative statements about objects**. [269] **These ideas arise in dependence on form and other skandhas**. How do any beings discern dependence on these skandhas of these positive and negative statements? If we take such statements as, "Tathagatas **continue to exist** after death", and "Tathagatas **do not continue to exist** after death", and "Tathagatas **do and do not continue to exist** after death", and "Tathagatas **neither do nor do not continue to exist** after death", these statements refer to these skandhas known as 'Tathagatas' only and these statements have no basis in the true reality of Tathagatas. This holds good of similar statements, i.e. when one says: "**Eternal** are self and the world, -just that is the truth, everything else is **delusion**." And so if one maintains either self and the world are **non-eternal**, are **both eternal and non-eternal**, **neither eternal nor non-eternal**, such statements still refer merely to these skandhas. [270] Or, similarly, if one maintains that self and the world are finite, or not finite, or both finite and not finite, or neither finite nor not finite. Or, finally, if one says "that which is the soul, that is the body," or "one thing is the soul, another the body," all these statements refer only to skandhas. It is a result of **perfection of wisdom** [in verse and application] these Tathagatas realize these positive and negative statements for what these are. [271] **Tathagatas cognize even skandhas as identical with Suchness**.

This is how and why as a result of **perfection of wisdom** [in verse and application], these positive and negative statements are realized as these are. (*i.e. the real nature of everything:*)

- It is thus Tathagatas reveal to realization **Suchness** of Tathagatas, as of skandhas, as **Suchness** of positive and negative statements.
- And just as this is **Suchness** of skandhas, as well is this **Suchness** of worlds.
- As this is said by Tathagatas..."these five skandhas are reckoned as world(s)."
- So here, Subhuti, as such is **Suchness** of skandhas, such is **Suchness** of these worlds;
- as such is **Suchness** of this world, such is **Suchness** of all dharmas;
- as such is **Suchness** of all dharmas, such is **Suchness** as fruit of a Stream-winner,
- so on up to: as such is **Suchness** of **PratyekaBuddhahood**,
- such is **Suchness** of Tathagatas.
- As a result, **Suchness**, **Suchness** of Tathagatas, of skandhas, of dharmas, of holy **Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddhas**- is just **Suchness** without a trace of variety such as positivity and negativity, as nothing beyond even one, non-different, non-extinguishable, unaffected, non-dual, nor with even a question of **duality**. [272]
- **In humbleness and compassion** of **perfection of wisdom**, **Suchness** as Tathagatas is neither realized nor not realized, as Such is as **Suchness**.
- Thus Tathagatas reveals this world to this infatuated world [as such is also] preoccupied as unreasoned passion(s).
- Thusly this vision of worlds takes place.
- **Thus...perfect wisdom is mother of Tathagatas**, as such spontaneously appear, neither as her result nor not.
- Thus...Tathagatas, neither realizing nor not realizing **Suchness**, cognize **Suchness** of worlds, as Non-falseness, as unaltered **Suchness**.
- Thus, as these neither do nor do not 'realize' **Suchness** [tathata] Tathagatas are called, 'Tathagata'.

Subhuti: **Suchness** is beyond fathom and **unfathomable**, O Lord. Enlightenment of Buddhas and Lords is neither brought about nor revealed through nor by **Suchness**, yet merely as **Suchness**...neither within nor without any times, any place, neither as direction nor directionless. Whoever else neither realizes nor does not realize **Suchness**? Any **irreversible Bodhisattvas**, or Arhats whose right intentions are fulfilled, or persons whom achieve as right views these **fathomless** stations described by Tathagatas as **Suchness**, as Tathagata are enlightened as these.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. **Suchness**, as Tathagatas fully neither do nor do not 'realize', is **inexhaustible**, as Tathagatas are purely aware [beyond thought and word...as space] of **Suchness** as such, and can describe **Suchness** as **inexhaustible**...for **Suchness**, neither fully 'realized' nor not...is **infinitely pure awareness** [as space...dharmakaya].

[**Another translation** : *Buddha*: Awakened Ones know the minds of living beings as intrinsically infinite and inexhaustible. Through all-embracing compassion, living Buddhas manifest an all-embracing mind which blissfully recognizes that just as empty space cannot disintegrate or be destroyed, neither can the infinitely open space of all minds ever be narrowed or extinguished. This inconceivably marvelous Buddha mind which knows this openness - which simply is this openness - can itself never be extinguished. Why? Because it never comes into being in the first place, and therefore possesses no duration through time that can be interrupted.

Buddha mind is the one mind of all beings - fully awakened, fully matured, fully sensitized, fully liberated. ...

Tathagatas compassionately know the polluted thoughts of conscious beings precisely as they are. How? By realizing directly that the minds of those living beings who do not practice any spiritual disciplines are not actually stained by the pollution of false viewpoints. Wrong ideas possess absolutely no substantial self-existence, nor do the conventional minds in which they are claimed to lodge possess any such self-existence. ...

Tathagatas kindly know that reactive thoughts react simply to their own false representations of Reality - representations which, whether subjective or objective, are empty of substantial self-existence. Tathagatas equally know non-reactive, harmonious, peaceful thoughts to be the total simplicity of Reality, never independently existing in themselves. ...

Awakened Enlightenment sympathetically knows, precisely as they are, the ingrained tendencies of countless conscious beings to engage in literal affirmations and negations concerning the transparent structure of reality. Such beings - themselves constructs - take their own linguistic constructions at face value to be solidly self-existing entities. Awakened Enlightenment clearly knows that these kaleidoscopic affirmations and negations arise like a play of reflected light beams from the constituent processes of personal awareness called form, feeling, impulse, perception and consciousness. How? Because Buddha mind realizes that all possible statements have reference not to Reality but only to transparent processes and structures called personal awareness. Included in this mere kaleidoscopic play are various metaphysical statements about the Tathagata - that the Tathagata does or does not continue to exist after physical death; that the Tathagata in some sense does and in some sense does not exist after death; or that the Tathagata cannot be said either to exist or not to exist after death. None of these statements, however refined, refer directly to awakened Enlightenment - birthless as well as deathless.

Buddha mind, unveiling the inherent emptiness of self-existence, dissolves metaphysical assumptions, such as the doctrine that the self and its consciousness are eternal and that other phenomena are mere delusion. Equally inadmissible as truth are statements that the self and its consciousness are eternal, temporal, both eternal and temporal or neither eternal or temporal. It is inadmissible as well to maintain that the self and its consciousness are finite, infinite, or both or neither. Referring also to false abstractions and projections and not to Reality are doctrines which claim that the soul is confined and identical to the body or that the soul is independent from the body and from other structures of relativity.

Though the unwavering principle of Prajnaparamita, Tathagatas know all possible positive and negative assertions precisely as they are, for Buddha mind realizes the transparent processes and structures of personal and communal awareness to be simply suchness, or pure presence. Through awakening fully as pure presence, the Tathagatas know the suchness of all beings and events and of all statements about them. The whole image of phenomenal manifestation is the play of universal enlightenment through the constituents of individual and communal awareness. All is simply suchness. ... All material and mental structures manifest as one continuous presence, one absolute depth of unthinkable purity, without trace of positive or negative assertions. This pure presence is inextinguishable, indistinguishable simplicity. ...

That is why the mysterious title Tathagata is conferred upon Buddhas, for Tathagata means the one who has disappeared entirely and beautifully into suchness. – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

[Emptiness of all marks; of all awarenesses]

So now, headed by Sakra, Chief of Gods, the Gods of the realm of sense-desire and of the realm of form and twenty thousand of the Gods of the realm of Brahma have come to see the Lord, salute his feet with their heads, and standing to one side, these ask: As **fathomless** dharmas are revealed, how, O Lord, are the marks fixed onto these? [273]

The Lord: Marks are fixed on to the fact these **fathomless** dharmas are **empty**, **signless**, **wishless** [the three doors to deliverance], not brought together, not produced, not stopped, not defiled, not purified, so, as such these non-exist, beyond even samsara and nirvana, as does also this realm of Dharma, and **Suchness**. As these marks are not supported by anything such are like unto space. These marks are not fixed on by Tathagatas, as these cannot be reckoned among skandhas. As these are not dependent on skandhas, such are not fixed on by Gods, Nagas nor any beings, and these cannot be shaken off by the world with its Gods, beings and Asuras. For even this world with its Gods, beings and Asuras has just this mark. No hand has fixed on these marks. Would this be correct to say space is fixed on something?

The Gods: No, Lord, as it would have to be conditioned.

The Lord: Well said, and this is true, O Gods. Regardless of whether Tathagatas are produced or not, [274] these marks stand out just as such. In accordance with what stands out, just as such Tathagatas describe this reality, as such Tathagatas fully realize it. As such are Tathagatas called 'Tathagata'.

Subhuti: **Fathomless**, O Lord, are these marks as Tathagatas fully realize **perfection of wisdom** as **unattached cognition/awareness of Tathagatas**. This field in this unattached cognition is **perfection of wisdom**, this range of Tathagatas.

[The real nature of all dharma is just this perfection of wisdom: inseparability of dependent origination / interdependence and emptiness; at the edge of existence and non-existence]

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. With this process of perfection of wisdom are Tathagatas instructed within worlds. As Tathagatas are spontaneously interdependent with dharma, as also with this perfection of wisdom, to this extent are these dharmas which stand without support fully realized by Tathagatas, as these take their stand nowhere. As such, these dwell interdependently as just Dharma. Tathagatas treat Dharma with respect, revere, worship and adore this, as these realize this essential nature of dharma is just perfection of wisdom. Just as all-knowledge of Tathagatas is realized as perfection of wisdom, Tathagatas are grateful and thankful for her. With justice can Tathagatas be called "grateful and thankful" [kritajna kritavedin]. With gratitude and thankfulness Tathagatas [275] favor and cherish this vehicle for such is this path by which these realize full enlightenment. One knows this gratitude and thankfulness of Tathagatas. In addition, Tathagatas fully know all dharmas as neither made [akrita] nor unmade, as not brought together. This also, one knows as gratitude and thankfulness of Tathagatas. It is as gratitude to perfection of wisdom this cognition of Tathagatas thus proceeds in all dharmas. This is another aspect of the fact this perfection of wisdom simultaneously instructs Tathagatas in this world.

Subhuti: But how can perfect wisdom instruct Tathagatas in this world if all dharmas are unknowable and imperceptible?

The Lord: It is good, Subhuti, as you question Tathagata about this matter. All dharmas are indeed unknowable and imperceptible as these are empty, and cannot lean on anything. It is thus all these dharmas are, as perfect wisdom, fully known by Tathagatas. Another reason also perfection of wisdom can be regarded as the instructress of Tathagatas in this world is that none of the skandhas is viewed.

Subhuti: How can here be a non-viewing of form, feeling, perception, impulse, or consciousness?

The Lord: As in this continuum arises merely an apparent act of consciousness which has no skandhas as objective support, here this non-viewing of form, etc., takes place. But, just this non-viewing of the skandhas is viewing of the world. This is the way in which this world is viewed by Tathagatas. Thus perfection of wisdom acts as instructress in these worlds to Tathagatas. And how does perfection of wisdom show up this world for what it is? She shows this world as empty, unthinkable, calmly quiet. As purified of itself she shows up the world, she makes it known, she indicates it, yet does nothing.

Chapter XIII – [All spiritual realizations come from this perfection of wisdom; even though they are all empty]

[The real nature of everything is beyond all description, beyond all discrimination, beyond all conceptualization]

Go to verses

Subhuti: Unfathomable, O Lord, is **perfect wisdom**. As a great enterprise this **perfection of wisdom** becomes of itself when elucidated and revealed through any exceedingly refined **vortex of cognition and awareness**. Such comes to be simply revealed as **unthinkable, incomparable, immeasurable, incalculable, ...as an enterprise equaling the unequalled.**

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.

How and why does this come to be an unthinkable enterprise? Unthinkable is **Tathagatahood**, Buddhahood, [our] spontaneous self-existence which is at all times **empty** of any self or notions whatsoever, truly as this **state of all-knowledge**, yet still comes to be revealed as such. On such as this one cannot reflect with one's thought, since this can be neither any object as thought, nor of volition, nor of any dharmas which constitute thought.

- Why is it this **incomparable enterprise**? One cannot reflect on Tathagatahood, etc., nor compare these as such.
- Why is it **immeasurable**? Tathagatahood, etc., is immeasurable.
- Why is it **incalculable**? Tathagatahood, etc., is incalculable.
- Why is any enterprise **equal to such as this unequalled**? Nothing can equal Tathagatas, as fully Enlightened Ones, as Self-existent, as All-knowing, can anything be superior to such as these as **totally equanimous**?

Subhuti: Do **these five attributes** apply only to Tathagatahood, etc., or also to the skandhas, and to all dharmas?

The Lord: **These attributes apply to skandhas as well as all dharmas also.** Also the skandhas, and also all dharmas are unthinkable. As skandhas (i.e., form, feeling, perceptions, impulses, and/or consciousness) regard or 'show up' as in relation to **true essential nature**, here is neither thought nor volition, nor any of these dharmas which constitute thought, nor any comparing. For and as this reason, skandhas and all dharmas are also unthinkable and incomparable. These are also immeasurable, as one cannot conceive of a measure of any nor all skandhas, since such a measure cannot itself exist as a consequence of infinitude [and as all dharmas relate to such]. These are also incalculable, as these are beyond any possibility of counting. These are also equal to the unequalled, as all dharmas are space. So do you think, Subhuti, here even exists (as related to space)...any sameness, or counting, or measure, or comparison, or thought, or any dharma which might even constitute thought?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: In like manner Dharma is **unthinkable, incomparable, immeasurable, incalculable, equal to no-thing** even such as no equal...as Tathagata-dharma. Tathagata-dharma is unthinkable as all thought is as naught, is incomparable as such is beyond all comparison. Words such as 'unthinkable' and 'incomparable' denote any and all objects as consciousness as do 'immeasurable', 'incalculable' and 'equal to the unequalled'. Any measure, calculation and sameness is as naught, as Tathagata-dharma is immeasurable, incalculable, equal to no-thing as such has no equal. This is immeasurable, incalculable, equal to no-thing as this immeasurableness and incalculability is as space. Dharma is incomparable as any sense, as space is incomparable. Dharma cannot be placed side by side, as such cannot be compared. Dharma is unthinkable, incomparable, immeasurable, incalculable, equal to no-thing **as such in this same sense, as space is this attribute.**

[**Another translation:** Buddha: **And why is Perfect Wisdom unthinkable?** Because unthinkably profound are all points of reference: Tathagata, the disappearance into pure presence; Buddha nature, the Reality which is simply awakens; spontaneous selflessness, the essenceless essence of all phenomena; and luminous omniscience, which knows without knower, knowing or known. Upon none of these points can

thought be focused, because they are not objects or subjects. They cannot be imagined or willed, perceived or felt. They cannot be touched or approached in any way by any finite mode or procedure of consciousness. ...

Can you count, compare, measure, conceive, imagine, perceive, touch or divide the principle of space?... In precisely the same manner as the principle of space are all appearances whatsoever unthinkable, unimaginable, incalibratable, unapproachable, unattainable, incomparable. For all phenomena are Buddha phenomena, arising as the open space of total awakens, in which dividing, discriminating and discursive thought is absent, in which no comparison is feasible. ... This impossibility of any comparison is the core of the universal principle of inconceivability called Prajnaparamita. – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

[Immediate result of this teaching on some of the listeners]

As any doctrine of **unthinkability, etc.**, is being taught, the minds of hundreds of monks who are ripened are freed from the outflows, without further clinging, and so are the minds of two thousand nuns in similar ripeness. Six thousand lay brethren and three thousand lay sisters obtain the pure, dispassionate, unstained eye of Dharma. Twenty thousand **Bodhisattvas** secure the patient acceptance of dharmas which fail to be produced. The Lords have predicted these to secure enlightenment in this very Bhadrakalpa [an auspicious aeon in which one thousand Buddhas are to appear]. And as to these lay brethren and lay sisters, whose dharma-eye is purified, these also are predestined by the Lords, and these also are free, without further clinging, from any outflows.

[All spiritual realizations come from this perfection of wisdom; even though they are all empty (again combining method and wisdom)]

Subhuti: **Unfathomable**, O Lord, is **perfect wisdom**. Certainly as a great venture this is set upon.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. **All-knowledge** is entrusted to **perfection of wisdom**, and so is these levels of **PratyekaBuddha** and the level of all the **Disciples**. An anointed king, a Kshatriya, who feels strong and secure in his kingdom, entrusts all his business concerning his kingly office, and the city and the kingdom to his minister, and he himself has few cares and his burden is light. Just so, whatever dharmas of Buddhas, **PratyekaBuddhas**, or **Disciples** may be possible are all entrusted to the **perfection of wisdom**. It is the **perfection of wisdom** which in these does the work. It is in this manner that **perfect wisdom** is set upon for a great venture, i.e. so one cannot take hold of form, feeling, perception, impulse, or consciousness, nor settle down in it and so also for skandhas, so also for the fruits of this holy life, from the fruit of a Stream-winner to this **state of all-knowledge**.

Subhuti: In what way is **perfection of wisdom** set upon so one cannot take hold of this **state of all-knowledge**, nor settle down in this?

The Lord: Do we view Arhatship as any real dharma which we could take hold of, or settle down in?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. I also do not view Tathagatahood as real, and here I do not take hold of it, do not settle down in this. For this reason **all-knowledge** also is a state in which one neither takes hold of anything, nor settles down in anything.

Subhuti: **Bodhisattvas** who have but newly set out in the vehicle, and whose wholesome roots are but small, must beware not to tremble when hearing this exposition. On the other hand, **Bodhisattvas** do, on hearing this **unfathomable perfection of wisdom**, firmly believe this as these may have become suitable for Buddhahood, have fulfilled their duties in view of the Jinas of any time, and have planted wholesome roots continuously.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti.

[This Bodhisattva path, combining method and wisdom, using the six paramitas, not accepting not rejecting, is the sure efficient path]

So now...*the Gods of the realm of sense-desire and of the realm of form* said to the Lord: **Unfathomable**, O Lord, is this **perfection of wisdom**, hard to see, hard to understand. **Bodhisattvas** who resolutely believe in this **unfathomable perfection of wisdom** fulfill their duties in accord with Jinas of any time, must have planted wholesome roots continuously. If, O Lord, all the beings in this **great trichiliocosm**, for an aeon or the remainder of an aeon, course as any stage of a Faith-follower; on the other hand someone for one day only is finding pleasure in patient acceptance of this **unfathomable perfection of wisdom**, and as one searches this, as one reflects on this, weighs this up, investigates this and is meditating on this, this latter being unveils realization of view and knowledge as all these things.

The Lord: As someone hears, O Gods, this **unfathomable perfection of wisdom, meditation, joyful effort, patience, self-discipline, generosity**... then one can rightly expect one's realization to take place more quickly than realizations of those who course on any stage of a faith-follower for an aeon, or for the remainder of an aeon.

The Gods: A great perfection is this **perfection of wisdom**! With these words, they saluted the Lord's feet with their heads, thrice walked round the Lord, decided to go away from this presence of the Lord, took friendly leave of him, and moved away. Before these had not gone far, yet these disappeared from sight, and these Gods of the realm of sense-desire departed for the world of sense-desire, and these Gods of the realm of form departed for the Brahma-world.

Chapter XIV – [A path in accord with the real nature of everything is a path that combines both adapted skillful means and the perfection of wisdom emptiness; not accepting/reifying, not rejecting/abandoning the world and other people]

[A Bodhisattva takes rebirth among people, or Gods, depending on the need]

Go to verses

Subhuti: As a Bodhisattva, on merely hearing this, immediately believes in this unfathomable perfection of wisdom, does not become cowed, stolid, paralysed, or stupefied, does not doubt or hesitate, but delights to perfect wisdom, -where does one de cease, where is one reborn?

The Lord: As a Bodhisattva reacts in such a way to perfection of wisdom, delights in seeing and hearing this, bears this in mind and develops this, keeps one's attention fixed on this without diverting it elsewhere, feels an urge to take this up, bears this in mind, speaks this, studys and spreads this, as, once one hears perfect wisdom, one follows and pursues the reciters of dharma and does not let these go, until one realizes this perfection of wisdom in one's heart or has it in the form of a book, just as a cow does not abandon her young calf, -this Bodhisattva de ceases among people and is reborn among people. (i.e. The Bodhisattva follow the Middle Way: using both adapted skillful means and wisdom. Not accepting, not ejecting the world. A path in accord with the real nature of everything: inseparability of dependent origination (interdependence) and emptiness; at the edge of existence and non-existence.)

Subhuti: Is a Bodhisattva, which is endowed with just these qualities crossed in other Buddha-fields just as being reborn here?

The Lord: It is possible any Bodhisattva which is endowed with these qualities, is, just as being reborn here, crossed in other Buddha-fields, as such honors and questions Buddhas and Lords. One may also cross among Tushita Gods. This may be, as such honors Maitreya, the Bodhisattva, and persistently questions him concerning this perfection of wisdom.

[Falling back at the Hinayana levels]

On another hand, as any Bodhisattva past or present hears this unfathomable perfection of wisdom and yet asks no questions, or so doing listens not to any reply, this one may be reborn among people and hear this unfathomable perfection of wisdom being taught, hesitates and is stupefied and cowed, this is one of these who are unwilling to ask questions and listen. Any Bodhisattva, again, may have had or does have a right attitude to this unfathomable perfection of wisdom, for one, two, three, four or five days, and for a certain time has faith in this, but again is withdrawn and no longer feels like asking questions about nor listening to this. It is a fact such a Bodhisattva has not or does not all the time ask questions about nor listen to and pursue this Unfathomable Perfection Of Wisdom and as such, one may at one time feel urged to pursue and hear this fathomless perfection of wisdom, but not so at other times urged to pursue and listen; such a one again falls from faith and is disheartened, as intelligence is unsteady like cotton wool. Such a Bodhisattva has but lately set out in the vehicle. Having come but lately to this vehicle, one loses faith, serene confidence and one's urge to this. In other words one no longer takes up this perfection of wisdom nor pursues it.

Such a one moves on either of two levels, on the level of a Disciple, or on the level of a PratyekaBuddha.

[Four Similes showing the need for both adapted skillful means and wisdom on the path]

As a ship is wrecked in the middle of the ocean, people die in the water without getting to shore, unless these find support on a log, or plank, or any floating object. These who manage to gain such support do not die in the water; this being so, safely and unhindered these cross over to a shore beyond, and stand, unhurt and uninjured, on firm ground. In this same way, any **Bodhisattva** which is endowed with but little faith, just little serene confidence, little affection, little aspiration, and which **does not gain support of perfection of wisdom**, incurs a fall in the middle of a bad road, and, without having attained to **the state of all-knowledge**, stands in **Discipleship** or **PratyekaBuddhahood**. Different is this case for any **Bodhisattva** of full faith, which accepts this patiently, develops a taste for this, as full aspiration, vigour, vigilance, resolve, earnest intention, renunciation, a title which is respected, joyous zest, elation, serene confidence, affection in this, and persistence to **realize full enlightenment**, which gains support as **perfection of wisdom**; in realizing this **perfection of wisdom**, one stands in **all-knowledge**.

As one uses a badly baked jar to carry water in, this jar does not last long, and actually quickly falls to pieces and melts away. In its unbaked condition this jar actually soon comes to an end on the ground. Likewise, although any **Bodhisattva** obtains all these qualities enumerated above, from faith to a persistent aspiration for enlightenment, as one **does not take hold of perfection of wisdom and skill in means**, one is bound to come to a bad fall in the middle of a bad road, in other words, one falls on this level of a **Disciple** or **PratyekaBuddha**. But, as one which carries water, from a river, or lake, or pond, or well, or any water-bearing place in a well-baked jar, a jar such as this, with the water, gets safely and uninjured to the house, simply due to the well-baked condition of this jar. Just so, any **Bodhisattva**, which develops not only these qualities enumerated above, but which in addition **takes hold of perfection of wisdom and skill in means**, does not in the middle of a bad road incur a fall, and, unhurt and uninjured, stands in **all-knowledge**.

A person who is exercising little intelligence launches into the water a seafaring vessel which was not caulked or repaired, and had been tied to its moorings for a long time, overloads it with goods, and climbs on board, and sets out on it. This ship is doomed to collapse before it has conveyed the goods across the water. When this ship bursts asunder, this merchant, exercising little intelligence, who is unskilled in means, loses a huge fortune, a great source of wealth. Just so a **Bodhisattva** with all the qualities enumerated above, but **lacks perfection of wisdom and skill in means**, without realizing the wealth of **all-knowledge** collapses midway, incurs a fall; this **Bodhisattva** loses a great deal of wealth, and has also lost a great deal of wealth for others, having lost **all-knowledge**, which is a huge fortune and a great source of wealth; not to mention the collapse in the middle of the bad road, resulting in realization unto the level of **Disciple** or **PratyekaBuddha**. An intelligent merchant, on the other hand, constructs a solid ship and launches it with proper care into the water, loads it with goods and distributes these evenly, and with a favourable wind this vessel gradually sails to the country which is the goal of this voyage. This ship does not collapse in the water, it goes to as it is meant to go, and the merchant will win great wealth in the shape of world-like jewels. Likewise, as any **Bodhisattva** of peerless faith, and these other qualities enumerated above, in addition is **taken hold of by perfect wisdom through her perfection and does not lack skill in means**, one such as this does not collapse in the middle of a bad road, does not incur a fall, and stands fully enlightened like unto **Suchness**. It is a fact as a **Bodhisattva** with peerless faith, and the other qualities enumerated above, in addition, develops these dharmas as is **taken hold of by perfect wisdom through her perfection, and does not lack skill in means**, these do not hasten obscured thought realizing the level of a **Disciple** or **PratyekaBuddha**. On the contrary these dharmas face **all-knowledge**, as such these set out for this, as these dissolve any obscurations to **realization of full enlightenment**.

As any person is aged, even advanced in years, physically weakened, say one hundred and twenty years old, and as one falls ill in one's body, could one rise from one's bed without being taken hold of by others?

Subhuti: No, Lord!

The Lord: And as one such as this does rise from one's bed, this one has not the strength to walk even for half a mile. Wasted away by both old age and illness this one does not walk about for any length of time, even as this one may be able to rise from this bed. Likewise, as any **Bodhisattva** as having developed all these qualities enumerated above, **does not oneself come to be magnetized by perfect wisdom through her perfection, and lacks skill in means**, although set out **for full enlightenment**, one such as this nevertheless collapses in the middle of a road, and incurs a fall, as this one produces subtle obscurities and now realizes the level of **Disciple** or **PratyekaBuddha**. This is an unavoidable consequence of the fact of **not bringing oneself to a point of being magnetized by perfect wisdom through her perfection, and is lacking skill in means**. So...here now, as two strong beings take hold of this old and sick being, and carefully lift this one up, and promise this one may go wherever this one wishes, and as far as this one wishes, as these are assisting this one, and one does not fall along this way to the place one is headed to. In this same way, a **Bodhisattva** of peerless faith, etc., and which is **assisted by perfect wisdom and her perfection, and endowed with skill in means**, does not collapse in the middle of a road, does not incur a fall, and is able to reach this station, i.e. the station of **full enlightenment**.

(i.e. We need the Middle Way, the combination of both adapted skillful means, and wisdom.)

Chapter XV – [A path in accord with the real nature of everything is a path that combines the world (interdependence) and the perfection of wisdom; that is the Bodhisattva path: the union of compassion and emptiness]

[The first step if to find a good teacher of the Middle Way; a Bodhisattva]

Go to verses

Subhuti: How does a **Bodhisattva** which is just beginning stand in **perfect wisdom... how train oneself?**

The Lord: Such a **Bodhisattva** tends to, loves and honors good friends. Any good friends are such as instruct and admonish this **Bodhisattva** in **perfection of wisdom**, and such as expound its meaning. These expound this perfection as follows: "Come here, you born of good family, make endeavours in **these six perfections**. Achieve **generosity, guard morality, perfect patience and exert with vigour, enter into concentration [293] or mastery of perfection in wisdom**, - all this **turn over** for no reason. Such is nature as **Suchness...unthinkable**, intangible, **full enlightenment**.

Do not misconstrue **full enlightenment** as **form, or any skandhas**. Intangible also is **all-knowledge**. Neither long for nor settle in any levels, **as for instance, of Sravaka as Disciple or PratyekaBuddha.**"

It is thus Subhuti, a **Bodhisattva** beginning gradually through these good friends enters into **the perfecting of wisdom**, by, through, and from **her unlimited and all permeating perfectness**.

[Out of compassion such Bodhisattvas remain in samsara in order to help / teach all other sentient beings without discrimination]

Subhuti: **Doers of what is difficult** are these **Bodhisattvas** which set out to realize fully benevolent enlightenment. Due to this practice of **these six perfections** as herein described, these do not wish **to realize some private Nirvana of some own-being**. **Bodhisattvas** survey these highly painful worlds of beings. These aspire to **realize full enlightenment**, and still these do not tremble at birth-and-death.

The Lord: So it is. **Doers of what is difficult** are these **Bodhisattvas which set out for the benefit and happiness of worlds, out of compassion**, - "We are a shelter for worlds, a refuge, a place of rest, a complete relief, islands, lights, and leaders of worlds. We **equanimously** reveal **full enlightenment** and resort to these worlds," - with these words these ones make diligent efforts to realize such **full enlightenment**. [294] (i.e. "Out of compassion" means that they have realized the inseparability of interdependence (dependent origination) and emptiness, the inseparability of existence and non-existence. One cannot develop this perfection of wisdom without virtuous methods, without adapted skillful means, without taking into consideration the interdependence of everything, of all sentient beings. So following a path that is in accord with the real nature of everything, they necessarily take rebirths in the world instead of trying to reject it like the Hinayanists are trying to do.)

1. How is any **Bodhisattva** **awakened to full enlightenment** and come to be the shelter of worlds?

These bring to light the nature of suffering and even by doing this, so offer protection from sufferings which belong to these deep skandhas of birth-and-death. Also these struggle and make efforts to rid the worlds of any and all sufferings, whether a hurt by some slight of heart, a bruised knee or deep and severe as causing the pains of both birth and death.

2. How are these the worlds refuge?

These reveal as free from birth, decay, illness, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness and despair any beings who are doomed to undergo these by bringing understanding of the true and complete nature of these conditions, to any beings who desire to know and are willing to listen.

3. How are these the worlds resting place?

Tathagatas demonstrate Dharma to beings so they may learn to not embrace anything whatsoever.

Subhuti: How does this non-embracing come about?

The Lord: Non-embracing comes about, or more accurately, is realized regarding form, feeling, perception, impulse, and consciousness, and is the same as in any skandhas (dharma or phenomena). What comes to be revealed is an inherent non-arising and uniform non-sustainability, from which is non-production, and so non-stopping. [295] As no thing whatsoever can be revealed in, or, of any beginning, how could any such thing stop? This is revealed and eventually realized as true of any and all skandhas -which would have been-seen, or thought of, or experienced as either thoughts, words and writings, or even actions, as these merely indicate notions only of form, feeling, perception, impulse, or consciousness of anything whatsoever as already being non-embraced. What does not exist, in truth cannot be embraced. One thus learns not to even think to embrace anything as a result of this cognition and vision. Non-embracing is "already established" as of itself and timelessly self-existent. Once revealed, what comes about is our realization of Such. All dharmas are non-embracing for Such cannot be embraced, and these are also non-arising as lacking attributes such as, coming into being (to begin with!), and consequently dwelling in time, duration and place, and ceasing to exist.

4. How are these the complete relief of worlds?

Any state of form is not form, but formless; and so beyond form, and this same fact applies to any state of feeling, perception, impulse and consciousness, and all dharmas.

Subhuti: If form, etc., and all dharmas (as any phenomena) are beyond mere appearance, as such these Bodhisattvas fully know and realize all dharmas, as here is no discrimination between them.

The Lord: So it is. Beyond these mere appearances, there is no discrimination. Through this non-discrimination are all dharmas fully known to Bodhisattvas. This also is most difficult yet effortless, as Bodhisattvas meditate on all dharmas (at once), and neither realize [296], nor are cowed, and these meditate thus: "In this way are all dharmas fully known...and thus awakened as full enlightenment, we demonstrate and reveal these dharmas."

5. How are these the islands of worlds?

'Islands' are pieces of land limited by water, as rivers or great lakes. Just so form, etc., is only limited at its perceived beginning and end, and so are all dharmas. This limitation of all dharmas is the same as this Calm Quiet, this Sublime, as Nirvana, as this which is Really Existing, the Unperverted or Undifferentiated.

6. How are these the lights of worlds?

Here these Bodhisattvas, once having come to realize full enlightenment, cannot help but to reveal it's light and subsequent knowledge to help dispell this dark obscurity and defiled gloom of non-cognizance from beings who for long are enveloped as the membrane of this eggshell of ignorance, and overcome by darkness, so these illuminate these beings through wisdom. [297]

7. How are these leaders of worlds?

As these are enlightened, Bodhisattvas demonstrate Dharma in order to reveal this absence of production and stopping as but one attribute of infinite quintessential nature of skandhas, and also as these very same dharmas which constitute and distinguish ordinary people, Sravakas as Disciples, PratyekaBuddhas, Bodhisattvas and Buddhas, indeed all dharmas which are no dharma, yet uniform in essence and no thing in general.

8. How are these the resort of worlds?

As these are enlightened, **Bodhisattvas** demonstrate Dharma by teaching these skandhas are situated as one and the same as this space of worlds. All dharmas exist in equal balance and exchange, as and with space. This does not come, this does not go, this is the same as space. Space neither comes nor goes, is neither made nor unmade, nor affected; space neither stands up to, nor as such does space last, nor endure; such is neither produced nor stopped. The same is true of all dharmas which are, as this fashion of space, indiscriminate. [298] Only within mind's less refined activity as consciousness is thought lent of itself to discriminate...and such fathers this great **delusion**, mothers this great **illusion**, and begets this great suffering. Only within mind's exceedingly refined activity toward cognizance of **pure spacelike awareness** is thought lent of itself to reveal it's nature from beyond even uniform stillness and **emptiness**. As such is realized as naught, and devoid of any possible notion evolved of subjective states or objective perusal, is begotten of nothing and purely spontaneous. To even say borne of the stuff of stars, does **Suchness** no justice, yet provides a general directive. As this **emptiness** of skandhas neither comes nor goes, neither does this **emptiness** of dharmas, for dharmas are situated as **emptiness**, and situated as such these dharmas do not depart. These are situated as **signless**, **wishless**, ineffective; as non-production, no-birth, non-arising as absence of relativity and polarity, as **dream** and self, as this **boundless**, as this calm quiet, as Nirvana, as this Unrecoverable; these neither come, nor go, and are situated as immobility; these are situated as form, etc., [299] and also as **full enlightenment** of Arhats and **PratyekaBuddhas**.

The **wisdom** of a Bodhisattva

Subhuti: Who can understand this **perfection of wisdom**?

The Lord: **Bodhisattvas** which course under Tathagatas, and which mature these wholesome roots.

Subhuti: What is own-being to such as these?

The Lord: To these, own-being is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable from any need for discipline.

Subhuti: **Bodhisattvas** so situated as these fully know this resort, these demonstrate and show this as available to all beings? Is it in this sense these resort to all beings? [300]

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. It is in this sense a **Bodhisattva**, as one knowing **full enlightenment**, resorts to countless beings.

Subhuti: A doer of what is difficult is any **Bodhisattva** which arms oneself with this armor: "To **immeasurable and incalculable** beings I indicate Nirvana."

The Lord: This armor of such a **Bodhisattva** is, however, not connected with skandhas, nor is it put on for any sake of form, feeling, perceptions, impulses, or consciousness. It is not connected with any level of **Sravakas** as **Disciples**, or **PratyekaBuddhas**, or any Buddha, nor put on for any own-self nature. Truly unconnected with any and all dharma is this armor of any **Bodhisattva** which is armed with this great armor.

Subhuti: Three standpoints one does not aspire to as a **Bodhisattva** which is armed with this great armor and which courses thus in **unfathomable wisdom**. Which three? The level of a **Sravaka**, or, **Disciple**, or of a **PratyekaBuddha**, or of a Buddha. [301]

The Lord: For what reason do you say this? This is, of course, impossible, there cannot be any **Bodhisattva** belonging to either vehicle of the **Sravakas** as **Disciples** or **PratyekaBuddhas**. **But, since ones such as these put on this armor to benefit all beings, these truly aspire to become Buddhas.**

Subhuti: **Fathomless**, O Lord, is **perfect wisdom** as such is perfection. This cannot be developed by anything, nor by anyone, nor is anything or anyone to be developed. As **perfect wisdom** nothing whatsoever has been brought to perfection. The development of **perfect wisdom** is like development of space, or all dharmas, or **non-attachment**, the **infinite**, what is non-arising, or has no-taking-hold-of.

The Lord: So it is as you say, any **Bodhisattva** making adjustments toward **unfathomable** and **perfect wisdom** is regarded as **irreversible** unto realization. Now, as such a **Bodhisattva** does not and can not settle down within **unfathomable** and **perfect wisdom**, nor in the declarations or counsels of others; one does not merely go by 'someone else' whom one puts one's trust in. As **fathomless perfection of wisdom** is taught, one is not cowed, or stolid, nor does one turn one's back; one does not tremble, nor manifest fright or terror; one does not hesitate nor doubt, nor get stupefied, but one is immersed in and fully saturated, is resolutely intent, and delights in being totally permeated in and by this vision and hearing. One knows in a former life already one explores **perfection of wisdom**. As now, as **unfathomable perfect wisdom** is taught as her perfection, one does not tremble, is not frightened, nor terrified.

Subhuti: By means of what mode does any **Bodhisattva** which does not tremble as this **unfathomable perfection of wisdom** is taught apperceive **perfect wisdom**?

The Lord: A **Bodhisattva** apperceives **perfect wisdom** through a series [of thoughts] which are inclined toward **all-knowledge**. Such is this process of **perfection of wisdom**.

Subhuti: How does one apperceive such a series of thoughts? [303]

The Lord: As a series of thoughts which indicate space, are prone to space, steadily yield non-substance as space. This apperception is realized as a series of thoughts which indicate **full awareness**. And why? **Full awareness** is **immeasurable** and **unlimited**. What is **immeasurable** and **unlimited**...this is not form, nor any skandha. This is not attainment, nor reunion, nor getting anywhere; not any path nor its fruit; not cognition, nor consciousness; no genesis, nor destruction, nor production, or passing away, or stopping, neither development, nor annihilation. Such is not made by anything, nor does this come from anywhere, such does not go to anywhere, as such does not stand in any place or spot. On the contrary, such can merely be indicated as "**immeasurable, unlimited**." As **immeasurable infinite** space is **immeasurable** full, or **infinite awareness**. This is **immeasurableness** as such does not, nay cannot lend itself to being fully known by anything, be it form, or any skandha, or any of **these six perfections**. Form is **all-knowledge**, and so are the skandhas, and even **these six perfections**.

Here now, **Sakra** approached [304] and said: **Unfathomable**, O Lord, is **perfect wisdom**. It is impossible to fully fathom, impossible to fully see, impossible to fully cognize or understand. This thought of Tathagatas which considers this depth of dharma, and who, seated on this terrace of enlightenment, has just realized **full enlightenment**, is inclined to carefree non-action, and not to demonstration of dharma.

The Lord: So it is. Deep certainly is this dharma I fully know. Nothing has been, or will be, or is fully known, and such is this **unfathomable** depth of this dharma. This dharma which I fully know is **unfathomable** as the depth of space, beyond the depth of the self, the depth not-coming of all dharmas, and of their not going. [305]

Sakra: It is wonderful, O Lord, it is astonishing, O Well-Gone! As contrary to the ways of the whole world is this dharma demonstrated, - it teaches one not to seize upon dharmas, yet this world is wont to grasp at anything.

Chapter XVI – [Equanimity of a Bodhisattva]

[There is no absolute basis for discrimination; all dharmas have the same real nature beyond any description, beyond conceptualization, but still called Suchness, or non-duality: not two, not one]

Go to verses

Subhuti: As non-observation of all dharmas, to be sure, is this dharma set forth. Nowhere is this dharma obstructed. Identical with space this dharma is, beyond even ultimacy marked with **non-obstruction**, as no trace can be purely cognized of such prior to, during, or after, any dharma which is indicated only by, what's best described as objective observation and appearance. When purely cognized unconditionally, dharma comes to be revealed as some 'thing' which can only seem to be what it is, yet neither is nor can be what it seems. **No-dharma exists as such yet all dharmas are**. At what seems the very least, perception will vouch for such. Yet, **perception 'itself' is identical with this mysterious dharma**. These are 'all' identical. So now, any dharmas -as- such, cognized -in- such cannot be purely cognized as other -than- such. So, here is no counterpart, as pure *emptiness* without any second, nor even a first from which a second might be determined. Such is **incalculable**, beyond number, immeasurable, truly **infinite**...purely no-thing whatsoever. Here is no opponent, as such is **beyond all opposites**. Such as this is appears without a trace. Here can be no cause, indeed, here is no cause to become as such. This is non-produced, as here is no occasion such as rebirth from some thing other than what this simply is. Here can be no path, as in truth no path exists which can be cognized.

Sakra and the Gods: Born as this image of the Lord is **Disciple** holy Subhuti, this Elder. Whichever dharma Subhuti demonstrates is merely indicated, truly an emanation of *emptiness*. [307]

Subhuti: As he is not born is Subhuti the Elder born as this image of Tathagata. He is born as this reflection of Tathagatas **Suchness**. As neither coming nor going, so Subhuti, of **Suchness** neither comes nor goes. With nothing whatsoever to establish any beginning, Subhuti the Elder simply is this Tathagatas **Suchness**. **Suchness as Tathagata and Suchness as all dharmas is this same thing**...these are 'both' **Suchness** and same as Subhuti this Elder. This image as Subhuti the Elder is **Suchness**; hence this same manner of Tathagatas.

Yet, Suchness is also empty of anything as Suchness, so as this non-image of **Suchness** Subhuti emanates. It is in this sense Elder Subhuti is emanated as this image of Tathagatas as a result of the non-establishable order of **Suchness** of Tathagata. Subhuti's **Suchness** is immutable and unchangeable, undiscriminated and undifferentiated **Suchness** of Tathagatas. Thusly Subhuti this Elder, immutable, unchangeable, undiscriminated, undifferentiated, through this **Suchness**, is this very image of any and all Tathagata.

So again, just as this Suchness of Tathagatas, immutable and undifferentiated, is nowhere obstructed, so also Suchness of all dharmas is immutable and undifferentiated. **Suchness** of Tathagatas, and this **Suchness** of all dharmas, are **infinite** and **unlimited** **Suchness**, **neither two, nor any division of any one is possible. A non-dual Suchness**, however, is nowhere, is 'from' nowhere, 'belongs to' nowhere. It is as it is **Suchness** belonging nowhere it is **non-dual**. Here through non-producible **Suchness** this Elder Subhuti is emanated even as non-image of all Tathagatas. Non-producible **Suchness**, however, is no time not **Suchness** [308] and **non-dual**. It is in this non-sense [be careful with this!] Elder Subhuti emanates as any and all imagery of 'the race' of Tathagatas beyond any and all phenomena. As **Suchness** of Tathagata is undiscriminated and undifferentiated, at all times and in all dharmas, so **Suchness** of the Emanant Subhuti.

For this reason, although this seems a duality in which Subhuti has been conjured up from Suchness of Tathagatas, nevertheless nothing is lopped off 'from' any Suchness, which as unbound infinity devoid even of any center or direction, remains perfect and unbroken, as one cannot apprehend any real or imagined outside agent which could break such apart. In this sense is the Emanant Subhuti the Elder [as other than Eminent] emanated as this image of any Tathagata.

As Suchness of Tathagata cannot be other than, or outside Suchness of any and all dharmas, so also Suchness of Subhuti. So also, whatever is, or appears as outside Suchness of dharmas, this is nothing which is not also Suchness. Suchness of Subhuti is here just the same as Suchness of all dharmas, Suchness of all Tathagatas. Subhuti the Elder undergoes this experience of Suchness of all dharmas. As such an emanated image of Suchness is Subhuti called "emanated such as Tathagatas." It is also by and as Suchness of Tathagatas [and not only his own] he conforms to Suchness. It is just through Suchness of Tathagatas he conforms to any 'past' Suchness, as it is also through any 'past' Suchness he conforms to Suchness of Tathagatas. Likewise with future and present dharmas as Suchness. It is through Suchness of Tathagatas he conforms to any such 'thing' as past, future and present Suchness, and it is through any past, future and present Suchness he conforms to Suchness of Tathagatas. In this sameness of elucidation, Suchness of Subhuti, and any past, future and present Suchness, and Suchness of the Tathagatas, are not two, nor any division such as any past, future, or present. Suchness of any and all dharmas and Suchness of Subhuti are anywhere or as anyway not two, nor any division. [309] And also, Suchness of the Lord as he is a Bodhisattva is Suchness of the Lord as he realizes full enlightenment. And this is same Suchness through which any Bodhisattva, as one definitely realizes full enlightenment, comes to be called a 'Tathagata'.

[Another translation: Subhuti: The suchness of the Tathagata, the one who has disappeared by awakening as Reality, is the very same as the suchness of all possible structures of relativity. So the pure presence of Subhuti the Elder is universal pure presence. ... Thus it can be said that the unidentifiable Subhuti now speaking is simply indivisible, undifferentiated suchness and is therefore a living image of universal Buddha nature. ...

The transparent suchness of Buddha and the transparent suchness of all phenomena are simply suchness - not divided or divisible, not multiple, not even single. This pure presence, without any second reality or subreality, is not located anywhere, nor does it come from anywhere, nor does it belong anywhere, much less is it going anywhere or evolving in any way. It is precisely because this pure presence does not belong anywhere that it is total and simple. ...

At all times, and timelessly, suchness remains without substantial structure and therefore without essential description, although it appears effortlessly as Subhuti, as Shakyamuni Buddha and as all phenomena. Although there may seem to be two beings - that is, Subhuti the disciple as a separate image of Buddha, his master - nothing has been broken away from the original Buddha presence which can now be called the image of Subhuti, because pure presence remains unbroken and unbreakable. – Quoted in [this article](#) from Lex Hixon's Mother of all Buddha]

[The earth shakes and some Bodhisattva felt to the Hinayana levels]

As this disquisition of Suchness of the Tathagatas takes place, the great earth shakes in six ways, stirs, quakes, is agitating, resounding and tumbling, as Tathagata remove any obstruction to full enlightenment.

Subhuti: It is thus, O Gods, Subhuti the Elder is emanates as this formless form of Tathagata. But he is not emanated as an image of form, nor any fruits of a holy life, from the fruit of a Stream-winner to Buddhahood. As any dharmas which may appear to be born after the image of anything, or in any image of which these may appear to be born, do not exist, still are these not got at, thusly Subhuti the Elder emanates in the image of Tathagata.

Sariputra: Suchness, O Lord, courses beyond even depth!

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra.

Yet as this disquisition of Suchness is expounded, the minds of three hundred monks are freed from the outflows, without any further clinging. Five hundred nuns obtain the pure, dispassionate and unstained dharma-eye. [310]

Five thousand Gods, who in the past had made the necessary preparations, acquire this patient acceptance of dharmas which fail to be produced. And the minds of six thousand Bodhisattvas are freed from the outflows, without any further clinging.

[A Bodhisattva needs both adapted skillful means and the perfection of wisdom; not accepting, not rejecting]

Sariputra knows the thoughts of these Bodhisattvas are free from the outflows, without any further clinging, and asks the Lord for the reason, or cause, of such.

The Lord: These Bodhisattvas honor five hundred Buddhas, and during all this time are generous, disciplined, perfecting patience, exercise diligence, and concentration. But these are not upheld by perfect wisdom and lack in skill in means. And so, although these gain this path of emptiness, course in Signlessness, put their minds to work on Wishlessness, yet still wanting skill in means these realize the reality limit, and come forth on the level of Sravaka Disciple or PratyekaBuddha, still not coming forth toward the level of a Buddha.

Suppose here is a very huge bird, one hundred, or up to five hundred miles large, but without any wings, or with crippled or damaged wings. This bird now wants to fly down to Jambudvipa from the Heaven of the Gods of Thirty-three. In intermediate space, the middle of its journey [311] to Jambudvipa, it wants to return to the Gods of Thirty-three, is it able to do so?

Sariputra: No, Lord.

The Lord: And can it hope to come down on Jambudvipa without damage or injury?

Sariputra: No, Lord. It is bound to get damaged and injured, and as it drops down on Jambudvipa it incurs death or deadly pain. Just the fact that, whereas its body is huge, the strength of its wings is insufficient, so it just drops down from above.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra. Even as a Bodhisattva, after one raises one's mind to full enlightenment, for countless aeons, gives gifts, shows discipline, perfects patience, exercises diligence, and has excellent concentration, how ever great this setting forth and this thought raised to full enlightenment, -as one is not upheld by perfect wisdom and lacks skill in means, one is bound to fall on the level of Sravaka Disciple or PratyekaBuddha.

Furthermore, Sariputra, it may be as this Bodhisattva brings to mind, and retains in one's mind, [312] of the Buddhas and Lords, past, future and present, the self-discipline, the concentration, the wisdom, the emancipation, the vision and cognition of emancipation, -but all this after the manner of a sign, this sign being an object of attention, a basis of recognition, or some such occasion for entrancement. This one now neither knows nor sees self-discipline of Tathagatas, nor their concentration, or wisdom, or emancipation, nor their vision and cognition of emancipation. Ignorant of these, blind to these, one hears this word 'emptiness', treats this as a sign, and wishes to covert [this (imagined) mass of merit] over into full enlightenment [which one regards as emptiness]. As consequence such a one as this remains on the level of a Sravaka Disciple or PratyekaBuddha, -as the fact is, this one is not upheld by perfect wisdom, and as well does this one lack in skill in means, both more silent than a whisper, and a gentle wind from space providing innate guidance.

Sariputra: As I understand the meaning of the Lord's teaching, although a Bodhisattva is joined to a huge carriage of merit, as long as this one is not upheld by perfect wisdom and is without skill in means, such a one lacks the good friend, and this one's attainment of full enlightenment is uncertain. A Bodhisattva aspiring to reveal full enlightenment for others and self, in this develops this perfection of wisdom, even as skillful means.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra. [313]

Sakra and the Gods: Unfathomable, O Lord, is perfect wisdom! Difficult to win, exceedingly hard to win is full enlightenment!

The Lord: So it is, O Gods. Deep is this perfection of wisdom. Difficult to win, exceedingly hard to win is full enlightenment, as one is weak in wisdom, below the mark in diligence and resolve, unskilled in means, and as one serves friends who have less than good intent and action.

[Emptiness of the Bodhisattva; they do not consider themselves as separate/different, nor the same as others]

[Another translation – see [passage 22](#) “Who attains enlightenment?” from Lex Hixon’s Mother of all Buddhas]

Subhuti: How is it the Lord says **full enlightenment** is difficult to know , exceedingly difficult to acknowledge, as here is no one who can get at enlightenment? As emanations of *emptiness* are all dharmas, no dharma exists which is able to win enlightenment. **All dharmas are empty.** This dharma for the forsaking of which dharma is demonstrated, this dharma does not exist. As well is this dharma which [314] might have been enlightened in **full enlightenment**, and this which could have been enlightened, and this which might have cognized [the enlightenment], and this which could have cognized such, -all these dharmas are *empty*. In this manner I am inclined to think that **full enlightenment** is easy to win, not hard to win. (*i.e. Emptiness of the three: subject, object, action*)

The Lord: As this cannot possibly come about is **full enlightenment difficult to obtain, attain, or get at**, as in reality this enlightenment is not here, for this can neither be discriminated nor figured as any base or ultimacy whatsoever, as this is not fabricated [in either reality or false appearances].

Sariputra: As this is *empty* is this hard to win, O Subhuti. Such does not occur to space as winning **full enlightenment**. As such...for instance, as without own-being...any and all dharmas are [already] known in enlightenment. **All dharmas are space.** And, Subhuti, if **full enlightenment** were easy to win, then countless **Bodhisattvas** would not turn away from this. As countless **Bodhisattvas** do turn away from this, here one can discern [315] **full enlightenment** is hard to win, exceedingly hard to win.

Subhuti: But, Sariputra, does form, feeling, perception, impulse, or consciousness, **turn away from full enlightenment?**

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Is this dharma which turns away from **full enlightenment** other than form, etc.?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does **Suchness** of form, etc., turn away?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti. [316]

Subhuti: Is this dharma which turns away from **full enlightenment** other than the **Suchness** of form, etc.?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does form, etc., know **full enlightenment?**

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Is the dharma which knows **full enlightenment** other than form, etc.?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does **Suchness** of form, etc., know **full enlightenment?**

Sariputra: No, Subhuti. [317]

Subhuti: Is the dharma which knows **full enlightenment** other than the **Suchness** of form, etc.?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Should form, etc., be known in **full enlightenment**, or any dharma other than form, etc. [318] or the **Suchness** of form, etc., or a dharma other than the **Suchness** of form, etc.?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does **Suchness** turn away from **full enlightenment?**

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Is some dharma which turns away from full enlightenment in Suchness?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti. [319]

Subhuti: What, Sariputra, is this dharma which turns away from full enlightenment, as we consider this as standing in this nature of dharmas, which is just *emptiness*, as so to is this manner of taking no stand in any dharma? Or what dharma is this Suchness? Is it perhaps Suchness is turned away?

Sariputra: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: As thus in ultimate truth and as things stand, no dharma is apprehended as real, what is this dharma which is turned away from full enlightenment?

Sariputra: As one adopts this method of considering dharmas as ultimate reality, which Subhuti the Elder uses in this exposition, indeed here is no dharma which turns away from full enlightenment. But now, Venerable Subhuti, here is no longer any ground for the distinction of these who set their hearts on enlightenment into three kinds of persons, who differ with respect to the vehicle which these have chosen, as described by the Tathagata. According to this exposition of the Venerable Subhuti, here is only one vehicle [for those whose hearts are set on enlightenment], this being the Buddha-vehicle, the Bodhisattva-vehicle, the great vehicle.

Purna: First of all the Venerable Sariputra must ask the Venerable Subhuti the Elder whether he admits even one single kind of being whose heart is set on enlightenment, and who uses either the vehicle of the Sravaka Disciples, or that of the PratyekaBuddhas, or the great vehicle.

Sariputra: Subhuti, do you admit even one single kind of being whose heart is set on enlightenment, and who uses either the vehicle of the Disciples, or that of the Bodhisattvas, or the great vehicle? [320]

Subhuti: Sariputra, do you see as Suchness of Suchness even one single being whose heart is set on enlightenment [i.e. as a real entity], be this one who uses the vehicle of the Sravaka Disciples, or that of the PratyekaBuddhas, or the great vehicle?

Sariputra: No so, Subhuti. Suchness, first of all, is not apprehended as of three kinds, how much less any being whose heart is set on enlightenment.

Subhuti: Is now Suchness apprehended as of one kind even?

Sariputra: Not so, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Do you now perhaps see in Suchness even one single dharma which would constitute a being whose heart is set on enlightenment?

Sariputra: Not so, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Thus in ultimate truth and as things stand, such a dharma which constitutes any being whose heart is set on enlightenment cannot be apprehended, where do you get the idea "this one belongs to the vehicle of the Disciples, that one to the vehicle of the PratyekaBuddhas, that one to the great vehicle?" Any Bodhisattva which hears this absence of difference, distinction or differentiation between the three kinds of persons who set their hearts on enlightenment, in so far as we are each and all 'encompassed' as Suchness, and do not become cowed or stolid in mind, do not turn back, now any of these one's know such as these go forth to enlightenment. [321]

The Lord: Well said, Subhuti. Through this might and sustaining power of Tathagata you are inspired to say this.

Sariputra: To which enlightenment, O Lord, will these Bodhisattvas go forth?

The Lord: To this full and supreme enlightenment, so difficult to win.

[The Bodhisattva helps all sentient beings without any discrimination; without discrimination]

Subhuti: How does a **Bodhisattva** behave, how does one train, as one wants to go forth in realization to this **full enlightenment**?

The Lord: The **Bodhisattva** adopts **the same attitude towards all beings, one's mind is even, equanimous towards all beings** [V.141], one does not handle others with an uneven mind, but with a mind which is friendly, well disposed, helpful, free from aversion, avoiding harm and hurt, and handles others as if these were one's mother, father, son or daughter. [322] As a refuge and one able to benefit any and all beings does any **Bodhisattva** behave towards all beings, does one train oneself, as one wants to know **full enlightenment**. A **Bodhisattva** stands in abstention from all evil, as also one gives gifts, guards discipline, perfects **patience**, exerts diligence, enters into mental stabilization, achieves mastery through **perfection of wisdom**, surveys **conditioned co-production**, both in direct and in reverse order; and also one instigates, incites and encourages others to do the same. One takes the same stance in everything from the meditation on these truths, to such a stage as one reaches certainty. As a **Bodhisattva** this one is liberated from **defilements** and samsaric bondage, and as one matures any and all beings, instigates these to do the same, and incites and encourages these. As one longs eagerly for all this and trains oneself in it, so everything is uncovered to ones such as these, from form to the established order of dharma.

Chapter XVII – [Irreversible]

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Chapter XVIII – [The need to combine the two accumulations]

[All dharma are at the edge of existence and non-existence, of samsara and Nirvana – and we need to act more and more in accord with this]

[Go to verses](#)

Subhuti: This is wonderful, O Lord, how great and with what **unlimited and measureless qualities** a **Bodhisattva** is endowed! [V.143 – chapter XVII]

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. **Irreversible Bodhisattvas** [V.144] come to reveal to self and others pure, undifferentiated cognition as non-produced, innate and simply beyond any conceptual fixations as 'self and others', and still just beyond any notions born of these [skandhas]. **Suchness** comes to be realized as it's truth of centerlessness, boundary-lessness, beginning- and thus end-lessness, and to which **Sravaka Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddhas** as yet have no claim.

Subhuti: Truly beyond any convention or standard whatsoever the Lord can and does expound how an **irreversible Bodhisattva** represents and emanates these attributes, tokens and **signs**. So now might the Lord indicate **these unfathomable positions** of **Bodhisattvas** as are connected through inconceivable **perfect wisdom**?

The Lord: Well said Subhuti. Surely, you bring up **unfathomable positions** as you want to hear discoursing on this subject as well. "**Unfathomable**", Subhuti, is **Emptiness** which is a synonym of **Signlessness**, **Wishlessness**, **Unaffectedness**. Such is Unproduced, as in...No-birth, Non-existent, Dispassioned of Cessation, Nirvana and Departing. [342]

Subhuti: Is this a synonym only of these, or of all dharmas?

The Lord: Indeed Subhuti, **such is a synonym of all dharmas**, as form, feeling, impulses, perception and consciousness, is **unfathomable**. Choose any dharma or dharmas whatsoever, and **unfathomable**, among all such and **unlimited** is synonymous with and as such. How are any and all skandhas **unfathomable**? Just as **unfathomable** as **Suchness**, so **unfathomable** is any and all skandhas. As **unfathomable** **Suchness** is any and all skandhas, etc., to include nothing throughout, even as no skandha...**so completely unfathomable is form, feeling, perception, impulse and consciousness**. [V.150] Even as here is no form, etc., this is the **fathomlessness** of form, etc.

Subhuti: Such is wonderful, O Lord, how subtle a device is -such- as allows for **this relativity of form, etc.**, and indicates **Unfathomable** Nirvana at this same time. (*i.e. Inseparability of samsara/existence and Nirvana/non-existence.*)

[The immeasurable determination of the Bodhisattva to live in accord with this]

The Lord: As a Bodhisattva reflects, ponders and meditates on these unfathomable positions which are connected through inconceivable perfect wisdom, and strives to stand, train and progress as is ordained, described and explained in this perfection of wisdom, [343][V.151?] now, as one may do so for, say, one day only, how great the deed is which one does during this one day! As a person, moved by considerations of greed, had made a date [V.152] with a handsome, attractive, and good-looking other person, and as now this other person is held back by yet something or other and could not leave one's house, what do you think, Subhuti, with what would this other person's preoccupations be connected?

Subhuti: With this other person, of course. One thinks about this other one coming, about things these do together, and about joy, fun and delight one has with the other.

The Lord: Does this person entertain many such ideas in the course of this day?

Subhuti: Many indeed, O Lord.

The Lord: As many such ideas as this person entertains in the course of this day, so for each vibration comprising each of the thoughts from each idea, hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of kotis of aeons for each of these vibrations, a Bodhisattva spurns birth-and-death, turns one's back on it, and has resolve enough to end this.

[The path consists of the two accumulations: all virtuous methods, merit, have to be combined with the perfection of wisdom to be efficient, to be in accord with reality]

As one stands, trains, progresses, meditates and strives as is ordained, described and explained in this **perfection of wisdom**, **one's faults and obscuring defilements dissolve** which are a turning away from **full enlightenment**. [344]

- As one **Bodhisattva** gives one's self up to devotion to **perfect wisdom**, and does deeds for one day only while dwelling completely in mental activities connected with **perfect wisdom**;
- and **yet another Bodhisattva** lacks connections with **perfect wisdom**, but gives gifts for countless aeons...
- more discretely refined attributes has the **Bodhisattva** which, for one day only, makes endeavours connected with **perfect wisdom**.

- A **Bodhisattva** which for one day only makes endeavours connected with **perfect wisdom**, begets merit other than
- the greatest merit of another **Bodhisattva** which for countless aeons gives and bestows gifts on all classes of holy persons, -from Stream-winners to Tathagatas - **but lacks this discretion regarding perfect wisdom**.

- And, as the other **Bodhisattva** not only bestows gifts as indicated, but in addition observes these moral precepts, **but still lacks in connecting these with perfect wisdom**,
- this **Bodhisattva** which dwells in connection with **perfect wisdom**, begets other merit, as this one emerges from this mental work on **perfect wisdom**, and demonstrates dharma.

- And this remains true [345] even as the other **Bodhisattva** in addition were endowed with **patience**. Even as in addition the other **Bodhisattva** exerts vigour, and makes endeavours about the trances and wings of enlightenment, **but is still lacking connections in perfect wisdom**...
- a **Bodhisattva** which, as one gives this gift of dharma, as said before, turns this over to full enlightenment, one such as this begets a different type of merit all together which benefits all sentient beings, than the **Bodhisattva** which yet does not make such connections in **perfect wisdom**.
- The merit of a **Bodhisattva** which not only gives this gift of dharma, not only turns this over to full enlightenment, but employs the kind of turning over which is being taught in this **perfection of wisdom** begets another type of merit indeed...beyond any reckonings whatsoever, of 'greater or lesser'.

- So, as a **Bodhisattva** which does all this, makes no further efforts than these visible and more tangible ones about it in meditative seclusion, [346] this one's merit is very great perhaps, yet still, different than
- this merit of one which also makes effort about this in meditative seclusion and **which in addition, is taken hold of by perfect wisdom** as coursing in her perfection, and now is open in this meditative seclusion, and is not devoid of **perfect wisdom**. The latter begets yet other merit.

[Accumulating merit while realizing its emptiness; that is the mostly efficient path]

Subhuti: How can one say that one begets the greater merit since the Lord has described all accumulations as the result of false **discrimination**?

The Lord: In this case also the accumulation of merit on the part of any **Bodhisattva** who courses in **perfect wisdom** must be described as **just empty, worthless, insignificant and unsubstantial**. To the extent any **Bodhisattva** goes on contemplating all dharmas in this manner, to this extent this is one which does not lack affinities with **perfect wisdom**. And to the extent one does not lack affinities with **perfect wisdom**, **to this extent one begets immeasurable and incalculable merit, beyond any tabulation of such as would result in accumulation deemed as worth as well.**

Subhuti: Is here any distinction made or difference noticed between **immeasurable and incalculable**?

The Lord: Such is "**immeasurable**" as in such, even measurement cannot exist nor take place. Such is "**incalculable**" as even any sense or effort to count such is exhausted and even numbers to count such as one or even as one divided into many cannot take place.

Subhuti: Is here any reason to assume skandhas (form, feeling, perception, impulse, consciousness) are **immeasurable**?

The Lord: Yes. [347]

Subhuti: Of what is this term "**immeasurable**" a synonym?

The Lord: Are not all dharmas described as "**empty**"?

Subhuti: As simply, and quite **empty** Tathagata describes all dharmas.

The Lord: And being **empty**, such are also **inexhaustible** of **emptiness**. And what is **emptiness** is also **immeasurable**ness. So, here and now, according to ultimate reality, neither distinction nor difference is apprehended between dharmas, nor can any 'between' even begin to be assumed. As talk these are described by Tathagata. One merely talks as one speaks of "**immeasurable**", or "**incalculable**", or "**inexhaustible**", or of "**empty**", or "**signless**", or "**wishless**", or 'this Uneffected', or "Non-production", "no-birth", "non-existence", "dispassion", "cessation", "Nirvana". This exposition is being described by Tathagata as the consummation of demonstrations. [348]

Subhuti: It is wonderful to see such an extent to which Tathagata demonstrates the **true nature of dharmas**, and yet one cannot properly talk about **true nature of dharmas**. As I humbly understand this meaning of Tathagatas teaching, neither any nor all dharmas can be talked about, in any proper sense?

The Lord: So it is, for **none can properly express emptiness of dharmas in words**, and ever and always can such, be merely indicated.

[Accumulating merit and wisdom, practicing the six paramitas, while realizing their real nature, while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action; the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting]

Subhuti: Can something truly have growth, or diminution, as it is beyond all distinctive words, and even characteristics?

The Lord: No Subhuti.

Subhuti: But, as here is no growth or diminution of any entity or dharma which is beyond all distinctive words and even characteristics, so here can no growth or diminution of **these six perfections** occur. And now, how does a **Bodhisattva** realize full enlightenment through the force of **these six perfections**, as these do not grow, and how does one even come close to full enlightenment, since without fulfilling these **perfections**, one cannot come close to full enlightenment? [349][V.156]

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. Here is certainly no growth or diminution of a perfection-entity. A **Bodhisattva** coursing in **perfection of wisdom** who develops affinities toward **perfect wisdom**, and comes to be **skilled in means**, does obviously not think, "this **perfection of giving** grows, this **perfection of giving** diminishes". Rather, such a one knows, "this **perfection of giving** is a mere word and characteristic". As one gives a gift one is turning any and all 'merit' over thus: **in totally equanimous reflection for any accountability whatsoever**, one comes to reveal that such as 'merits' cannot be had outside of or in addition to the **infinite** fullness of **emptiness**, for such is "always" already had...merely in the simple realization that even the mental activities, the production of thought, the roots of good which are involved in the act of **giving**...is to and for the total benefit of countless sentient beings. However, in such a revelation one turns these over in such an 'automatic' way as one respects this actual reality of **full enlightenment**. One proceeds in this way as one takes upon oneself these **moral obligations**, as one perfects oneself in **patience**, [350][157a] as one **exerts diligence**, enters into the **trances**, courses in **perfection of wisdom**, as one develops and maintains affinities to **perfect wisdom**. See?

Subhuti: So now, what is this supreme enlightenment? [351][V157b?]

The Lord: It is **Suchness** Subhuti. However, **Suchness** **neither grows nor diminishes**. A **Bodhisattva** which repeatedly and often dwells in mental activities connected with **Suchness** dwells near supreme enlightenment, and any such as these do not lose these mental activities. This is certain as here can be neither growth nor diminution of any entity or dharma as such is beyond any and all words and even characteristics, and here neither **the perfections**, nor any and all dharmas, can grow or diminish. So, it is thus as dwelling in mental activities of this kind a **Bodhisattva** is one ever nearing perfect enlightenment, yet in **Suchness** also are neither considerations of distance as, near or far, nor of time as, sooner or later.

For now Subhuti, this is all.

Chapter XIX – [How to transcend causality, the wheel of life, the world & self/mind]

Conditioned Co-production [/ dependent co-origination of cause & effect]

[Go to verses](#)

Subhuti: As a Bodhisattva realizes full enlightenment, is this due to production of the first thought of enlightenment, or due to the last thought of enlightenment? These two acts of thought are nowhere synthesized [and here these cannot cooperate in producing a result]. How can any accumulation of a Bodhisattva's wholesome root take place?

The Lord: What do you think, Subhuti, is this wick of this burning oil lamp burned up at the first incidence of the flame, or at the last incidence of the flame?

Subhuti: Not so, O Lord! It is not burned up at the first incidence of this flame, nor independent of it, and is also not burned up at the last incidence of this flame, nor independent of it.

The Lord: Is now this wick being definitely burned up?

Subhuti: Yes, Lord.

The Lord: In this way is it neither through this first nor through this last thought of enlightenment, nor independent of these [353] that a Bodhisattva realizes full enlightenment. One does not come to realize this through any of these productions of thought, nor other than through them. And yet one does realize full enlightenment.

(i.e. No absolute cause, no total absence of cause either. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting causes. Cause and effect are not separate/different, but still not the same. One cannot exist without the other; one implies the other. They are conceptually interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.)

[About the emptiness of thought-moments, of their objects/signs, and of their karma]

Subhuti: Unfathomable is this conditioned co-production!

The Lord: Subhuti, does even the slightest portion of this first thought...whether just at this outset of this thought, or during this thought, or more towards the end of this thought...which seems to have stopped after its momentary appearance...does this get produced again at the time of the second thought? Consider also Subhuti, what of the outset of the outset, and during the duringness, etc., etc., do even these get produced again?

(i.e. Causality is flawed because cause and effect cannot exist simultaneously, nor separately in time.) So there is no real cause, effect, causality; no real subject, object, action. The three are empty of inherent existence, conceptually interdependent, inseparable, non-dual. – What triggers a cause to cause, or to stop causing. Something else. Then this cause is not the cause. It is empty of being the cause. All causes have their own causes and conditions. And this ad infinitum. And because of that there is no real cause.)

Subhuti: No Lord.

The Lord: Also once this thought thus produced is now past, (!) is this due to its very nature doomed to stop?

Subhuti: Yes it is, O Lord.

The Lord: As anything is due to its very nature doomed to stop, is this destroyed?

Subhuti: No, Lord. [354]

The Lord: This future thought which is not yet being produced, is this due to its very nature doomed to stop?

Subhuti: No, Lord [as anything which is not being produced cannot be stopped].

The Lord: So, as it comes to such a point as by its own nature it is doomed to stop, will it now be destroyed?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: As this **essential nature** of this **thought** involves neither production nor stopping, is this now being stopped?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: As any dharma is, due to this **essential original nature**, stopped already in its own being, is this dharma being stopped?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Is this **true nature of dharmas** being stopped?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Does any **Bodhisattva** stand firm in this same way in which **Suchness** stands firm?

Subhuti: Yes, one does. [355]

The Lord: Is now **Suchness** not in danger of being changed away from overtowering immobility?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: **Unfathomable** is **Suchness**.

Subhuti: It is beyond fathoming, O Lord.

The Lord: Is here and now any **thought** in **Suchness**?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Is **thought** [identical with] **Suchness**?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Is **thought** other than **Suchness**?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Can you see a **Suchness**?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: One which courses like unto **Suchness**, does one course in the **unfathomable**?

Subhuti: Such a one courses nowhere at all. As any ideas as to one's own performance neither habitually proceed in one, nor befall one.

The Lord: Where does a **Bodhisattva** course as one courses in **perfect wisdom**? [356]

Subhuti: In ultimate reality.

The Lord: As coursing in ultimate reality does any **Bodhisattva** course in a **sign**?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Is the **sign** a **sign** as in something which one does not undo by one's meditational development?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Is this **sign**, to the **Bodhisattva** who courses in **perfect wisdom**, something which is undone by one's meditational development?

Subhuti: The **Bodhisattva** does not make any efforts, while coursing in the course of a **Bodhisattva**, to reach in this present birth any state in which all **signs** are forsaken. As one makes an effort to reach in this present birth any state in which all **signs** are forsaken, as any or all Buddha-dharmas are not complete in this one, one automatically is recognized as a **Disciple**.

The skill in means of a Bodhisattva consists in this, as one cognizes any sign, both its mark and cause, and yet surrenders oneself completely to the Signless (i.e. Not accepting, not rejecting. Using it while realizing the emptiness of all elements: subject, object, action, characteristics.) [realm of dharma, in which no sign has ever arisen].

* * *

Sariputra: Does a Bodhisattva's aspiration to perfect wisdom increase as in one's dreams one develops the three doors to deliverance, i.e. the Empty, the Signless and the Wishless?

Subhuti: As this increases through development by day, this also increases in one who dreams about this. As the Lord says dreams and waking are indiscriminate, essentially the same. As [357] a Bodhisattva which aspires to perfect wisdom, day by day courses in perfect wisdom, one also in one's dreams remains close to perfect wisdom, and develops even now in abundance.

Sariputra: In one's dreams as one does a deed, wholesome or unwholesome, is this added on to the heap or collection of one's karma?

Subhuti:

- The Lord teaches all dharmas are like a dream, and infinitely so, as in such [i.e. from the standpoint of infinite reality / ultimate truth] this deed is not added to one's heap or collection of karma.
- On the other hand [from the standpoint of empirical reality / conventional truths], this deed is added to the heap and collection of one's karma when, upon waking up, one thinks the dream over, and consciously forms the notion as wanting to kill someone. How does one do this? During this dream one may dream of taking a life, and as one wakes up, thinks this dreamed of deed over like this: "It is good this being is killed! It is right this being is killed! It is just this being is killed! It is I who killed this being." Such thoughts are equivalent to the conscious notion this one wants to kill someone.
- (i.e. There is no real subject, object, action. They are all empty. But empty doesn't mean complete non-existence. So the deeds and their karma are empty of inherent existence in the absolute, but still not completely non-existent in the conventional sense of the term.)

[Karma is produce only when one makes an implicit mistaken assumption about reality – thinking something is inherently existent, an object existing independently of the subject – remove this mistake and you transcend the whole wheel of life with its 12 links, the whole samsara]

Sariputra: As a result of conscious reflections, the deed of any particular person is added on to this persons collection of karma, so to this deed of Buddha, the Lord, as he thinks to himself and consciously forms this notion he wants to enter extinction, [358] will this not also be added to the Buddha's heap and collection of karma? (i.e. Does the Buddha create karma since he acts (actions of body, speech and mind).)

[Another translation: If, as a result of such conscious reflection, the deed of that man is added on to his collection of karma, then the deed of the Buddha, the Lord, when he, thinking to himself, consciously forms the notion that he wants to enter extinction, [--that deed] will also be added to the Buddha's heap and collection of karma? (Perfection, 1973: 215). – from Streng's article, quote #16]

Subhuti: No, indeed not, Sariputra, as the Tathagata is beyond reflections and discriminations. Empty awareness beyond any objective support, raises to, or rather reveals result as neither deed nor thought, as such simply cannot.

A deed 'arises' only with an objective support as basis and not without one. (i.e. To create karma a deed must be based on ignorance, on the reification of something, on the assumption that something is inherently existing. The Buddha doesn't make this mistake since he is constantly aware of the real nature of everything as he acts for the benefits of all sentient beings. So there is no karma formation in the usual sense of the terms, and thus no suffering later.)

This result of false view, raises or reveals the assumption to reality, even though a mirage, a phantom spector now in both this objective reality, as well as the dream-world. This type of thinking arises with only a (personally) untested presumption for it's objective support, not without one (and sadly in most cases, habitually left beneath any discursive perusal).

As 'intellectual' acts can only refer to dharmas such as are seen, heard, felt, or known, in this unchecked thinking all results necessarily do miss the mark, and are inaccurately assumed as fact and truth, and thusly projected out onto the myriad worlds as such. (i.e. All usual conceptualization are necessarily based on the assumption of the inherent existence of something or another, so all conceptualization is flawed. But that is not the case for a Buddha who uses conceptualization, because he is not making this implicit assumption while using language.)

[Another translation: No, indeed not, Sariputra, for the Tathagata is one who has forsaken all reflections and discriminations. Space on its own cannot raise a deed or thought without objective support, not without one. A thought can arise only with an objective support, not without one. Intellectual acts must refer to dharmas which are seen, heard, felt, or known. In respect to some objects, intellectual acts take defilement upon themselves, in respect of others purification. Acts of will and deeds can therefore arise only with objective support, not without (Perfection, 1973: 216). – from Streng's article, quote #17]

Without giving an objective support as such to such as is here being done in this instant...in regards to some objects intellectual acts take on defilement or obscuration quite naturally as just seen, while with regards to others, these don purification through revelations of non-objective, non-productive contemplation as pure awareness beyond any basis. Acts of will and deeds only arise with objective support, not without. Suchness thus comes to reveal 'itself', of 'itself', and so neither adds to nor takes away from any dharmas whatsoever. Your heap and collection of karma, Sariputra, only reveals it's true nature of itself, as well. (i.e. Karma is also empty, also of the same real nature as everything else.)

* * *

Sariputra: As the Lord describes **objective supports** as isolated-inaccessible-not-findable [without an inherent relation to a subject], how can an act of will arise only with **objective support**, and not without? (*i.e. About the inseparability of subject, object, action.*)

[**Another translation:** "Since the Lord has described all objective support as isolated (vivikta) [without an inherent relation to a subject], how can an act of will arise only with objective support, and not without?" (Perfection, 1973: 216). – from [Streng's article, quote #18](#)]

Subhuti: An act of will is raised only with an **objective support**, and not without, **in the sense one treats an actually non-existent objective support as a sign, as an objective support.**

In fact also **the act of will** is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, and also the **sign**.

And so are **Karma-formations** which are conditioned by **ignorance**, and so **all the links of conditioned co-production, up to decay and death conditioned by birth, and vice-versa**. Even so **objective supports** are isolated-inaccessible-not-findable. The act of will is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable from the **sign** [which seems to cause it], and it arises only in reference to the conventional expressions current in the world. (*i.e. The emptiness of the subject, object and action; their conceptual interdependence, inseparability, non-duality: not two, not one. The whole 12 links of dependent origination are empty of inherent existence. Not existent, but still not completely non-existent either. They exist conventionally.*)

[**Another translation:** An act of will is raised only with an objective support, and not without, in the sense that one treats an actually non-existent objective support as a sign, as an objective support, in fact also the act of will is isolated, and also the sign. And so are karma-formations which are conditioned on ignorance, and so all the links of conditioned co-production up to decay and death conditioned by birth. Even so, objective supports are isolated. The act of will is isolated from the sign [which seem to cause it] and it arises only in reference to the conventional expressions current in the world (Perfection, 1973: 216). – from [Streng's article, quote #19](#)]

Sariputra: As in one's **dream** a **Bodhisattva** gives a gift, and dedicates it **to full enlightenment**, can this gift effectively called dedicated? [359]

Subhuti: We are face to face with Maitreya, the **Bodhisattva**, the **great being**. The Tathagata has predicted his supreme enlightenment. He is a direct eyewitness of this matter, he can dispose of this matter.

Sariputra: Maitreya, Subhuti the Elder has said: "Here is Maitreya, the **Bodhisattva**, the **great being**! He can dispose of this matter." Dispose of this matter, Venerable Ajita!

Maitreya: With reference to what the Venerable Subhuti says, what corresponds to these words 'Maitreya' and "he can dispose of this matter? Does my form reply? Or my feeling, perception, impulses, or consciousness? Does my outward appearance reply, or my shape? Or does **emptiness** of form reply, or **emptiness** of feeling, perception, impulses or consciousness? Obviously **emptiness** of form, etc., does not have any capacity to reply. [360] Nor do I see any dharma which can reply, or which may reply, or by which one does reply, nor any dharma which is predicted to supreme enlightenment. (*i.e. Emptiness of the subject, of the "will" master.*)

Sariputra: Maitreya, do you really witness these dharmas in this way, in which you teach?

Maitreya: I do not. Even I do not, nor can I know these dharmas, do not apprehend, do not see these, in this way in which these words express, and these **thoughts** reflect. But certainly this body can not touch these, speech can not express these, mind can not even consider these. These things indicate own-being of all dharmas, yet even these things are without any own-being.

Sariputra thought: Deeply wise, indeed, is this **Bodhisattva** Maitreya the **great being**. How he expounds the **perfection of wisdom** in which he courses for such a long time!

The Lord: Why does this **thought** occur to you? Can you, Sariputra, see this dharma endowed with which you have been made into an Arhat?

Sariputra: No, Lord. [361]

The Lord: In this same way this does not occur to a **Bodhisattva** which courses in **perfection of wisdom**, "this dharma is predestined **to full enlightenment**, that dharma will be predestined, this dharma is being predestined, that dharma will know **full enlightenment**." As one courses in such a way, one courses in **perfect wisdom**.

[Fears occur only one makes an implicit mistaken assumption about the self – **thinking the self is inherently existent, an object existing independently of the world** – remove this mistake and you transcend the whole wheel of life with its 12 links, the whole samsara; knowing this the Bodhisattva **exchange self for others** as a skillful means while realizing the emptiness of the three]

Coursing thus, here is no fear. Impregnated with this strength which is gained [in these coursings in baselessness], this enables persistence in any endeavours to think such as: "This is not a condition such as not to reveal enlightenment." Coursing thus, one courses unto **perfect wisdom**.

This being as it is, a **Bodhisattva** is not afraid as **when arriving in a wilderness infested with wild beasts**. Here is laid bare one's honor to **renounce everything to benefit all beings**. Reacting with **thoughts** such as: "as these wild beasts may devour this fleshly thing, just this must be freely given. **Perfection of giving** as this becomes **perfect selflessness** and of its direction turns all the more toward full realization. Coming to have revealed perfect luminosity, steps are taken in one's **Buddha-field** such as are seen no animals, as these are not regarded as 'animals' at all, and none have any concept of these as such, but rather, simply as beings living on divine food."

As well, a **Bodhisattva** is not afraid when **finding one's self in a wilderness infested by robbers**. As **Bodhisattvas** find pleasure in this wholesome practice of renouncing anything such as belongings and what ever, a **Bodhisattva** exudes **non-attachment** to even this body, having freely renounced all of which is necessary to life. Reacting to danger with a **thought** such as [362]: "As these beings need everything necessary to life, just this must be life's gift. As someone needs this life, here is felt no **ill will, anger or fury** on account of this. Against these no offensive action is taken, either by body, voice or mind. Life here is ever **an occasion to bring these perfections of generosity, discipline, and patience** to more limpid perfection, and clearing any and all obscurities to **great perfection**. As reality of great perfection, exuding such a manner in this **Buddha-field**...a wilderness infested with robbers is in no way whatsoever possible, or even conceivable. **Diligence and concentration** to this realization of perfect purity in any **Buddha-field** is so great as neither these nor any faults are known as such, or even conceivable in such."

As well, **in a waterless waste** also a **Bodhisattva** is not afraid. Such is neither alarmed nor terrified. This training resolves such as may result in quenching any thirst of any and all beings. Here one will not tremble as thinking that "as one dies of thirst one is reborn as a Preta." On the contrary, as one directs a **thought** of **great compassion** unto all beings, thinking [363]: "Alas, certainly these beings are in great need as in this world such deserts are even conceivable. As this reality of great perfection, one sees to this in this **Buddha-field** no such deserts exist, or are even conceivable, for such simply are not needed. One exudes **suchness** on any and all beings as surely these drink the most excellent water. Thus effort is exerted on behalf of all beings, so on any and all occasion(s) also the perfection of effort [diligence, vigor] is more perfected.

So, **in a foodless waste** also a **Bodhisattva** is not afraid. Such is protected with this **thought**: "**As effort is firmly exerted**, a **Buddha-field** is purified in such a way as approaching enlightenment, in this **Buddha-field** is no foodless waste...such is not even conceivable. The beings in this field are entirely happy, filled with happiness, possessed of all happiness. And thus all the intentions and plans of these beings are realized as reality. Just as with these Gods of the Thirty-three, any idea in these minds is sufficient to produce anything whatsoever these desire, so effort is exerted so these beings can realize and produce everything by merely thinking of it in their minds. In order that their legitimate intentions are fulfilled, in order that all beings, everywhere and anywhere, do not go short of any requirements of life, [364] so is this exerted effort for purity in **thought**, for the benefit of any and all beings, as at this occasion also the perfection of **concentration** is more perfect.

As such a Bodhisattva is not afraid **in a district infested by epidemics**. But such considers, reflects and deliberates as 'here is no dharma which sickness can oppress, nor is this which is called "sickness" a "dharma." In this manner **contemplate emptiness**, and do not be afraid. Do not think this "is an excessively long time to realizing **full enlightenment**," do not tremble at such a **thought**. This **thought-moment** [which in reality is not produced] is an extreme limit with no beginning; in other words, this is absence of any limit. A Bodhisattva here avoids dwelling on difficulties as such thinks "great and long is this limit with no beginning as one single **thought-moment**, in other words, no absence, as no limit." Such 'prevents' a Bodhisattva from trembling at any **thought** such as "it will be a long time until **full enlightenment**". And this as well, Subhuti, as these and other fears and terrors, be they seen, heard, felt or known, do not cause a Bodhisattva to tremble, one knows "this [any] son or daughter of good family is capable of knowing **full enlightenment**." A Bodhisattva here dons the great armor of this **thought [365]**: "Thus act, thus exert firm effort and diligence such as any and all beings in this **Buddha-field** do not suffer any sickness, and do not even know what it is. In such a way the Tathagatas have taught and thus teach, and apply this as is taught and as such master the **perfection of wisdom**, **for the benefit of all beings, such that on this occasion also the perfection of wisdom comes to fulfillment.**"

Prediction of [or about] the Goddess of the Ganges [transcending the female state]

So now *a certain woman* comes to this assembly, and sits down in it. She rises from her seat, puts her upper robe over one shoulder, salutes the Lord with folded hands, and says: "O Lord, as I am placed in these positions, I am not afraid. Without fear, I demonstrate dharma to all beings."

The Lord at this time smiles a golden smile. Its luster irradiates endless and **boundless** world systems, it rises up to the Brahma-world and returns, circulates three times round the Lord, and disappears again in the head of the Lord. As she sees this smile, this woman seizes golden flowers, and scatters these over the Lord. Without being fixed anywhere, these remain suspended in the air. [366] (*i.e. This simple smile was a revolution in Buddhism.*)

Ananda: What is this reason, O Lord, of his smile? It is not without reason the Tathagata manifests a smile.

The Lord: This Goddess of the Ganges, Ananda, is in a future period a Tathagata, 'Golden Flower' by name, -an Arhat, fully Enlightened, proficient in knowledge and conduct, Well-Gone, a knower of the world, unsurpassed, a tamer of any beings to be tamed, a teacher of Gods and people, a Buddha, a Lord. In the star-like aeon such appears in this world and realizes **full enlightenment**. As this one deceases here she ceases to be a woman, she is seen as a man. He is reborn in Abhirati, the **Buddha-field** of the Tathagata Akshobhya, in whose presence he leads the holy life. After his decease he passes from **Buddha-field** to **Buddha-field**, never deprived of the sight of the Tathagata. He goes on passing from **Buddha-field** to **Buddha-field**, from here to here, always choosing such as in which he is not without the Buddhas, the Lords. A universal monarch passes from palace to palace, and the soles of his feet never, during this entire life, tread upon the surface of the earth, [367] and he dies without ever, up to the time of his death, having trodden with his feet on the ground. Just so the Ganges Goddess passes from **Buddha-field** to **Buddha-field**, and she is never at any time deprived of the Buddhas and Lords, until the time of her **full enlightenment**.

Ananda thought: These **Bodhisattvas** which are with the Tathagata Akshobhya must actually be considered as the congregation of the Tathagata.

The Lord read Ananda's **thoughts**, and said: So it is, Ananda. These **Bodhisattvas** which lead this holy life in the **Buddha-field** of Akshobhya, the Tathagata, are known as having **emerged from the mud**, as having approached to the accomplishment of enlightenment. In addition, Ananda, the community of **disciples** of the Tathagata 'Golden Flower' are not bound by any measure. For his **disciples** are so many as here will be no measure of these. On the contrary, these are styled '**immeasurable, incalculable.**' In addition, Ananda, at this time, on this occasion in such a **Buddha-field** is no wilderness infested with wild beasts, or with robbers, and no waterless wastes, and no districts infested by epidemics and no foodless wastes. [368] All these, and all other disagreeable places in this **Buddha-field**, in no way whatsoever either is, or is conceived. It is quite certain, as the Tathagata 'Golden Flower' realizes **full enlightenment**, all these kinds of places which inspire fear and terror no longer exists, or is even conceivable.

Ananda: Who is this Tathagata in whose presence this Goddess of the Ganges planted this wholesome root of the first **thought** of enlightenment, and turned it over to supreme enlightenment?

The Lord: This is under the Tathagata Dipankara. And she actually scattered golden flowers over the Tathagata as she requested of him [this prediction to] supreme enlightenment. It is as I strewed the five lotus flowers over Dipankara, the Tathagata, and acquired the patient acceptance of dharmas which fail to be produced, Dipankara predicted this future enlightenment with the words: "You, young man, in a future period are a Tathagata, Shakyamuni by name!" Here now, as she heard this prediction, this Goddess produced a **thought** to the effect of [369]: "Oh, certainly, as this young man I also like to be predicted **to full enlightenment!**" And in this way, Ananda, in the presence of the Tathagata Dipankara, this Goddess planted the wholesome root of the first **thought** of enlightenment, [and turns it over to] **full enlightenment**.

Ananda: Certainly, as one who makes the necessary preparations, as one who makes the grade this Goddess of the Ganges is predicted **to full enlightenment**.

The Lord: So it is, Ananda, as you say. (*i.e. This section must also be about how to transcend certain condition.*)

Chapter XX – [Combining the meditation on the four immeasurable to the meditation on emptiness – that is mostly efficient]

[How to meditate on emptiness; without grasping at any of the three: subject, object, action; not accepting, not rejecting any dharma – using adapted skillful means, like the four immeasurables, while realizing the emptiness of the three]

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Subhuti: How does a **Bodhisattva** coursing in **perfection of wisdom** come to reveal to self, another, and countless beings, these humbled revelations as the non-limitedness of **emptiness**, or, how does one enter into **concentration on emptiness**?

The Lord: One contemplates form, etc., [skandhas], as **empty**. However, one contemplates this with an undisturbed continuum of thought resulting from **non-conceptual awareness** thusly: as one **contemplates this universal law... "form, feeling, perception, impulse and consciousness is empty," ...** one doesn't regard any dharma [phenomena] as any 'thing' [phenomena] which as a result of **emptiness** is any separate entity [because it is its true nature]. So, as one does not, and logically can not regard any nature -as- any specific dharmas being any real thing, **one cannot realize any reality-limit** (which is 'a point' where reality 'as we know it' comes to an end, because the knowing itself thereof comes to be revealed as this non-limitedness, synonymous with **all-knowledge**, or **emptiness**.) As such, this can be viewed intellectually from many different angles and almost grasped, **but still cannot be known and stated experientially in some conventional discursive fashion** because 'where' this comes to be definitively known...is beyond thought, word, and concept... 'where' no-thing exists. Here or abouts, one comes to say with the greatest conviction and knowing... "I know nothing!", and joins the ranks of the exceedingly rare minority who can say this with any truth whatsoever behind it.

[**Another comment:** Concentration on emptiness through **perfected wisdom and skill in means** permits **one to avoid "realizing the reality-limit"** in the earlier sense. Specifically, the Lord says that a bodhisattva should contemplate the emptiness of the skandhas (personality factors) with a certain attitude, namely, with an undisturbed series of thoughts in such a way that, when he contemplates the fact that "form, etc., is empty", he does not regard that true nature of dharmas [i.e. emptiness] as something which, as a result of its own true nature [i.e. emptiness], is a real entity. But when he does not regard that true nature of dharmas as a real thing, **then he cannot realize the reality-limit** (Perfection, 1973: 222). – from [Streng's article, quote #8](#)] (i.e. *Again, using the Middle Way in order to stay away from all extreme views.*)

Subhuti: In reference to the Lord saying, "a **Bodhisattva** does not realize **emptiness**," how does a **Bodhisattva** who stands firmly in **[this continuing practice of] this concentration [on emptiness]** not realize **emptiness**?

The Lord: A **Bodhisattva** contemplates **emptiness** which yields its inherency of the naturalness of all modes [of **the six perfections**]. Yet, one does not contemplate this: "I shall realize," or "I should realize," but one contemplates this: "this is time for complete discomfiture, and not realization." [371]

- So, without losing oneself in this **concentration**,
- **one ties one's thought to any objective support [for one's compassion]**
- **and determines to yield one self to the infinitely apparent perfect wisdom [which is essentially skill in means],**
- **and one determines within this, one will not realize emptiness** [as its realization is not any 'final goal'].
- **Yet the Bodhisattva does not lose any dharmas which act as the 37 wings of enlightenment.**
- [These are the 4 foundations of mindfulness, the 4 restraints, the 4 bases of accomplishment, the 5 faculties, the 5 powers, the 7 limbs and the 8 fold path.]

One does not affect the extinction of outflows [which prevent renewed rebirths], yet one 'achieves' no limitations. As a **Bodhisattva** dwells in **concentration as emptiness** - which is one of the doors to deliverance - one also dwells in **concentration on Signlessness**, but without realizing the **Signless**. Endowed with dharma of this wholesome root which is thus in place, one contemplates "this is time for nurturing beings, and not for realization." Taken hold of by **perfect wisdom** **one does not realize any reality limit**. (i.e. *This is just another adapted skillful means; one should not grasp at it either, nor reject everything. The Middle Way.*)

[**Another translation:** It is because a Bodhisattva contemplates that emptiness which is possessed of the best of all modes [that is, of **the six perfections**]. He does, however, not contemplate that "I shall realize," or "I should realize," but he contemplates that "this is the time for complete conquest, and not for realization." Without losing himself in the concentration, **he ties his thought to an objective support** [for his compassion] and **he determines that he will take hold of perfect wisdom** [which is essentially skill in means], **and he will not realize [emptiness]**, because its realization is not the final goal.] Meanwhile, however, **the Bodhisattva does not lose the dharmas which act as the wings to enlightenment**. He does not effect the extinction of the outflows [which would prevent renewed rebirths], but over that also he achieves complete conquest (Perfection, 1973: 222). – from [Streng's article, quote #9](#)]

[Meditating on the four immeasurables while realizing the emptiness of the three; not accepting, not rejecting beings, the world]

The Lord: Suppose, Subhuti, one excellent, of noble qualities...very vigorous, of high social position, attractive and most fair to behold, of many virtues, in possession of all the finest virtues, virtues which spring from the very height of sovereignty, discipline and morality, learning, renunciation and so on. This person is judicious, able to express with ease, to formulate views clearly, to substantiate one's claims; one who always knows the suitable time, place and situation for everything. In archery this one has gone as far as one can go, is successful in warding off all manner of attack, most skilled in all arts, and foremost, through fine achievements, in all crafts. Of good memory, this one is intelligent, clever, steady and prudent, versed in all the treatises, has many friends, is wealthy, strong of body, with large limbs, with all faculties complete, [372] **generous** to all, dear and pleasant to many. Any work undertaken is managed to completion. This one also speaks methodically, shares great riches with the many, honors what should be honored, reveres what should be revered, worships what should be worshipped. Would such a person, Subhuti, feel every increasing joy and zest?

Subhuti: Yes indeed, O Lord.

The Lord: Now suppose as well, this person so greatly accomplished, takes one's family on a journey, one's mother and father, sons and daughters. By some circumstances, these find themselves in a great, wild forest. The foolish ones among them feel fright, terror and hair-raising fear. This one, however, fearlessly says to this family: "Do not be afraid! I shall soon take you safely and securely out of this terrible and frightening forest. I shall soon set you free!" Then more and more hostile and inimical forces rise up in this forest, would this noble person decide to abandon this family, and to take oneself alone out of that terrible and frightening forest - this one who is not one to draw back, who is endowed with all the force of firmness and vigor, who is wise, exceedingly tender and **compassionate**, courageous and a master of many resources? [373]

Subhuti: No, O Lord. This person, who does not abandon this family, has at one's disposal powerful resources, both within and without. On this one's side forces arise in this wild forest which are quite a match for the hostile and inimical forces, and these stand up for and protect these one's. These enemies and adversaries, who look for a weak spot, who seek for a weak spot, do not gain any hold over these one's. This one is competent to deal with the situation, and is able, unhurt and uninjured, soon to take out of that forest both this family and oneself, and securely and safely these reach a village, city or market-town.

The Lord: Just so, Subhuti, is it with a **Bodhisattva** which is full of pity and concerned with the welfare of all beings, which dwells in **friendliness, compassion, sympathetic joy** and **impartiality**, is taken hold of by **skill in means and perfect wisdom**, which has been taken over by one's wholesome roots, employing the kind of transformation which is the Buddha's sanction. Although one enters into **this concentration which proffers just these doors to deliverance, -being concentrated contemplation on; emptiness, signlessness and wishlessness-** this one nevertheless just **does not realize any reality-limit, such as one has a tendency toward on levels of Sravaka Disciple, or on these of a PratyekaBuddha**. This one has at this one's disposal very strong and powerful helpers, in **perfect wisdom and skill in means**. Since this one does not abandon all beings, this one is thus able to have revealed **full enlightenment**, safely and securely.

[Another Translation: "does not realize the reality-limit, that is, neither on the level of a Disciple, nor on that of a pratyekabuddha. For he has at his disposal very strong and powerful helpers, in **perfect wisdom and skill in means"** (Perfection, 1973: 224). – from [Streng's article, quote #2](#)]

(i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. Using adapted skillful means while realizing the emptiness of the three. Not rejecting dependent origination, interdependence, compassion, the world like in the lower vehicle. Not grasping at emptiness either. The Middle Way between dependent origination and emptiness, between existence and non-existence, in accord with the goal: the Union of The Two truths.)

At such a time as a Bodhisattva makes all beings an object for one's thought of **friendliness**, and with **this highest friendliness** ties oneself to these, at this time one rises above **the factiousness of the defilements and of Mara**, one rises above **the level of Sravaka Disciple and PratyekaBuddha**, [374] and one abides in **this concentration [on friendliness]**. *(i.e. So, in order to fight the tendency to fall into the opposite extreme, nihilism, one combines this realization of emptiness with the inseparable realization of the interdependence of everything by meditating of the four immeasurables. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting; using adapted skillful means based on dependent origination (existence) while realizing the emptiness (non-existence) of the three. Only then is it efficient because in accord with the goal, in accord with reality at the edge of existence and non-existence.)*

[Another translation: Since [the bodhisattva] has not abandoned all beings, he is thus able to win full **enlightenment**, safely and securely. At the time when a Bodhisattva has made all beings into an objective support for his thought of **friendliness**, and with **this highest friendliness** ties himself to them, at that time he rises above **the factiousness of the defilements and of Mara**, he rises above **the level of Disciple and Pratyekabuddha**, and he abides in that concentration [on friendliness] (Perfection, 1973: 224). – from [Streng's article, quote #12](#)]

This is not one who has attained the extinction of the outflows, yet achieves a complete consummation of **emptiness**, which [in this case] is endowed with these highest **perfections**. At such a time as a Bodhisattva dwells in this **concentration on emptiness**, which is but one door to freedom, one yet does not dwell in **concentration as Signlessness**, nor does this one realize **concentration on the Signless**. This is just like a bird which on its wings courses in the air. It neither falls to the ground, nor does it stand anywhere on any support. It dwells in space, just in the air, without being either supported or settled herein. *(i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting.)*

Just so a Bodhisattva dwells as this **dwelling of emptiness**, realizes this total permeance of **emptiness**. Just so this one dwells as this dwelling of **Signlessness** and **Wishlessness**, and such comes to be revealed as this specific consummation as **Signless** and **Wishless**. **But one does not fall into emptiness, neither into Signlessness, nor Wishlessness**, with one's Buddha-dharmas remaining incomplete. It is as with a master of archery, strong, well-trained, perfectly trained in archery. He first shoots one arrow upwards. He now sends after this another arrow which checks the fall of the first. By a regular succession of arrows he would not permit that first arrow to fall to the ground, and that arrow is kept in the air until he decides it falls to the ground.

In this same way a Bodhisattva which **courses in perfection of wisdom and which is upheld by skill in means, does not realize the farthest reality-limit** until one's wholesome roots are matured, well matured as **full enlightenment**. Only as one's wholesome roots are matured, well matured as **full enlightenment**, [375] does this one realize this farthest **reality-limit**. A Bodhisattva which courses in **perfection of wisdom**, which develops revelations as **perfect wisdom**, here now contemplates and meditates on this limitless true nature of these dharmas, but still one does not realize **perfect wisdom** as goal or conquest. Such as these come to exude wise (or, purely natural) humility. *(i.e. This only means that he is not falling for the extreme of rejecting everything, and staying on the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. But there is no absolute progress, it is all relative. The antidote to realism is emptiness; the antidote to nihilism is dependent origination or using skillful means. There is no first and last, no low, midway and highest reality limit. One use one antidote against the extreme tendency of the other ones until one can transcend the whole apparent opposition.)*

[Another translation: A Bodhisattva who **courses in perfect wisdom and who is upheld by skill in means, does not realise that farthest reality-limit** until his wholesome roots are matured, well matured in **full enlightenment**. Only when his wholesome roots are matured, well matured in **full enlightenment**, only then does he realise that farthest **reality-limit**. A Bodhisattva who courses in perfect wisdom, who develops perfect wisdom, should therefore contemplate and meditate on the deep true nature of those dharmas, but he should not realise it (Perfection, 1973: 224-25). – from [Streng's article, quote #10](#)] *(i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. Using adapted skillful means while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.)*

[This skillful means, this Bodhicitta vow, is the best protection against falling into total rejection of the world and nihilism, thus not acting in accord with reality and missing Buddhahood]

Subhuti: A doer of what is difficult is the **Bodhisattva**, a doer of what is most difficult, as one courses and dwells as *emptiness*, one enters into **this concentration as emptiness, and yet does not realize any reality-limit!** Exceedingly wonderful is this, O Well-Gone! (*i.e. That is the definition of the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. Using adapted skillful means while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.*)

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. **For the Bodhisattva does not abandon beings. We have made these special vows to reveal this process to freedom from defilement and obscurations to Buddha-nature for themselves, for all beings.** As the mind of a **Bodhisattva** forms this aspiration not to abandon beings but to set this freeing technique and process in front of these beings, and in addition one aspires as **this concentration on emptiness, Signlessness, Wishlessness**, this being the three doors of deliverance...such a **Bodhisattva** is known as one which is **endowed with skill in means**, and **does not realize any reality-limit midway**, before Buddha-dharmas are complete. **It is just this skill means which protects such a one.** Any thought of enlightenment, for a **Bodhisattva**, [376] consists in just this fact -- one does not leave beings behind. As one is thus **endowed with this thought of enlightenment and with skill in means**, **one does not midway realize any reality-limit**, hereby stopping as any result of any thing whatsoever.

[Another translation: For the Bodhisattva has not abandoned all beings. He has made the special vows to set free all those beings. If the mind of a Bodhisattva forms the aspiration not to abandon all beings but to set them free (*vimoksa*), and in addition he aspires for **the concentration (samadhi) on emptiness, the Signless, the Wishless**, *i.e.* for the three doors to deliverance, then that Bodhisattva should be known as one who is **endowed with skill in means**, and he will **not realise the reality-limit midway**, before his Buddha-dharmas have become complete. **For it is this skill in means which protects him.** His thought of enlightenment consists in just that fact that he does not want to leave all beings behind. When he is thus endowed with the thought of enlightenment and with skill in means, then **he does not midway realise the reality-limit** (Perfection, 1973: 225). – from *Streng's article, quote #11*] (*i.e. The Middle Way in meditation: the perfect union of Shamatha and Vipashyana. Not letting the mind go wild, not trying to control it either. Combining virtuous skillful means (concentration) and wisdom (emptiness) until one can transcend the apparent opposition. Using adapted skillful means (meditating on the four immeasurables) while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.*)

In addition to this, as a **Bodhisattva** either actually contemplates these limitless stations, being the three doors to deliverance, or aspires to contemplate these, in this mind one forms this following aspiration:

"For a long time beings such as these have a notion of existence, and course in apprehension of basis. [birth, life, death and any and all dharmas in-between]. As in realizing these coursings toward **full enlightenment**, dharma only too naturally comes to be revealed and demonstrated to these beings so these too, may forsake whatever erroneous views may be harbored about any basis."

As a free agent one now enters this **concentration on Emptiness, on Signlessness, on Wishlessness**. A **Bodhisattva** revealing to oneself one's natural endowment with **this thought of enlightenment and skill in means** does not midway realize or give way to some **reality-limit**. **On the contrary, one does not lose concentration on friendliness, compassion, sympathetic joy and impartiality. Upheld as skill in means, one increases pure dharma more and more. One's faith, etc., develops as keener and keener, one acquires siddhis, revealing to self and others the limbs of enlightenment, and this path.** [*Here are 7 Limbs: mindfulness, investigation of dharmas, vigor, tranquility, rapture, concentration, and even-mindedness*] [377]

- Even so, a **Bodhisattva** reflects this..."**for a long time beings as these perceive dharmas, course in the apprehension of a basis,**"...and develops this aspiration as the former one, entering **concentration as emptiness.**

- Also, one reflects this..."as perceiving a sign, these beings coursed for a long time in these signs",...and this one deals with this aspiration thusly, entering **concentration as Signlessness**.
- And, a **Bodhisattva** reflects: "For a long time these beings are perverted by these perceptions of **permanence, of happiness, of some self, of loveliness**." This one now acts in such a way as dharma is demonstrated so these may forsake these perverted views of any perception of permanence, of happiness, of self, of loveliness, and in order that these may learn this: "impermanent is all this, not permanent; ill is all this, not happiness; without self is all this, not with a self; repulsive is all this, not lovely."
- **Endowed with this thought of perfection of wisdom, [378] and with the previously described skill in means**, here and now taken hold of by **perfect wisdom**, one does not realize any **reality-limit** midway, before all one's Buddha-dharma are complete. One dwells thus, and one enters on **concentration as Wishlessness**, **but one does not lose one's concentration as friendliness, etc.** **Upheld by skill in means, one increases more and more one's pure dharmas. Faith, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, discernment [as the five faculties] develop as keener and keener, and one acquires siddhis, the limbs of enlightenment, and the path.**
- A **Bodhisattva** raises the following thought: "These beings for a long time are in the habit of coursing in the apprehension of a basis, and even just now these do so. These are for a long time in the habit of coursing in the perception of **signs**, in perverted views, in perception of material objects, in perception of unreal objects, in wrong views, and even now these continue to do so. Thusly it may be that these faults in each and every way may cease to be in these, and these faults come to be revealed as inconceivable in them." **As a Bodhisattva has all beings in mind in such a way, is endowed with this recollection of all beings, with this production of thought, and as skill in means, as one is taken hold of by perfect wisdom** and, as endowed with all these qualities, one thus contemplates the true nature of these **unfathomable** dharmas - through **Emptiness**, or **Signlessness**, or **Wishlessness**, or through these being unaffected, unproduced, without birth, [379] without any positivity - it is quite impossible such a **Bodhisattva**, which is endowed with such pure cognition, could either fall into the Unaffected, or become intimate with anything belonging to the **triple world**. This cannot possibly be.

[The path is efficient only by combining compassion and emptiness; because only then in accord with reality beyond existence and non-existence.]

A **Bodhisattva** is asked by another **Bodhisattva** wanting to win **full enlightenment**: "Over which dharmas does one come to consummation of realization? What kind of aspiration does one form in one's mind, aspirations which enable a **Bodhisattva** to not settle in realization of **Emptiness**, or **Signlessness**, or **Wishlessness**, or Unaffectedness, or non-production, or non-positivity, but to go on developing **perfection of wisdom**?"

As the answering **Bodhisattva** answers - just **emptiness** is attended to, -just **Signlessness**, -just **Wishlessness**, -just Unaffectedness, -just non-production, -just no-birth, -just non-positivity, and does not make manifest this production of the thought of the non-abandonment of all beings, or not manifest or indicate **skill in means** in this answer, one can know this **Bodhisattva** is not in irreversibility predicted **to full enlightenment** by the Tathagatas previously. This one does not indicate **this special dharma of an irreversible Bodhisattva [i.e. the non-abandonment of all beings]**, does not make much of this, does not make this manifest, does not wisely know this, does not include this in one's answer, and does not induce others to enter into this stage **[of skill in means] which is the true stage of an irreversible Bodhisattva.** [380]

Subhuti: And how can a **Bodhisattva**, in regard to this question, be regarded as **irreversible**?

The Lord: One is known as an **irreversible Bodhisattva** as, whether one hears this **perfection of wisdom** or not, one hits upon the correct answer.

Subhuti: Here are many who course towards enlightenment, but a few only could give the correct answer.

The Lord: As few only are these **Bodhisattvas** which are predicted to this **irreversible** stage on which this cognition is possible. But these who are predestined for it, these give the correct answer. One can be sure that these have planted splendid wholesome roots in the past, and the whole world, with its Gods, persons and Asuras, cannot possibly and ultimately overwhelm these.

[An irreversible Bodhisattva truly never abandon all beings, not even in dreams; never accepting, never rejecting – always in accord with the real nature of everything]

So, as a Bodhisattva even **dreams** and beholds, "all dharmas are like a **dream**," but does not realize this experience, regarding it as final,...so too this is known as the **irreversible** mark of an **irreversible Bodhisattva**. This is another mark...as even in **dreams**, neither the level of **Sravaka Disciple** nor **PratyekaBuddha**, nor anything which belongs to any **triple world**, is seen or known as an object of any longing, or appears advantageous. It is another mark...as even in **dreams**, one sees oneself as a Tathagata, -in the middle of an assembly of many hundreds of thousands of nyutas of kotis of persons, [381] seated in a circular hall with a peaked roof, surrounded by a community of monks, revered by the community of **Bodhisattvas**, demonstrating dharma.

It is another mark, as, even in **dreams**, one rises into the air and demonstrates dharma to beings, as one perceives the halo round the Buddha, one conjures up monks who go into different directions to fulfill the functions of Buddhas on other world systems and demonstrate dharma here. Even as one **dreams** one has such perceptions.

It is another mark as one **dreams** and remains unafraid when a village, town, city, or kingdom is sacked; or sees a huge conflagration spreading; or sees wild beasts or other offensive animals; or one's head is about to be cut off, or as one is subjected to other great fears and terrors, and also one sees these fears and terrors to which other beings are subjected. In no case do fear and terror arise in one such as this, and one remains unafraid. And immediately as one awakes from this **dream**, reflects how "**like a dream** is all this which belongs to any **triple world**. And in this sense should I demonstrate dharmas, as one which demonstrates dharma correctly."

It is again another mark of irreversibility as a **Bodhisattva**, on seeing in **dreams** [382] the beings which are in these hells, reflects: "Thus as in this **Buddha-field** are no states of woe at all!" This also is known as a mark of an **irreversible Bodhisattva** as never having to be reborn in such states of woe.

And how does one know here are no states of woe in a **Buddha-field** of any particular **Bodhisattva**? As a **Bodhisattva**, on seeing in **dreams** the beings reborn in the hells, as 'animals', or as Pretas, sets up mindfulness and a **Buddha-field** without such states of woe, this is known as the mark which shows one can never again need to be reborn in the states of woe. Also, a **Bodhisattva** may **dream** a prophetic **dream** to the effect that a town or village is on fire, and as one wakes up considers thusly: "The attributes, tokens and **signs** in these **dreams**, are the attributes, tokens and **signs** which an **irreversible Bodhisattva** bears in mind. This Truth, as of utterance of this Truth, let this town fire or village fire, which is taking place here, be appeased, cooled, extinguished." As the fire is extinguished, one can know [383] this **Bodhisattva** is predicted **to full enlightenment** by Tathagatas in this past; as it is not extinguished, one should know this is not so predicted. Again Subhuti, if instead of being appeased, this conflagration passes beyond all bounds and spreads from house to house, from road to road, one should know this **Bodhisattva** has in some **past collected karma** consisting in refusal of dharma, conducive to weakness in **wisdom**, or, specific abilities to maintain a state of naturalness. From this refusal and conductivity results **karma** which led to this experience in this present life [i.e. to this distress at being unable to control this fire], which is just a result of **karma** left over from refusal of dharma. For, as is known, a **Bodhisattva's** past lives condition the **[absence or presence of the] mark of irreversibility later on**. A **Bodhisattva** which succeeds in controlling this fire is, on this other hand, borne in mind as **irreversible**.

[Another sign for irreversibility]

And now Subhuti, are demonstrated **the attributes, tokens and signs by which an irreversible Bodhisattva is borne in mind**. Listen well and attentively to this teaching.

Subhuti: So be it, O Lord, speak on.

The Lord: As a person, -man or woman, boy or girl, - is seized or possessed by a ghost, a **Bodhisattva**, which comes across one such as this, performs this Act of Truth, and says: "As it is true by Tathagatas of this past, [384] and it is true these intentions are perfectly pure, - to the extent this attention to this is perfectly pure, to this extent I leave behind thoughts of **Sravaka Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddhas**. It is this nature to reveal **full enlightenment**. Not to not reveal **full enlightenment**! Just revealing **full enlightenment**! Here is nothing which the Buddhas and Lords which reside in countless world systems do not cognize, see, feel and fully know. These Buddhas and Lords which know this earnest intention also reveal **full enlightenment**. As this is truth, as this is utterance of Truth, may this one depart which seizes and possesses this person with this ghostly seizure!" So, as a result of these words of this **Bodhisattva**, if this ghost does not depart, one can know the **Bodhisattva** has not had one's prediction yet; but as this being departs, one can know this **Bodhisattva** has this prediction **to full enlightenment**.

Chapter XXI – [More pitfalls along the way: pride, rejection / false detachment]

[Beware of developing pride and conceit over false realisations, false signs]

Go to verses

This **Bodhisattva**, as we see, says: "I am predicted **to full enlightenment** by the Tathagatas of this past. As this is the Truth, and my utterance of this Truth, let this ghost depart!"

Now as this happens, **Mara** -is seen to be- in his turn trying at this same time to induce the ghost to depart. And his efforts are particularly strong and energetic when he has to deal with a **Bodhisattva** which has but recently set out in the vehicle. **It is the magical power of Mara which is seen to have driven the ghost away.** But a recently set out **Bodhisattva** thinks one's own might drove the ghost away, and does not know nor consider that this just may be what is called **Mara's** might, as one's own negative forces within, driving one to thoughts of great advantage. **The Bodhisattva now slackens in efforts.**

As a result of this [apparent] victory over the ghost this **Bodhisattva** thinks to have had this prediction in this past, and despises other **Bodhisattvas**, sneers at these, ironically compliments, condemns and deprecates these. **Pride goes on increasing, until quite firm and rigid. The pride, arrogance, hauteur, false pride, conceit keeps this one away from all-knowledge, from supreme cognition of a Buddha, from cognition of the Self-Existent [386], from cognition of all-knowing, from supreme enlightenment.** As this one meets with **Bodhisattvas** which are good friends, -virtuous in character, resolutely intent on the sublime, earnestly intent, skilled in means, endowed with **irreversible** dharma, - in this one's conceit these are despised, as such does not tend to, love and honor these. So, this recently set out **Bodhisattva tightens what's seen as the bond of Mara still further.** One can expect this one to belong to one of two levels, either of **Sravaka Disciple**, or of a **PratyekaBuddha**. In this way, in connection with magical power of the enunciation of a Truth, **Mara** the Evil One is seen to be allowed to cause an obstacle **to full enlightenment** in any **Bodhisattva** which has recently set out in the vehicle, which has little faith, has learned little, lacks any good friend, is **not upheld by perfect wisdom, and lacks in skill in means.** This also can be known as **Mara's deed** to any **Bodhisattva**.

[This production of thought connected with pride is more serious than the five deadly sins]

Here and now, Subhuti, **these deeds of Mara are seen to operate also in connection with the annunciation of a Bodhisattva's name.** And how? **Mara** is accredited with using even the annunciation of the name, and of the other details connected with it, to tempt a **Bodhisattva**. He comes to the **Bodhisattva** in all kinds of disguises, and says: "You have your prediction from Tathagatas in other times. The proof is this name you have, even as a Buddha, and these are the names of your mother, your father, your brother, your sister, your friends, maternal relatives, kinsmen and relations." He proclaims these names backwards through seven generations. He tells you that you are born in this region, this country, this village, town or marketplace. [387] As you have any particular quality, he tells you that you have that same quality also in other times. Whether this **Bodhisattva** is dull by nature, or keen in faculties, **Mara** tells this one that such is the same in other times as well.

Or, he will take other qualities which one has in this present life: As, say, a forest dweller, or one who begs for food from door to door without accepting invitations, or wears clothes made of rags taken from a dust heap, or never eats any food after midday or eats a meal in one sitting, or sleeps at night wherever one may happen to be, or possesses no more than three robes, or lives in and frequents cemeteries, or one dwells at the foot of a tree, or even in sleep remains in a sitting posture, or lives in an open, unsheltered place, or wears a garment made of felt, or has few wishes, is easily contented, detached, frugal, soft in speech, or a person of few words, -in each case, **Mara** announces that also in other times this same one is endowed with the same quality, and that for certain the Tathagatas of the three times must have predicted this one **to full enlightenment** and to the stage of an **irreversible Bodhisattva**, for now this one has the just mentioned qualities of an austere ascetic, and must now in all certainty also have endowments with these from other times.

It may be now a Bodhisattva comes to feel conceit as one thinks of the annunciation of these names and circumstances from other times, and of present austere penances as a rigid ascetic. One may actually think one had this prediction in other times as now one has these qualities of a rigid ascetic. And **Mara** confirms this one in

this view. [388] In the guise of a monk, or nun, or lay brother, or lay sister, or Brahmin, or householder, or mother, father, brother, sister, friend or relative, **Mara** is seen as coming to the **Bodhisattva** and telling this one that in other times one has had this prediction **to full enlightenment** and to this **irreversible** stage of a **Bodhisattva** for the simple reason that now one has these qualities of a rigid ascetic, which, according to **Mara**, are the qualities of an **irreversible Bodhisattva**. But...the **Bodhisattva** does not have the attributes, tokens and **signs of an irreversible Bodhisattva** which is described. This is surely a being seen as beset by **Mara**, unlike these other **Bodhisattvas** [which are good friends]. For this one does not have the attributes, tokens and **signs** which are actually characteristics of an **irreversible Bodhisattva**.

So, as a result of the annunciation of the circumstances of other times one feels conceit. In this conceit, overcome by great and rigid conceit, defeated by what's seen as the magical power of **Mara**, **one despises brother and sister Bodhisattvas, sneers at and deprecates these**. One can recognize this as a **deed** -seen as being done- of **Mara**, which makes use of the annunciation of the circumstances, said to be from other times of a **Bodhisattva**. [389]

Also Subhuti, **Mara** -is seen to- operate in connection with the prediction of the name which a **Bodhisattva** will have as a Buddha. In the guise of a monk he comes to a **Bodhisattva** and predicts: "this will be your name when you have won **full enlightenment**." And **Mara**, strangely enough, is seen to predict the name which the **Bodhisattva** had already guessed when pondering over the name one would bear after **full enlightenment**. If the **Bodhisattva** is **weak in wisdom**, [which is pure and natural sensibilities more or less refined] **and without skill in means**, this one reflects that, strangely enough, the name which that monk has mentioned is the same guessed by oneself.

The **Bodhisattva** compares the name thought out by oneself with the name proclaimed by that monk, who is seen as either beset by **Mara**, or was conjured up by **Mara** or his host, and finds that the two agree, and concludes oneself has in other times also been predicted **to full enlightenment** by Tathagatas by name. But one has not got the attributes, tokens and **signs** of an **irreversible Bodhisattva** as are described. Since lacking in them, one feels conceit as a result of this prediction of name. In this conceit [390] one despises the brother and sister **Bodhisattvas**, and thinks that as one has had this prediction, these others have not. This pride, arrogance and conceit which makes one despise these other **Bodhisattvas** keeps one far away from **all-knowledge** and the cognition of a Buddha. **Not upheld by perfect wisdom, lacking in skill in means** and the good friend, taken hold of by the bad friend, one would, we must expect, belong to one of two other levels, that of a **Sravaka Disciple**, or that of a **PratyekaBuddha**.

Now, even if after one has spent a long time, a good long time in erring about and in wandering about [in birth-and-death], one would again come to want to know **full enlightenment** by resorting to just this **perfection of wisdom**; and if one were to go to these good friends and regularly approach them; and if, in one's newfound outlook on life one would, first of all, censure former ideas, vomit them up, abhor them, throw them back, see their error, - even then it is still difficult for this one to realize **Buddha-nature**. **So serious is the offense of conceitedness, for it is a result of pandering to the self-aggrandizing and deluded needs of one's self for immediate gratification**.

Among the monks who belong to the vehicle or level of the **Sravaka Disciples** four unforgivable offences are so serious that, as someone has been guilty of one of them, that one ceases to be a monk, a Shramana, a son or daughter of the Shakya. More serious than those four unforgivable offences is **the production of a proud thought**, when, on the occasion of the prediction of one's name, a **Bodhisattva** has despised other **Bodhisattvas**, and produced a thought which is very unwholesome, which is more serious than the four unforgivable offences. Not only this, but it is more serious even than the five deadly sins, **this production of thought connected with pride**, [391] produced on the occasion when a **Bodhisattva's** future name [as a Buddha] is announced. **That thought is more serious than the five deadly sins**. In this way, even through the mere annunciation of a **Bodhisattva's** name very subtle deeds -seen to be- of **Mara** may arise. These are recognized for what these are, and avoided, both by the **Bodhisattva** oneself, and by others.

[The Bodhisattva's non-attachment is equanimity, the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting; combining skillful means and wisdom; it has nothing to do with the lower vehicle detachment based on rejection of the world]

Furthermore, -what is seen as- **Mara** the Evil One, comes to any **Bodhisattva** and exhorts and informs these in connection with the quality of detachment which Tathagatas have appraised as detachment, and that this means one should dwell in a remote forest, in a jungle, in mountain clefts, burial grounds, or on heaps of straw, etc. But this is not taught as the detachment of a **Bodhisattva**, that one should live in a forest, remote, lonely and isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, or in jungle, mountain clefts, burial grounds, on heaps of straw, etc.

Subhuti: As this is not the detachment of the **Bodhisattva**, **what then is this detachment of a Bodhisattva?**

The Lord: A **Bodhisattva** dwells detached as one is detached from the mental activities associated with **Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddhas** [392].

As one is taken hold of by perfection of wisdom and skill in means, and as one dwells in the dwelling of friendliness and of great compassion towards all beings, one dwells detached even as one dwells in the neighborhood or village.

Thusly ordained is this detachment from the mental activities associated with **Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddhas**: A **Bodhisattva** dwells detached as one passes day and night dwelling in this detachment. As any **Bodhisattva** dwells in this dwelling while one lives in remote dwelling places, in remote forests, in the jungle, in mountain clefts and burial grounds, thus one dwells detached.

But as to the detachment recommended by **Mara, the Evil One**, -i.e. the dwelling in remote forests, jungles, mountain clefts and burial grounds, -as this detachment is actually contaminated or tainted by the mental activities associated with **Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddha**, just so, as one does not apply as one practices the **perfection of wisdom**, one does not fulfill these conditions necessary to realize **all-knowledge**. As a result, one dwells in a contaminated dwelling, in a mental activity which is not wholly pure. By consequence of this, one despises other **Bodhisattvas** who dwell in villages, but which are uncontaminated by mental activities associated with **Sravaka Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddhas**, who dwell in dwellings of **wisdom** with many devices, and with **great compassion**.

As one's deeds of body, voice and mind are not quite pure, one is **a dweller in contamination**, not a dweller in detachment, although one may dwell in the remote forest. At first one despises these which live in the neighborhood of a village, though these dwell in the **dwelling of wisdom, with devices and great compassion**, though these are habitually quite pure in what these do with their body, voice or mind, though these are detached from mental activities associated with **Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddhas**, uncontaminated by them [393]; after this one finds one **cannot gain the Trances, Concentrations, Attainments, Emancipations and Super-knowledges, and these qualities do not reach fulfillment in this person.**

The reason for this is that this one is without skill in means.

Even though a **Bodhisattva** may dwell in deserted forests hundreds of miles wide, with no other company than beasts of prey, antelopes, flocks of birds, uninfested even by the smaller wild animals, by Yakshas and Rakshasas, and untroubled by the fear of robbers, and even though one may settle here for one year, or for one hundred years, or even for hundreds of thousands of nyutas of kotis of years, or for more than that; -if one does not know this detachment as explained, and through which detachment and explanation a **Bodhisattva** dwells as one who has set out with earnest intentions, who has achieved earnest intentions; even now one completely devoted to life in the remote forests fails to gladden the heart of hearts, as one does not know this [detachment], **as one is without skill in means, as one leans on this detachment, clings to it, is bent on it, indulges in it.** For the detachment of any **Bodhisattva** which is described does not appear in this one's detachment. But from a place high up in the air **Mara** can be seen as saying to the dweller in the remote forest that this dweller does well, that one's detachment is the one which Tathagatas have described, and one can go on dwelling in just this detachment, and in consequence of it one quickly realizes **full enlightenment**. [394]

As one leaves this isolated place in the forest, and comes back to a village, one despises Bodhisattvas here, monks who are well behaved, chaste, lovely in character, uncontaminated by mental activities associated with Sravakas, Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas, and living their lives quite pure in body, voice and mind. This one tells these they surely do not dwell in a detached dwelling, but in a contaminated and crowded one. Any Bodhisattvas here, who dwell in a detached dwelling, this one warns against contaminated and crowded dwellings, tries to commit them to a detached dwelling [as this one conceives it].

One such as this also attempts to make claims, and demanding their respect for one's own residence...is proud, and tells these: "Superhuman beings have exhorted me, superhuman beings have come to inform me! This [isolated place in the forest] is the dwelling in which I dwell. What dweller in a village has ever been exhorted and informed by superhuman beings?" In this way this one despises the persons who belong to the vehicle of the Bodhisattva. This one is known as a Candala of a Bodhisattva, as a defamer of Bodhisattvas, as a mere pretender of a Bodhisattva, as a counterfeit Bodhisattva, as filth of a Bodhisattva, as a robber in the guise of a Shramana, a robber of persons belonging to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas, a robber of the world with its Gods. Such a one is surely not yet tended, loved or honored. For such persons have fallen into conceit. [395] These even succeed in corrupting other kindred spirits, weaklings who have but recently set out in the vehicle. These are regarded as yet obscured of nature, as devoid of any ability as yet to allow teachers to find their effectiveness within one such as this, devoid of any realization of the qualities of holiness.

Although a Bodhisattva does not yet tend such persons, neither does one not love or honor these, as a true Bodhisattva is one who can neither abandon beings, nor all-knowledge, nor full enlightenment, as one aspires earnestly to reveal full enlightenment, and indicate to countless others how to bring about this revelation themselves as well as the weal of all beings.

On the contrary, one who has raised oneself to a height which is such as one considers the weal of all beings, also does, so one may see through these and other deeds -seen to be- of Mara, always maintain one's mind as anxious to expound the path to beings who have not yet got it, a mind which does not tremble and which is not submerged in the wanderings through these triple worlds; one has revealed first of all an attitude of friendliness, and an attitude of compassion, one has revealed the great compassion and is moved by sympathy, one has thoughts of joy and in sympathy with the beings who progress, whether or not such is obvious, and one is impartial, for the true nature of dharmas is such as it cannot be apprehended; [with all this in mind] one forms the resolution: "Thus in any time any and all the faults seen to be of Mara's deeds are in no way whatsoever either conceived, or produced; or, appearing as produced, these at once pass away again. Thus train oneself!"

This is also known as a Bodhisattva's courageous advance towards one's own higher knowledge. So much for this which a Bodhisattva knows about Mara's deeds in connection with the quality of detachment.

Chapter XXII – [The meaning of progress and purification]

[One's best friend : the Six Paramitas, the Middle Way: always combining skillful means and wisdom; one alone is bondage, the two together is Liberation]

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A **Bodhisattva** which sets out with earnest intention from the very beginning tends, loves and honors good friends.

Subhuti: Who are these good friends of a **Bodhisattva**?

The Lord: The Buddhas and Lords, and also the irreversible Bodhisattvas who are skillful in the Bodhisattva-course, and which instruct and admonish one in the **perfections**, who demonstrate and expound **perfection of wisdom**. The **perfection of wisdom** in particular is regarded as a Bodhisattva's good friend.

All the six perfections, in fact, are good friends of a **Bodhisattva**.

- These are one's Teacher, one's path, light, torch, illumination, one's shelter, refuge, place of rest, one's final relief, island, mother, father, and these lead one to **this sublime revealing of undifferentiated awareness and this inherent pure cognition herein, to understanding, to full enlightenment**.
- For it is in these perfections this **perfection of wisdom** is accomplished.
- Simply from **the six perfections** is revealed **all-knowledge** of Tathagatas which, in a period which stands completely clear of time as it is known in these **triple worlds**, come to realize full enlightenment and enter Nirvana...and so also the **all-knowledge** of Tathagatas which in all periods of these three times simultaneously realize enlightenment, and so these Tathagatas which just now reside in **incalculable, immeasurable, infinite**, inconceivable world systems.
- I also, Subhuti, am a Tathagata which in this present period is revealing full enlightenment, and reveal also this **all-knowledge** coming forth from these **six perfections**.
- For **the six perfections** contain the thirty-seven dharmas which act as wings to enlightenment, these contain four Brahma-dwellings, four means of conversion, and any Buddha-dharma whatsoever, any **Buddha-cognition**, cognition of the Self-Existent, any **unthinkable, incomparable, immeasurable, incalculable**, unequalled cognition, any cognition which equals the unequalled, any **cognition of all-knowing**.

So Subhuti, simply the six perfections of any Bodhisattva [398] are known as one's good friends.

- **These are one's Teacher, etc.**, to: these lead one to cognition, to understanding, to full enlightenment.
- In addition, a **Bodhisattva** which trains in these **six perfections** is a true benefactor to all beings which are in need of one.
- But as one wants to train in these **six perfections**, a **Bodhisattva** must above all hear this **perfection of wisdom**, take it up, bear it in mind, recite, study, spread, demonstrate, expound, explain and write of and about this, and investigate this profound meaning, content and method, meditate on this, and ask questions regarding this.
- For this **perfection of wisdom** directs these **six perfections**, guides, leads, instructs and advises these, this is their genetrix and nurse.
- Because, **if these are deprived of the perfection of wisdom, the first five perfections do not come under any concept of perfections, and these are not called "perfections"**. As a **Bodhisattva** trains in just this **perfection of wisdom**, one comes to reveal a state which is such as one cannot be led astray by others, and stands naturally and firmly in this.

[Defilement is ignorance; purifying our body speech and mind means realizing their real nature]

Subhuti: How is perfect wisdom marked? [399]

The Lord: It has non-attachment for mark. (i.e. The bodhisattva's non-attachment is equanimity, the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. And this applies to everything, no exception.)

Subhuti: Is it feasible to say that same mark of non-attachment, which exists as regards perfect wisdom, exists also as regards all dharmas?

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. For all dharmas are isolated-inaccessible-not-findable and empty. Here as well this same mark of non-attachment, which indicates perfect wisdom as isolated-inaccessible-not-findable and empty, also indicates all dharmas as isolated-inaccessible-not-findable and empty.

Subhuti: As all dharmas are isolated-inaccessible-not-findable and empty, how is the defilement and purification of beings conceivable? For what is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable cannot be defiled and purified, what is empty cannot be defiled or purified, and what is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable and empty cannot know full enlightenment. Nor can one get at any dharma outside emptiness which has known full enlightenment, which will know it, or which does know it. How do we so understand the meaning of this teaching! Show us, O Lord, show us, O Sugata!

The Lord: What do you think, Subhuti. Do beings course for a long time in I-making and mine-making? [400]

Subhuti: So it is, Lord.

The Lord: Are also I-making and mine-making empty?

Subhuti: These are, O Lord.

The Lord: Is it just due to this I-making and mine-making these beings wander about in birth-and-death?

Subhuti: So it is, Lord.

The Lord: It is in this sense the defilement of beings is conceivable. To whatever extent beings take hold of things and settle down in these, to this extent is defilement in place. But no one is here defiled.

And to whatever extent one does not take hold of things and does not settle down in these, to this extent does one deconceptualize I-making and mine-making. In this sense does one come to continuously participate in revealing and hence forming this realization of the purification of being. So see, Subhuti, to whatsoever greater or lesser extent these do not take hold of things and do not settle down in things, in direct proportion to this extent here is realized, or rather, here is revealed, purification. But no one is here purified.

As a Bodhisattva courses thus, one courses in perfect wisdom. It is as this sense which we gradually and steadily come to reveal to our selves as...it is this which we are but indications of...in our day to day practice, that we form this concept of any and all defilement, and deconceptualize I-mine concepts -as becoming "some kind of purification" of beings- in spite of the fact all dharmas are isolated-inaccessible-not-findable and empty. As such, here is neither question of defilement to rise above or send away, nor even purity in which to seek absolution. Here is no thing whatsoever, which 'I' have...and nothing which is mine. To be sure, Subhuti, none of this.

Subhuti: This is truly wonderful! And a Bodhisattva which courses thus, courses in perfect wisdom as one now does not course in form, or other skandhas. As one courses thus, [401] a Bodhisattva is not crushed by worlds with various Gods, beings and Asuras. As one courses thus, a Bodhisattva comes to reveal the coursing of all persons belonging to the vehicle of Sravaka Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas as it is, and gains an insuperable equanimous position. For Buddhahood is insuperably equanimous, and so is Tathagatahood, this state Self-Existent beyond any existent self, this state of all-knowledge in which is nothing knowledgeable. A Bodhisattva, which day and night passes 'time' dwelling on these mental activities associated with perfect wisdom, is quite near full enlightenment and quickly comes to reveal such.

[A Bodhisattva never departs from combining these two: virtuous methods and wisdom; the six paramitas; the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting]

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. Suppose, Subhuti, all beings in Jambudvīpa simultaneously acquire a human personality, and upon raising any thoughts **to full enlightenment**, abide in [402] these thoughts of enlightenment all life long. Just so...now [after all this preparation], these give gifts to all beings, -do these **Bodhisattvas** on the strength of this beget much merit?

Subhuti: These do, O Lord.

The Lord: Truly again, Subhuti, any son or daughter of good family begets a much different merit, who, as a **Bodhisattva**, dwells for even one single day only in mental activities connected with **perfection of wisdom**. For, as one goes on dwelling day and night in these mental activities, one is more and more worthy of the bestowal of sacrificial gifts to any and all beings. Few beings whatsoever have **minds and intentions so full of friendliness as these** and, except for Buddhas, the Lords, and Tathagatas of course, are matchless, without any likeness, endowed with **unthinkable** dharmas. So, how do these sons or daughters of good family at first aspire to such merit?

Such ones are endowed with a kind of wise (or, exceedingly natural) insight which allows one to view any and all beings as on their way to being slaughtered. This being as it is, **great compassion on all occasions take hold of such as these**. [403] We survey countless beings with this heavenly eye, and what we see fills us with great agitation. So many beings carry this burden of **karma** which lead to immediate retribution in hells. Others acquire unfortunate rebirths [which keeps these away from the Buddha and their own revelations of **Buddha-nature**, and these teachings]. Still others are doomed to be killed, or are enveloped in a net of false views, or fail to find this path, while again others which gain fortunate rebirths lose it again, and yet again.

So, one attends to these with a thought: "I shall become a savior to all these beings, I seek release for these from all suffering!" But **one makes neither this, nor anything else, into a sign to which one is partial**. This also is this light of a **Bodhisattva's** natural **wisdom**, this same light by which one cognizes and reveals **full enlightenment**. **Bodhisattvas** which dwell in these dwellings are worthy of the gifts from the worlds which these inhabit, and do not turn back upon recognition of **full enlightenment**. These purify gifts and offerings of any and all which accord to these the requisites of life, when their thoughts are well directed toward **perfect wisdom**, as these are near to **all-knowledge**.

So here a **Bodhisattva** dwells in mental work accorded to **perfect wisdom**, as one does not consume one's alms fruitlessly, as one points out the path to any and all beings, [404] sheds light over a limitless range, is able to set free from birth-and-death any and all beings who subject themselves to these ones and apply themselves attentively, and is able to cleanse the organs and faculties of perception and vision of all beings.

As one dwells in mental activities directed towards these goals, one brings to mind and maintains mental activities which accord with perfection of wisdom. As one decides to bring these to mind, one's mind works welfare for any and all beings. But as well, one gives no room to other mental activities, such as lack in **perfect wisdom**. As one so accords [as the mental work, which is essentially loving concern for beings, impels one thusly], one spends days and nights in mental activities which accord with **perfection of wisdom**.

Suppose a man, well versed in jewelry and the different varieties of jewels, newly acquires **a very precious gem**. This makes him very glad and elated. As he again lost this precious gem, he is most sad and distressed. Constantly and always mental activities associated with this jewel proceed in him, and he regrets being parted from it. He does not forget it, until he either regains this gem, or another one of like quality and kind. Just so a **Bodhisattva** who again loses sight of the precious jewel of **perfect wisdom**; [405] with a clear perception of this preciousness of **perfect wisdom**, and convinced one is not definitely parted from it, one does, with a thought not lacking in mental work on **perfect wisdom**, and which is directed to the **state of all-knowledge**, search about everywhere until one regains **this Sutra**, or gains an equivalent one. All this time this is one which is not lacking in mental activities which accord with the recognition of the precious jewel of **perfection of wisdom**, one who is not lacking in mental activities which accord with recognition of this great jewel of **all-knowledge**.

Subhuti: But, since the Lord teaches all dharmas and all mental activities are lacking in own-being, and *empty*, - how can a **Bodhisattva** now be as one not lacking in mental activities which accord with *perfect wisdom*, or with *all-knowledge*?

The Lord: As the mind of a **Bodhisattva** works on this fact that all dharmas are through their own-being isolated-inaccessible-not-findable and *empty*, and agrees this is so, now such a one is one not lacking in mental activities which accord with *perfect wisdom* and with *all-knowledge*. As *perfect wisdom* is *empty*, such neither increases nor decreases.

[Relativity and emptiness of progress, and enlightenment]

Subhuti: So, how can a **Bodhisattva** cognize, with no increase in *perfect wisdom*, full attainment of enlightenment, how can one know *full enlightenment*?

The Lord: In actual fact a **Bodhisattva** which courses in *perfect wisdom* neither increases or decreases. Just as *perfect wisdom* is *empty*, without increase or decrease, just so also a **Bodhisattva** is *empty*, without increase or decrease. It is this fact, -i.e. just as *perfect wisdom* is *empty*, [406] without increase or decrease, -a **Bodhisattva** arrives at cognition of enlightenment, and thus is *full enlightenment* revealed. As a **Bodhisattva** is taught, and is not afraid, does not lose heart, this one is known as a **Bodhisattva** who courses in *perfect wisdom*.

Subhuti: Does now *perfect wisdom* course in *perfect wisdom*?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does *emptiness* of *perfect wisdom* course in *perfect wisdom*?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Can one now apprehend outside any *emptiness* of *perfect wisdom*, any dharma which courses in *perfect wisdom*?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does *emptiness* course in *perfect wisdom*? [407]

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Can one apprehend in *emptiness* any dharma which courses in *perfect wisdom*?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does *emptiness* course in *emptiness*?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Does form, etc., course in *perfect wisdom*?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Can one apprehend outside form, etc., any dharma which courses in *perfect wisdom*?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: So, O Lord, how does a **Bodhisattva** course in *perfect wisdom*?

The Lord: Do you now, Subhuti, see any real dharma which courses in *perfect wisdom*?

Subhuti: No, Lord. [408]

The Lord: Do you see *perfect wisdom*, in which the **Bodhisattva** courses, as a real thing?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Do you see as real any dharma which offers no basis for apprehension? Is this dharma by any chance produced, or can this be produced, or is this being produced, is this stopped, can this be stopped or is this being stopped?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: This insight gives any Bodhisattva patience in regards to dharmas which fail to be produced. As one is endowed with this, one is sure to reveal full enlightenment. One is bound to progress towards self-confidence of a Tathagata. This is quite impossible for a Bodhisattva, which courses, strives and struggle in this way, and progresses in this direction, to not reach this supreme cognition of a Buddha, the cognition of the all-knowing, the cognition of a great Caravan Leader.

Subhuti: Can this true nature of all dharmas, which consists in the fact that these fail to be produced, can this be predestined to full enlightenment?

The Lord: No, Subhuti.

Subhuti: How in this case does the prediction of this dharma to full enlightenment take place?

The Lord: Do you see as real this dharma which has a prediction to full enlightenment? [409]

Subhuti: No, Lord. I do not see any real dharma which is at any time predestined to full enlightenment. Nor do I see any real dharma which is known by the enlightened, which can be known to these, or by means of which these can even reveal full knowledge. It is such as any and all dharmas cannot be apprehended, that this does not occur to me to think, "this dharma is known to the Enlightened, this dharma can be known to such as these, by means of this dharma these recognize full knowledge."

Chapter XXIII – [The incommensurable merit, power, protection of this perfection of wisdom combined with virtuous methods, of the Middle Way]

[The incommensurable merit of combining virtuous methods to this perfection of wisdom]

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At this time *Sakra*, Chief of Gods, is seated amid this assembly, and says: To be sure, deep is this [perfection of wisdom](#), hard to see, difficult to understand!

The Lord: So it is, Kausika. As [infinite](#) as space is [perfect wisdom infinite](#). As isolated-inaccessible-not-findable none can come close to see, as [empty](#) is [perfect wisdom](#) beyond thought and understanding.

Sakra: These beings which hear this [perfection of wisdom](#), take it up, study, spread, and write it, are endowed with more than a puny wholesome root!

The Lord: So it is. Imagine all the beings in Jambudvīpa are endowed [411] with [the ability to observe] the ten ways of wholesome action, do these on the strength of this endowment beget much merit?

Sakra: These do, O Lord.

The Lord: A person who hears, studies, spreads and writes this perfection of wisdom begets merit other than these, as [merit beyond any reach of greatness, and indeed beyond even merit itself](#). The just mentioned heap of merit, due to the morality of all beings in Jambudvīpa, is not compared with any so called merit which is due to the wholesome root of one who hears, studies, spreads and writes this [deep perfection of wisdom](#).

Here and now, *a monk* said to Sakra, Chief of Gods: You are conceived of and recognized in essence, Kausika, by a person who hears, studies, spreads and writes this [deep perfection of wisdom](#)!

Sakra: I am even conceived of in essence and recognized by these sons or daughters of good family who raise but one single thought to enlightenment: [412] [how much more so, as, in addition, these train to Thusness, progress to thus, make endeavours regarding thus;](#)

- thus on their journey these conceive in essence and cognize [the whole world with its Gods, beings and Asuras](#).
- On their journey these not only conceive and cognize in essence the world with its Gods, beings and Asuras, but also all [the Stream-winners, Once-Returners, Never-Returners, Arhats and PratyekaBuddhas](#).
- These conceive and cognize also in essence [Bodhisattvas](#) which are great [almsgivers](#) but lack as yet in [perfect wisdom and skill in means](#);
- and equally [these with morality](#) as perfectly pure, which possess a vast quantity of morality, with observation of the moral rules as unbroken, flawless, unstained, complete, perfectly pure and unspotted, but also as yet lack in [perfect wisdom and skill in means](#);
- and equally [any which reveal from within themselves patience](#) and peaceful calm, [413] with thoughts free from hostility, which think no thought, nor harbor any feelings of malice even while burned at the stake, but who lack in [perfect wisdom and skill in means](#);
- and equally [any which exert perseverance](#), which persist in trying, are free from sloth, and remain uncowed in all these do with body, voice and mind, but which as yet lack [perfect wisdom and skill in means](#);
- and equally [these who are fond of the trances and delight](#) in these, which are strong and powerful in the trances, which are established in the trances, which are masters of trances, but which as yet lack in [perfect wisdom and skill in means](#).
- (*i.e. Practicing virtuous methods alone is not enough. Those five paramitas have to be combined with the sixth, the perfection of wisdom. Only then do they take the name of perfections. They have to be practices while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.*)

For, as one courses in **perfection of wisdom** as this is expounded, a **Bodhisattva**

- conceives of and recognizes in essence the worlds with their Gods, beings and Asuras,
- conceives of and recognizes in essence any and all which belong to the vehicle of **Sravaka Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddhas**,
- also the **Bodhisattvas** which are not skilled in means.

And all these mentioned cannot surpass one such as this, **for such is this nature and profound balance struck by total equanimity**. (*i.e. Such is the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting.*) For a **Bodhisattva** which courses in **perfection of wisdom** as this is expounded, which complies with this...takes up such a position so the lineage of all-knowing is not interrupted, and does not keep aloof from Tathagatas. This one's journey, as one progresses in this way, shortly reveals to one such as this the terrace of enlightenment; [414] one training oneself in this way, rescues beings which are sunken into the mud of defilement. Training oneself this way, one trains in this training of a **Bodhisattva**, and not in the training of **Sravaka Disciple** or **PratyekaBuddha**.

[The incommensurable protection and power that is this perfection of wisdom]

Sakra: And **the four Great Kings, the World Guardians**, come to any **Bodhisattva** who trains this way in the **perfection of wisdom**, and these say to this one: "Train yourself quickly in this course of a **Bodhisattva**, O you born of good family! Nimble train yourself! Here are the four begging bowls which you receive as you are seated on the terrace of enlightenment, as one which has revealed **full enlightenment**." Not only the four World Guardians come to a **Bodhisattva** which trains in **perfect wisdom** as is being expounded, but **I also come**, not to mention **other Gods. Constantly as well**, Tathagatas bring one to mind. All the worldly ills which might befall the **Bodhisattva** which courses in **perfect wisdom**, such as attacks from others, etc., are prevented from affecting this one in any way. This also, O Lord, is a quality which a **Bodhisattva** which courses in **perfect wisdom** gains in this very life.

Ananda just now thinks: Is this speech of Sakra, Chief of Gods, due to his own insight, or to the Buddha's might?

Sakra, through the Buddha's might, read his thoughts, and said: To the Buddha's might, Ananda, to the Buddha's sustaining power is this attributed. For I myself [415] am quite incapable of uttering anything relevant on the subject of **Bodhisattvas**. (*i.e. In other words, the refuge is to realize the real nature of everything. The one acts in accord with reality, and that is the protection and power.*)

The Lord: So it is, Ananda. What Sakra, Chief of Gods, is saying is due to Tathagatas might, to this sustaining power.

Chapter XXIV – [How to escape the influence of our own bad karma]

[There is no external Mara; it is all coming from our own habits, our own karma; and it is in our power to see through this and change it]

[Go to verses](#)

As a **Bodhisattva** trains in **perfect wisdom**, makes endeavours about this and develops this, **all the Evil Maras in the great trichiliocosm are seen as being in a state of uncertainty**: "Does this **Bodhisattva** **prematurely realize the reality-limit of the level of Sravaka, Disciple, or PratyekaBuddha**, or know **full enlightenment**?" [V215] Even so, as a **Bodhisattva** dwells as this dwelling for **perfect wisdom**, beings believe with firm resolve that **it is the Evil Maras which are pierced by a dart of sorrow**. As a **Bodhisattva** ever courses toward perfecting **wisdom**, makes endeavours about this and develops this, **the Evil Maras are resolutely believed to be thinking of how to hurt such a one as this**. (*i.e. We have to remember the Evil One is our own mind trying to play tricks on us. It is our old karma that is trying to filter everything, our old habits, the natural tendency of the mind to reify everything, to grasp at its own creations and then suffer because of this mistake.*)

For instance, beings resolutely believe these **Maras** try to invoke fear by letting loose a shower of meteors in all directions, causing an impression the horizon is all aflame. [V215] As a result, these beings believe with unquestioning certainty that these **Maras** hope now for the **Bodhisattva** to cower, for one's hair to stand on end, so even one single thought concentrated toward **full enlightenment** or any benevolent equanimity might get extinguished. [417] **But Mara, the Evil One, does not hurt these Bodhisattvas**. Some he is seen and resolutely believed to hurt, and yet others, not? Such fallaciousness in resolute belief. Such idleness of intent and action. Such unfortunate arrogance.

Ananda: What kind of a **Bodhisattva** is **Mara** seen as, or believed in as confounding, and herein called to blame for hurting?

The Lord: **Mara** is thus seen as, or believed in as confounding, or herein called to blame for hurting a **Bodhisattva** which in time, as this **perfection of wisdom** is taught, does not produce **a thought of firm belief in what is the actual nature of these various dharmas, all-knowledge**. **Mara** is thus firmly believed to gain entry. Such is this fallaciousness of resolute belief. He is believed to have already hurt **Bodhisattvas** which, as this **deep perfection of wisdom** is being taught, are seized by uncertainties, feel perplexed, and think, "perhaps this **perfection of wisdom** is so, perhaps it is not so"...or **Bodhisattvas** which are seen to be **lacking a good friend**, which are believed to have been taken hold of by bad friends who, as perfecting of **wisdom** is taking place, **either do not hear or do not understand** about very deep stations in nature, or **wisdom**, and **choosing to remain in ignorance** of these, **do not ask** how this perfecting of **wisdom** is developed; or, **Bodhisattvas** which cling to someone who upholds any dharma which, not being true of any of these dharmas, thus says: "I am an adherent to this one, and in all things this one I follow does not abandon me. [418][V217] Here are many other **Bodhisattvas** whom I might adhere to, but these do not suit me. I have taken this one as my fitting companion and this suits me."

Moreover, a **Bodhisattva** might, as this deep perfecting of nature as **wisdom** is taking place, say to another **Bodhisattva**: "Deep, indeed, is this perfecting of **wisdom**! What point is here in your listening to this? For even as I apply myself to this in the way in which Tathagatas have taught in other Sutrantas, even so I do not get to the bottom of this, nor derive any enjoyment from this. **What is any point in anyone's hearing and writing this?**" [V218] (*i.e. All our own bad karma.*)

In this way one projects one's lack of understanding, and herein appears to be making attempts to estrange other **Bodhisattvas**. Thus, it is seen as being **Mara** coming also to such a **Bodhisattva**...to hurt and gain entry herein. Furthermore, Ananda, herein is this thought to be **Mara** as the one **being contented, elated or enraptured**. **Mara** is accredited in one's thinking as being the one who is overjoyed, exultant and glad, thrilled, delighted and jubilant in any case **in which a Bodhisattva in one's own laxity despises other Bodhisattvas**, [V218] thinking: "I dwell in the dwelling of detachment, but not so these; theirs is not this dwelling in detachment." And blindly is it thought of as being **Mara** also who is so joyful as this **Bodhisattva keeps far away from revealing full enlightenment**. On the contrary, in this **imagined joy and contented ecstasy** of one who allows themselves to think thus, is **Mara** seen

to be this most excellent teacher of the exceedingly tenuous nature of one's disconcerted application of right **concentration**, mindfulness and effort. (*i.e. All our own bad karma.*)

Besides this, as a **Bodhisattva** takes on a name or clan, or as ascetic qualities are proclaimed, one may regard this as a sufficient reason to despise other **Bodhisattvas**, well-behaved and lovely in character though these are. [419] But this one has no depth of practice and does not apply qualities of **irreversible Bodhisattvas** which course toward **perfect wisdom**, nor their attributes, tokens or **signs**. As this one does not exude the **irreversible** qualities, such a one gives rise to defilement, seeing as this one thinks to attempt exalting one's self and self's concepts above others, and deprecates others, and thinks these are not equal to such dharmas, as oneself is. (*i.e. All our own bad karma.*)

The **Evil Maras**, which are anyone's unpracticed, untrained inclinations toward such, then foresee that the realms of **Mara** will not remain *empty*, and the great hells, the animal kingdom, the world of the Pretas, and the assemblies of the Asuras are overcrowded. And what is thought of as **Mara**, and blamed on this Evil One, is seen as becoming even more determined, and thinking something such as: "With this kind of start any **Bodhisattvas** such as this are soon smothered by gain and honor. These are plausible talkers, and with their plausible talk these catch hold of many people. Many people decide to listen to these, imitate what these speak of and show, and consequently do not train in **Thusness**, do not progress in this, do not make endeavours about this, and as well, these further increase **defilements**. So it is a fact all these deeds -of body, voice or mind- which these undertake with perverted mentality impels these to a rebirth in conditions which are unserviceable and do not provide selfless service, disagreeing as disagreeable, unpleasing as well as unpleasant. Consequently, what is seen to be the realms of **Mara** are overcrowded, i.e. the great hells, the animal world, the world of the Pretas, and [420] the assemblies of the Asuras." As this **Bodhisattva** considers this sequence of events, one believes it to be **Mara** the Evil One who is contented, elated, enraptured, overjoyed, exultant and jubilant. It is not **Mara**, however, who is given to sloth, this contented unawareness or ecstatic jubilation.

Furthermore, Ananda, as a **Bodhisattva** fights with any person belonging to the vehicle of the **Sravakas**, or **Disciples**, disputes and quarrels with these, abuses and reviles these, feels ill-will and hatred for these, a person comes to think to themselves that **Mara** thinks "surely, this son or daughter of good family keeps away from **all-knowledge**, this one remains far away from this." Now also, **Mara** is thought of as being even more jubilant as any person belonging to the **vehicle of the Bodhisattvas** fights with someone else which also belongs to this **vehicle of the Bodhisattvas**, for he thinks that "both these **Bodhisattvas** remain far from **all-knowledge**." But as a **Bodhisattva** which has one's prediction fights with another **Bodhisattva** which also has this prediction, [V.219] and cherishes malice for one such as this - for many aeons this one does, as this one may have such an attitude of mind, put on the armor [which enables any to struggle against it], -unless, of course, one has abandoned **all-knowledge** completely. [421] (*i.e. All our own bad karma.*)

Still in this, one here sees that it is not Mara, but one's own inclinations, attitudes and disconcertedness, seen as being Mara, which brings these unfortunate circumstances to bear... as well, it will be one's own right intentions and efforts, mindfulness and concentrations which comes to reveal these circumstances as dissolved in equanimity and perfect wisdom.

[The Way to escape the influence of bad gross karma: morality, patience, confession, promise, joy & contentment]

Ananda: Can one escape from these attitudes of mind, or is one definitely condemned to go on putting on the armor for all this length of time?

The Lord: Ananda, a dharma is demonstrated which **includes the possibility of escape**, -for persons of the **Sravaka, Disciple**-vehicle, for persons of the **PratyekaBuddha**-vehicle, for persons of the **Bodhisattva**-vehicle.

- As to this person which belongs to the **vehicle of the Bodhisattvas** and quarrels with someone else which also belongs to the **vehicle of the Bodhisattvas**, **-as one does not confess one's fault, does not promise restraint in future, harbors a latent bias towards hate, and dwells tied to bias, -this person does not allow for the teaching of escape** [i.e. from the consequence of action], but is definitely condemned to go on putting on the armor for any and all lengths of time. [V.219b?]
- But, to **any one which confesses any and all fault, [V.220] resolves true restraint throughout any of the three times, and reflects as follows:**

"This nature is to drive away bias, to pacify and appease the quarrels, disputes and conflicts of all beings, yet I myself engage in disputes! It is indeed a loss to me, and not a gain, as I answer back as I am spoken to. As I am to any and all beings a bridge across the sea of birth-and-death, I nevertheless say to another, 'the same to you,' or return a harsh and rough answer. This is not a way in which to speak. In fights, quarrels and disputes, here I behave as a senseless idiot, or dumb sheep. As I hear someone using offensive, abusive, insulting words towards me, this heart does not cherish malice for these or others. It is not [422] disciplined for me to mete and perceive faults assumed by me or another of others, or to think what is being said or even thought about any faults of others is worth listening to. As well, neither are any which mete and perceive thusly thought of as such.

As I am earnestly intent and intentioned, I do not do harm to others. As I indicate **joy and contentment** by pointing out any and all things which allow for **joy and contentment**, I head this way, as these, toward Nirvana, -yet nevertheless I bear ill will! I truly resolve to not bear ill will even against these which I perceive as having offended against me, and I truly resolve to avoid **rage**, and I truly resolve by making diligent and persistent effort in this direction. Even as my life is in danger I truly resolve not to allow a **rage**, or even a frown to appear on my face."

-To such a Bodhisattva, Ananda, I teach escape. This is the attitude which a **Bodhisattva** adopts also towards persons who belong to the vehicle of the **Disciples**. Never to allow **anger** with any being, this is the attitude of mind one adopts towards all beings. What attitude now does a **Bodhisattva** have towards other persons avowed to this **vehicle of the Bodhisattvas**? The same as towards any Teacher. One has the attitude that, "these **Bodhisattvas** are my teachers. Surely, these mount on this same vehicle as I, have ascended by this same path, are of like intention with me, are set out in this same vehicle as I. Here these are trained, this is the method by which I train.

But as some of us dwell in a dwelling tainted [by the ideas of **Maras, Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddhas**], [423] I do not do likewise. As, however these dwell in an uncontaminated dwelling, **in mental activities which accord unto all-knowledge**, now I also train as these. No obstacles can arise to any **Bodhisattva** which trains oneself in this way in **all-knowledge**, and one quickly reveals full enlightenment. [V.226] *(i.e. Morality is acting more in accord with the real nature of everything than our usual egoistic behavior. That is why it is efficient in bringing more peace, calm, and capacity to concentrate and have insights. It takes into account the interdependence and emptiness of all sentient beings and things.)*

Chapter XXV -- ?? [About the Middle Way in Training]

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[Note: only the last paragraph seems to talk about it.]

Chapter XXVI – [Progressing through the Mahayana Stages while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action]

[The coherence, benefits and powers of acting more and more in accord with reality grow incommensurably as one approach enlightenment – so do their faith, compassion and skillful means]

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[V.227] So now it occurs to *Sakra*, Chief of Gods: A *Bodhisattva*, even as one courses only just so far, surpasses all; how much more so as one knows **full enlightenment**! A great gain accrues to these beings, a good life do these live as thoughts stride in **all-knowledge**; how much more so as these have realized thoughts un**to full enlightenment**! To be emulated are these, the very cream of all beings, which **realize full enlightenment**!

So here, *Sakra*, Chief of Gods, conjured up Mandarava flowers, saluted these reverently, scattered these over Tathagata, and said: May any persons who are avowed to the *vehicle of Bodhisattvas*, and who have revealed and realized thoughts **to full enlightenment**, succeed in their resolve to know **full enlightenment**, and beyond this, to transfer any and all beings which are borne along by the great flood of birth-and-death to the smooth yonder shore! May this thought of enlightenment which these wish for, think over and take hold of, bring to fulfillment any dharmas of a Buddha, and dharmas in accord with **all-knowledge**, dharmas of the Self-Existent, insuperable dharmas! **I have not even the slightest suspicion such Bodhisattvas, which are endowed with great compassion, might turn away from full enlightenment, [435] or these persons who are avowed to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas and who are set out for full enlightenment might turn away from this. On the contrary, I am sure this resolve to reveal and realize full enlightenment increases more and more in these,** as these survey the ills which afflict beings on the plane of birth-and-death. For through **great compassion** these desire the welfare of this world with its Gods, beings and Asuras, are of an aspiration to benefit this, are full of pity for this, these, who are endowed with this attitude of mind, dwell in the attitude of mind which is expressed in this resolution...

"we have crossed over, we help beings to cross over!
Freed, we free them!
Recovered, we help these to recover!
Gone to Nirvana, we lead these to Nirvana!"

"Gaté Gaté Paragaté Parasamgaté Bodhi Svaha!"

[The benefits of developing aspiring Bodhicitta – rejoicing over the Mahayana Stages ...]

Sakra: [V.228] Any son or daughter of good family who rejoice at this production of thought of any Bodhisattvas, who are just now set out in the vehicle, as well as at this production of thought of any which realize progression as always, on course, as well as at this irreversible nature of any which realize irreversibility, as well as at this nature of any which inevitably realize one birth only, -to what extent is their merit a different one?

The Lord: One might be able, Kausika, to grasp the measure of Sumeru, king of mountains, or of a world system, up to a great trichiliocosm, with the help of a tip of straw, but one can not possibly grasp any measure of merit coming to these sons or daughters of good family, or to a Bodhisattva, from the production of this thought connected with that jubilation. [436]

Sakra: Seen as and thought of as beset by Mara are any beings which do not hear of this immeasurable merit of jubilation over the career of a Bodhisattva -which begins with the first thought of enlightenment [tathagatarbha] and which ends with full enlightenment [Tathagata] -which do not know it, which do not see it, which do not bring this jubilation to mind. These are seen as partisans of Mara, deceased in Mara's realms.

For any which bring to mind these thoughts, which turn these over into the supreme enlightenment, rejoice at these, such do so in order to bring to realization Mara's realm, as this truly is. One does O Lord, rejoice at the various stages of thought which these Bodhisattvas raise to enlightenment. [437] Sons and daughters of good family abandon neither the Tathagata, nor Dharma, nor Community, these rejoice in the stages of the thought of enlightenment!

The Lord: So it is, Kausika. And sons or daughters of good family who have rejoiced in the stages of the thought of enlightenment, these do - whether these belong to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas, or of the PratyekaBuddhas, or of the Disciples - soon please the Tathagatas, and not displease such as these.

Sakra: So it is, O Lord. Here and now, these are reborn as a result of the wholesome roots [which these plant] as hearts are filled with jubilation, here these are treated with respect, revered, worshipped and adored. These never see any unpleasant sights, nor hear any unpleasant sounds, nor smell any unpleasant smells, nor taste any unpleasant tastes, [438] nor come into contact with anything unpleasant to the touch. One realizes these things to be reborn in the wholesome roots of countless beings, roots which bring happiness to all beings. The thoughts of jubilation of any beings which, as producing an aspiration towards enlightenment, rejoice over the successive stages of the thought of enlightenment [enlightened thought] in persons who aspire to the vehicle of Bodhisattvas, as these thoughts increase, are nourishers of full enlightenment. As these realize and reveal full enlightenment, and just so these lead countless beings to Nirvana.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika, as you say through Tathagatas might. The wholesome roots of countless beings are rejoiced over, planted and consummated as a consequence of these actions of sons or daughters of good family who rejoice over the successive stages of the thought of enlightenment in these persons who belong to this vehicle of the Bodhisattvas.

[Progressing on the Mahayana stages, while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action – transcending the duality subject vs. object; mirror vs. dust]

Subhuti: But how can a thought which is like **illusion** know **full enlightenment**?

The Lord: Subhuti, do you see the thought which is like **illusion** as a separate real entity?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

The Lord: Do you see **illusion** as a separate real entity?

Subhuti: No, Lord. [439]

The Lord: So, as you see neither **illusion**, nor the thought which is like **illusion**, as a real separate entity, do you now perhaps see this dharma which knows **full enlightenment** as something other than **illusion**, or as something other than the thought which is like **illusion**?

Subhuti: No, Lord. I do not. In consequence, to which dharma can I point, and say "it is" or "it is not?" To a dharma which is absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable **one cannot attribute "it is" or "it is not."** Also any absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable dharma can not know **full enlightenment**. Here now, O Lord, **perfect wisdom** is absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable. But any dharma which is absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, this is not a dharma which can be developed, nor does this bring about or remove any dharma. So, how can a **Bodhisattva**, by resorting to an absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable **perfection of wisdom**, know **full enlightenment**? **Even full enlightenment is absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable.** [440] As, O Lord, the **perfection of wisdom** is absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, and as **full enlightenment** is absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, how can the isolated-inaccessible-not-findable become known through the isolated-inaccessible-not-findable?

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. It is just as this **perfection of wisdom** is absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable that absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable **full enlightenment** is known [by this]. But as a **Bodhisattva** forms such a notion as "the **perfection of wisdom** is absolutely isolated-inaccessible-not-findable," this is not the **perfection of wisdom**. It is thus certain, thanks to perfecting **wisdom** a **Bodhisattva** can know **full enlightenment**, and one cannot know this without resorting to this. The isolated-inaccessible-not-findable cannot be known by the isolated-inaccessible-not-findable, and nevertheless a **Bodhisattva** knows **full enlightenment**, and does not know this without resorting to the **perfection of wisdom**. (*i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting.*)

Subhuti: As I understand the meaning of the Lord's teaching, a **Bodhisattva** in this way courses in an **unfathomable** object.

The Lord: A doer of what is hard is the **Bodhisattva** which courses in an **unfathomable** object, and which yet does not realize such object [or: gain], i.e. on the level of **Sravaka, Disciple** or **PratyekaBuddha**.

Subhuti: As I understand the meaning of the Lord's teaching, there is in this way no **Bodhisattva** at all which is any doer of what is hard. [441] As this very dharma is not got at which is realized, nor anything whatsoever which can be revealed or realized, nor anything whatsoever by means of which one can realize. So, as this is being taught, as a **Bodhisattva** is not despondent, cowed or stolid, does not turn back, and remains unafraid, this one courses in **perfect wisdom**. As one does not review this as a certain fact as one courses, one such courses in **perfect wisdom**. As one does not review this as a real fact one is near **to full enlightenment**, one such as this courses in **perfect wisdom**. As it does not even occur to one that one is keeping aloof from the level of **Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddhas**, this one courses in **perfect wisdom**. This does not occur to space, "I am near to this, or, I am far from that," for space can not make such discriminations, just so it can not in truth occur to a **Bodhisattva** which courses in **perfect wisdom**..."**full enlightenment** is near to me, the level of **Sravaka, Disciple** or **PratyekaBuddha** is far from me."

The perfection of wisdom does not make any discriminations. It is as with a man created by magical illusion to which (!) it does not occur "the conjurer is near to 'me', but this assembled crowd of spectators is far from 'me'." For illusory men make no such discriminations. [442] It is as with the reflection of an object in a mirror or in water, to which it does not occur "the object which produces the reflection is near to 'me', but these who come along and cast the reflection in the mirror or in water, are far from 'me'." For this reflection of an object makes no discrimination. Just as Tathagata, as one which forsakes all constructions and discriminations, finds nothing dear or not dear, just so a Bodhisattva which courses in perfecting wisdom, for here is no discrimination on the part of perfect wisdom. Just as Tathagata is one which forsakes all constructions and discriminations, even so perfect wisdom forsakes all constructions and discriminations. It does not occur to a fictitious creature which Tathagata magically conjures up "the level of Sravakas, Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas is far from 'me', full enlightenment is near to 'me'," for any fictitious creature can not make any discriminations. In the same way a Bodhisattva which courses in perfect wisdom does not think "the level of Sravakas, Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas is far from 'me', full enlightenment is near to 'me'," and this simply due to an absence of any and all discrimination on the part of the perfection of wisdom. [443] A fictitious creature [which has been conjured up by the Tathagata] to do a certain work [in converting beings], performs this work, but remains without discrimination, just due to being so constituted as it lacks all discrimination. Just so a Bodhisattva performs the work for the sake of which one develops this perfection of wisdom, but this perfection of wisdom remains without discrimination, due to the fact as it is so constituted it lacks all discrimination. An expert mason, or mason's apprentice, makes of wood an automatic man or woman, a puppet which can be moved by pulling the strings. Whatever action it is made to perform, this action it performs, yet this wooden machine has no discrimination. Just due to the fact as it is so constituted that it lacks all discrimination. Just so a Bodhisattva performs this work for the sake of which one develops this perfection of wisdom, but this perfection of wisdom remains without discrimination, just due to the fact as this perfection of wisdom is so constituted it lacks all discriminations. (i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting.)

Chapter XXVII – [The subtle Bodhisattva Path]

[Coursing on the razor's edge of between existence and non-existence without losing heart.]

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Sariputra: Translucently...in **this core and substance of things** course these **Bodhisattvas** coursing in **perfect wisdom!**

Subhuti: Translucently as well, Sariputra...devoid of any center or boundary, in dharmas devoid even of substantiality course these **Bodhisattvas** coursing in **perfect wisdom.**

Here and now, these thoughts occur at once to *many thousands of Gods of the realm of sense-desire*: Homage is due to these beings which raise thoughts to, and are consummating these thoughts in **full enlightenment**, these coursing in this most **profound perfection of wisdom**, and as these are coursing thus, do not realize any boundary to reality, be this on the level of a **Sravaka, Disciple**, or even of a **PratyekaBuddha**. In this way also are **Bodhisattvas** known as doers of what is hard, as **these course in this true nature of dharma, but do not realize this as such**, for of this truth is herein no thing to be revealed, and indeed, nothing to realize. This is, again...**Suchness**. We, as any and all dharmas, are this already, prior to and beyond even any thought to seek for it...and once we begin to seek, are no longer that which we seek, for we think of this, then, as some thing other than what this is.

Subhuti read their thoughts, and said to them: This is not hard for these **Bodhisattvas** that these do not realize any **reality-limit**. This, however, is hard for these, this is most hard for these, [445] as these put on this armor of this resolution **to lead countless beings to Nirvana, but now absolutely such beings do not exist**. And since these do not exist, these cannot be got at.

Owing to isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of beings, these who are disciplined thus absolutely do not exist. It is in this spirit the **Bodhisattva** set out toward revealing **full enlightenment**, and decides to discipline beings. For isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of beings is known only as is the design of isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of space [as dharmakaya]. In this way also **Bodhisattvas** are doers of what is hard, as these put on this armor for **the sake of beings who do not exist**, who cannot be got at. One decides to put on space exactly the same as one decides to put on this armor for the sake of beings. **And yet this armor, as non-extinguishable space is put on by Bodhisattvas for the sake of beings**. But this non-apprehension of beings, in [ultimate and] absolute reality, is taught by Tathagatas. And this non-apprehension of beings is inferred from this very isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness, and from the isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of any who are so disciplined is the isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of a Bodhi-being inferred. **As a Bodhisattva, while this is being taught, does not lose heart, one can know this one courses in this perfection of wisdom**. For from the isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of a being is known the isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of form, feeling, perception, impulse, and consciousness...and this the same of all dharmas. [446] Thus is the isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of all dharmas viewed. As this isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of all dharmas is thus taught, a **Bodhisattva** does not lose heart, and due to this, one courses in this **perfection of wisdom**.

The Lord: For what reason does a **Bodhisattva** not lose heart as the isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of all dharmas is thus taught?

Subhuti: Due to isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness no dharma can ever lose heart. For one cannot get at any dharma as loses heart, nor at any dharma which makes a dharma lose heart.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. It is quite certain a **Bodhisattva** courses in perfect and natural **wisdom** as this is being taught, demonstrated, expounded and pointed out...one does not lose heart, is neither cast down nor depressed, is not cowed or stolid, does not turn one's mind away from this, does not have one's back broken, and remains unafraid.

[On this Middle Way the Bodhisattva is coursing in accord with reality, thus more and more efficiently and easily]

Subhuti: So it is. As a **Bodhisattva** courses thus, one courses in **perfect wisdom**. And the Gods round Indra, around Brahman, round Prajapati, round Ishana, and the crowds of men and women round the Rishis, **from a distance pay homage with hands together to a Bodhisattva coursing thus.** [447]

The Lord: And not only these, but also all the other Gods, up to the Akanistha Gods, pay homage to such a one. And with the Buddha-eye, Tathagatas within any present moment residing in countless world systems behold these **Bodhisattvas** thus coursing in **perfect wisdom**, and these help such a one, and bring one to mind. This is quite certain, Subhuti, these **Bodhisattvas** coursing in **perfect wisdom**, and being helped and brought to mind by Tathagatas, are borne in mind as **irreversible** from **full enlightenment** being revealed and realized as such. **No obstacle seen or thought of as being put up by Mara or anyone else can stop these.** Even as all beings in the **great trichiliocosm** are seen as being evil **Maras**, and each one of these conjure up just as many diabolic armies, [448] even these all together have not the strength to obstruct on one's way **to full enlightenment** any **Bodhisattva** brought to mind by the Buddhas and coursing in **perfect wisdom**. And this remains true even as all the beings in all the countless **trichiliocosms** are seen as evil **Maras**, and as each one of these conjures up just as many diabolic armies.

The endowment with these two dharmas safeguards a **Bodhisattva** against all attacks which are seen and thought of as coming from the **Maras**, or their hosts: 1) One can not abandon any being, and 2) One surveys all dharmas as reflected from **emptiness**. Two other dharmas have this same effect: 1) As one speaks so one acts, and 2) One is brought to mind by the Buddhas, the Lords.

As a **Bodhisattva** courses thus, the Gods also decide to go up to one such as this. These decide to ask questions and counter-questions, [449] to honor, and to strengthen one's determination by saying: "Soon, child of good family, shall you know **full enlightenment**! Here now, go on dwelling in this dwelling of **perfect wisdom**! Thus you offer safety to the helpless, defense of the defenseless, a refuge to these without refuge, a place of rest to these without resting place, the final relief of these who are without this, an island to any without one, a light to the blind, a guide to the guideless, a resort to any without one, and you guide to the path any who have lost this, herein you become a support to one's who are without support."

[There comes a stage where the Bodhisattva is called irreversible – they cannot turn back from this point on]

The Buddhas, Lords who reside in countless world-systems, and who demonstrate dharma surrounded by a congregation of monks and attended by a multitude of Bodhisattvas, proclaim the name, clan, power, appearance and form of a Bodhisattva which courses and dwells in perfect wisdom, and is endowed with the virtues of roaming in perfect wisdom, perfecting wisdom. And these demonstrate Dharma, and exult over this Bodhisattva, proclaiming name, clan, power, color and form. Just here and now I demonstrate dharma, and I proclaim the name, etc., of the Bodhisattva Ratnaketu, and of the Bodhisattva Sikhin. [450] I exult over these, and also over the other Bodhisattvas which just now lead the holy life with Tathagata Akshobhya. In a similar way, the Buddhas in other Buddha-fields proclaim the name, etc., of Bodhisattvas just now leading the holy life here in this Buddha-field, and which dwell in the dwelling of perfect wisdom. And these exult over such as these.

Subhuti: Do the Buddhas honor all Bodhisattvas in such a manner?

The Lord: No, Subhuti. But only one's which are irreversible and free from all attachment.

Subhuti: Apart from the irreversible Bodhisattvas, do the Buddhas in such a manner honor any other Bodhisattvas?

The Lord: Yes, here are others. These are persons belonging to the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas, who are strong in assimilating what may be seen as an enemy. These are [451] just now engaged in learning this course of a Bodhisattva under Tathagata Akshobhya, and the Bodhisattva Ratnaketu, courses here on the pilgrimage of a Bodhisattva, and dwells, engaged in learning it. In addition, these Bodhisattvas which course in perfect wisdom, and resolutely believe "all dharmas fail to be produced" without, however, so far acquiring definitely the patient acceptance of dharmas which fail to be produced; as well as these which resolutely believe "all dharmas are calmly quiet," without, however, having entered into accord with the irreversible domain over all dharmas; any Bodhisattvas which dwell in this dwelling are honored by the Buddhas in the above manner. [452] Bodhisattvas of whom the Buddhas proclaim the name, etc., and over whom these exult, have forsaken the level of the Sravakas, Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas, and one can well see these come to be on the level of the Buddha. And these are predicted to full enlightenment. For Bodhisattvas of whom the Buddhas proclaim the name, etc., and over whom these exult, also stand in irreversibility.

[Standing in irreversibility; not accepting, not rejecting any dharma]

In addition to this, Subhuti, **Bodhisattvas** stand in irreversibility as, upon hearing this **deep perfection of wisdom** being taught,

- **these resolutely believe in this, are not stupefied, do not hesitate or doubt;**
- as in this resolute belief "so it is, as Tathagata teaches" these go on listening to this in greater detail;
- and as these make up their minds to listen in still greater detail to this **perfection of wisdom** in the presence of Tathagata Akshobhya;
- and as these resolutely believe from just hearing this **perfection of wisdom** in the presence of persons avowed to this **vehicle of the Bodhisattvas** which in this **Buddha-field** lead the holy life. [453]

Thus I teach merely to hear **perfection of wisdom** achieves much. How much more is achieved by any who resolutely believe in this, who, upon this, take up a position in relation to **Thusness** and progress toward **Thusness**, and who, upon this, stand firmly in **Suchness** and who, standing firmly in **Suchness** and in **all-knowledge**, demonstrate dharma.

Subhuti: As, O Lord, one cannot get at any different dharma, distinct from **Suchness**, what is this dharma which stands firmly in **Suchness**, or which knows **full enlightenment**, or which even can demonstrate this dharma?

The Lord: One cannot get at any different dharma, distinct from **Suchness**, which stands firmly in **Suchness**. This very **Suchness**, to begin with, is not apprehended, how much less one which stands firmly in **Suchness**. **Suchness** does not know **full enlightenment**, and no dharma is got at which knows **full enlightenment**, can do so, or does do so. **Suchness** does not demonstrate dharma, and this dharma cannot be got at which is demonstrated. [454]

[Abiding without abiding; coursing while realizing the emptiness of the three]

Sakra: Deep, O Lord, is perfecting of **wisdom**. Doers of what is hard are these **Bodhisattvas** which aspire **to full enlightenment**. Indeed, no dharma stands in **Suchness**, no dharma knows **full enlightenment**, no one demonstrates dharma. And yet this does not cow these, **nor do these hesitate, nor are these stupefied**.

Subhuti: You say, Kausika, "doers of what is hard are **Bodhisattvas** which, as dharmas as deep as these are being taught, feel neither hesitation nor stupefaction." But, as all dharmas are **empty** who can herein feel hesitation or stupefaction? Who herein, can even begin to raise a question of hesitation or stupefaction?

Sakra: Whatever the holy Subhuti is expounding, this he expounds with reference to **emptiness**, and he does not get stuck anywhere. The holy Subhuti's demonstration of dharma does not get stuck anywhere, no more than an arrow shot into the air. Now perhaps, O Lord, I, as I take into consideration Subhuti the Elder, and teach as he thus teaches and expounds, may be one who correctly preaches Tathagata-truth, a preacher of Dharma, and one who declares also the logical sequence of dharma.

The Lord: So it is, Kausika. As you come to teach and expound as he does, you come to be one who correctly preaches Tathagata-truth, a preacher of dharma, and one who declares also the dharma's logical sequence. For whatever [455] the Elder Subhuti makes clear, this he makes clear with reference to **emptiness**. As the Elder Subhuti does not, to begin with, even review or apprehend **perfection of wisdom**, how much less one coursing in **perfection of wisdom**. Enlightenment, even to begin with he does not get at, how much less at one who knows **full enlightenment**. Even all knowledge, he does not get at, how much less at one who reaches unto **all-knowledge**. Even **Suchness** he does not get at, how much less at one who becomes a Tathagata. Even non-production he does not get at, how much less at one who fully has awoken to enlightenment. Even the powers Subhuti does not get at, how much less at one who possesses the powers. Even the grounds of self-confidence he does not review, how much less at one who is self-confident. Even the dharma he does not get at, how much less at one who demonstrates dharma. For Subhuti the Elder dwells in this dwelling of the isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of all dharmas, in **this dwelling of the baselessness of all dharmas**. And this is quite certain this dwelling in isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness and baselessness of all dharmas, on the part of Subhuti the Elder, is of **infinitesimal** value compared with the dwelling of a **Bodhisattva** coursing in **perfect wisdom**, perfecting herein and dwelling in this. You see Kausika, except for **the dwelling of Tathagata this dwelling of a Bodhisattva coursing in perfect wisdom, which dwells in it, surpasses all other dwellings**. [456] This dwelling is described as the foremost of all dwellings, as the best, the choicest, the most excellent, the most sublime, the highest, the supreme, the unequalled, the **incomparable**. It surpasses the dwellings of all **Sravakas, Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas**. So here now, Kausika, a son or daughter of a good family who have this aspiration to arrive at the highest possible degree of perfection of all beings, to arrive at the best state, the choicest state, the most excellent state, the most sublime state, the **incomparable** state, -these do with diligence **aspire to dwell in this dwelling of Bodhisattvas which course in perfect wisdom, which dwell in this**.

Chapter XXVIII – [Ensuring the future of this teaching]

[The Prediction of 6,000 monks all called Avakirnakusuma]

[Go to verses](#)

So, at this time, one of the Gods of the Thirty-three seized Mandarava flowers, magnificent Mandarava flowers, and comes here to the Lord. And just at this time, **six thousand monks** are assembled and seated in this assembly. They rise from their seats, put their upper robes over one shoulder, place their right knees on the earth, and salute the Lord with their hands together. Through the Buddha's might their hands are now filled Mandarava flowers, with magnificent Mandarava flowers. They scatter these flowers over the Lord, and speak: "We, O Lord, course in this **perfection of wisdom!**"

Here and now, as this occasion progresses, **the Lord is smiling**. Such is the nature of the Buddhas and Lords that, when a smile is made to manifest [in an assembly of **Bodhisattva**], multiple colors of rays issue from the Lord's mouth, -rays of blue, yellow, red, white, crimson, crystal, silverfish and golden. These rays illuminate endless and **boundless** world systems with their luster, rising right up even to this world of Brahma, again returning from this world to the Lord, circulate thrice round the Lord, and now vanish again into the head of the Lord. [458] Here and now the venerable Ananda rises from his seat, put his upper robe over one shoulder, placed his right knee on the earth, placed his hands together and offered them and his entire being to the Lord, and said: It is not without reason the Tathagata manifests a smile. **What is the reason for your smile**, O Lord?

The Lord now speaks and says: **These six thousand monks**, Ananda, in a future period, in the Starlike aeon, do finally come to know **full enlightenment**, and within this demonstrate dharma to beings. **These all bear the same name. With Avakirnakusuma** for their name these Tathagatas are teachers in the world. These all have an equal congregation of **disciples**. These all live the same length of time, i.e., twenty thousand aeons. Each one of these have an extensive holy writ, which spreads widely among Gods and beings. In each case their good law abides for the same length of time, for twenty thousand aeons. And showers of flowers, of all the five colors, descends upon all of these - wherever they may leave a home which they had in a village, town or marketplace, or wherever they may turn once again the wheel of dharmas, wherever they may dwell, wherever they may appear [among people]. [459]

[NOTE: the name 'Avakirnakusuma', literally means, 'covered with flowers', said in this prediction to be a group of future Buddhas.]

[This is the realization where a Bodhisattva gain his absolute faith and irreversibility]

So here, Ananda, in any of these three times, **Bodhisattvas** aspiring to dwell in this highest dwelling, beyond limit, aspiring to dwell in this dwelling of Tathagata, dwell in this dwelling of **perfect wisdom**. With any **Bodhisattvas** coursing in perfecting this **wisdom** within, and actually becoming this and adapting this as oneself, ones such as these can be quite certain of having, before one is reborn here among people, deceased among people or among the heavenly hosts of the Tushitas. **For it is among people and Tushita Gods this perfection of wisdom circulates to this full extent.** One can be certain Tathagatas behold such **Bodhisattvas** as course in this **perfection of wisdom**, learn this, bear this in mind, study, speak of, repeat, or merely write this, and also instruct any other **Bodhisattvas**, admonish, instigate and encourage these.

You can know that ones such as **these have planted and continue planting wholesome roots within and beyond any known limits, or any limits yet to be established...**and these do this within this view and thought of Tathagatas. These do, not only in the presence of **Sravakas, Disciples, and PratyekaBuddhas** plant wholesome roots so as to train self and others in **perfect wisdom**, but, **without any doubt these Bodhisattvas training in this perfection of wisdom and remaining unafraid, plant wholesome roots with Tathagatas.** [460]

Any taking up this **perfection of wisdom**, bear this in mind, study, speak of, repeat and write this, which pursue this, - in its meaning, contents and method - one can be quite certain these have been face to face with Tathagatas. As **Bodhisattvas** do not revile this **perfection of wisdom**, neither oppose, deny nor reject this, **one can know these fulfill their inclinations indicated under Jinas, these Buddhas of this past.**

As a **Bodhisattva** does not go back on one's vow to reveal and have revealed, to realize and bring to realization **full enlightenment**, this one does not give the wholesome root which one plants in the all-presence of Tathagatas, over to Discipleship or **PratyekaBuddhahood** as one's reward. As a rule, **as a matter of imperishable principle struck by the complete interdependence of any and all dharmas**, such **Bodhisattvas** are grateful and practice this **perfection of wisdom** with no stopping whatsoever, even beyond these forms, feelings, perceptions, impulses or any consciousness of such dharmas. One can know this, to be sure. **The spontaneity of Suchness reveals this thoughtless, timeless cognition borne of pure awareness...identical to space.** *(i.e. Realizing the real nature of the subtle clear luminous source, the inseparability of interdependence and emptiness, of the world and mind, of compassion and emptiness, of the inseparable three kayas, of the Two Truths – all of this being merely a finger pointing at the moon beyond any description, beyond all conceptualization.)*

[Entrusting and transmitting the most precious Sutra to Ananda so it does not disappear]

So, here now, Ananda, again and again **I entrust and transmit to you this perfection of wisdom**, laid out in letters, so this is available for learning, bearing in mind, discoursing, studying and spreading wide, so this lasts long, so this does not disappear. As, Ananda, you forget all the demonstrations of dharma which you learn directly from me - the **perfection of wisdom** being this lone exception - as you cast these away, and allow these to be forgotten, this is but a slight offence against Tathagatas. (*i.e. Forget all the Hinayana teachings and live by this one only.*)

But consider as you forget, cast away and allow to be forgotten only one verse of this **perfection of wisdom**, or merely a part of a verse, this is a serious [461] offence against Tathagatas, and this displeases me. And as you learn this **perfection of wisdom**, and you forget this, cast this away, allow this to be forgotten, you fail in the respect, reverence and worship afforded Tathagatas, past, future and present, all together. Here and now, Ananda, remember it is a serious offence against Tathagatas, whereas you learn this **perfection of wisdom**, you forget this, cast this away, and allow this to be forgotten, this displeases me. For Tathagatas say "this **perfection of wisdom is mother, this sourceless source, the generatrix of past, future and present Tathagatas, the nurse in all-knowledge.**" Here and now, Ananda, do **I entrust and transmit to you this perfection of wisdom, so it does not disappear.**

This **perfection of wisdom** is learned, borne in mind, studied, repeated, written and developed. **Attend this well, and spread this well.** And as one learns this, one carefully analyzes this grammatically, letter by letter, syllable by syllable, word by word. [462] As the dharma-body of past, future and present Tathagatas is this dharma-text authoritative. In this same way in which Ananda behaves towards me, at present residing as a Tathagata - with solitude, affection and respect - in this same virtuous spirit, do you learn this **perfection of wisdom**, bear this in mind, study, repeat, write and develop this, respect, revere and worship this. This is a way for you or any to worship, this is a way to show affection, serene faith and respect for the past, future and present Buddhas and Lords.

As I, a Tathagata, am dear and pleasant to you Ananda, and you do not abandon me, here and now **may this perfection of wisdom be dear and pleasant to you, and may you not abandon this, may you not forget even one single word of this, so this does not disappear.** For long I speak to you about this bestowal of **perfection of wisdom**, for one kalpa, or for the remainder of a kalpa, for one hundred kalpas, for up to hundreds of thousands of kotis of kalpas, and more. But to cut this short, in this same way in which I am your teacher, so is this **perfection of wisdom**. In this same way in which the past, future and present Buddhas and Lords are teachers of the world with its Gods, beings and Asuras, just so is this **perfection of wisdom**.

Here and now, Ananda, [463] **with a measureless bestowal I entrust and transmit to you this perfection of wisdom**, which is beyond any measure whatsoever, for the benefit and happiness of the world with its Gods, beings and Asuras. **As one does not want to abandon these Jewels of Tathagata, Dharma, or noble Sangha, as one does not want to abandon enlightenment of past, future and present Buddhas and Lords, - does one not abandon this perfection of wisdom!** And here is this further admonition - as these who learn this **perfection of wisdom**, bear this in mind, study, repeat, write and develop this, these assist in enlightenment of the past, future and present Buddhas and Lords. **For, whoever assists this perfection of wisdom as it is either thought to be, or seeming to crumble away, such a one assists in enlightenment of the past, future and present Buddhas and Lords. From this perfection of wisdom does enlightenment of Buddhas and Lords come forth. And this holds good of all Tathagatas, whether past, future or present.**

Here and now, a **Bodhisattva** which has aspiration to know **full enlightenment** and to train in **the six perfections** listens to this **perfection of wisdom**, studies, repeats and writes this, [464] and one trains in this very **perfection of wisdom**, and makes endeavours around, about, and within this. This **perfection of wisdom** is mother, this sourceless source and generatrix of **Bodhisattvas**. It is due to this **perfection of wisdom** any **Bodhisattvas** ever train in **the six perfections**, and at any time progress **to full enlightenment**. It is due to just this **perfection of wisdom** **Bodhisattvas** progress in **the six perfections**, as all these **perfections** come to nourish this which provides dissolution of **defilements** and revelations toward supreme enlightenment as these are indicated and revealed from this **perfection of wisdom**.

Here and now, Ananda, again and again, **for a second time, for a third time, do I entrust and transmit this perfection of wisdom to you, so it does not disappear.** For this **perfection of wisdom** is the **inexhaustible** storehouse of the dharma of Tathagatas. The dharma which Buddhas and Lords demonstrate to beings in this past period, in these worlds of birth-and-death with no beginning or end, all this is indicated and revealed from just this storehouse of dharma, from this **perfection of wisdom**. As well, this dharma which the Buddhas and Lords demonstrate to beings, reveals also **full enlightenment** in any future period, for any such as have a view which leads beyond these **measureless** worlds of birth-and-death, also as is indicated and revealed from just this storehouse of dharma, this **perfection of wisdom**. And also the Buddhas and Lords just now residing in countless world systems, and demonstrating dharma, these also derive revelation from just this storehouse of dharma, this **perfection of wisdom**. As **inexhaustible**, here and now is this storehouse of dharma, this **perfection of wisdom**, still and after all. [464a]

As, Ananda, you demonstrate dharma on the **Disciple**-level to persons who take vows to the vehicle of the **Disciples**, and as a result of your demonstration of dharma all the beings in the **great trichiliocosm** realize Arhatship, you do not do your duty as my **disciple** as in this way you keep moving as I the wheel of dharma, and demonstrate dharma.

But as, on this other hand, you demonstrate and reveal but one single verse of dharma associated with this **perfection of wisdom** to a **Bodhisattva**, I am pleased with you, who as my **disciple** turns as I the wheel of dharma, and demonstrate dharma. As you consider this demonstration of dharma of yours through which the beings in this **great trichiliocosm** all are induced to attain Arhatship, and of these Arhats the meritorious work founded on **giving**, on morality, and on meditational development continues, does all this constitute a great heap of merit?

Ananda: It would, O Lord.

The Lord: A person who has taken vows to the vehicle of the **Disciple** begets a different and **immeasurable merit** as this one demonstrates to **Bodhisattvas** the dharma associated with the **perfection of wisdom**. This merit is different as it is a **Bodhisattva** who demonstrates to another **Bodhisattva** [a verse of] dharma associated with this **perfection of wisdom**, -for even one single day only, for a morning, for an hour, for half an hour, for a minute, nay for a second, for a moment, or for an incidence of a single moment. **For this gift of dharma on the part of any Bodhisattva is different from all the wholesome roots of all who avow to the vehicle of the Sravakas, Disciples, or PratyekaBuddhas.** It is quite impossible for a **Bodhisattva** who is thus endowed as a **Bodhisattva** with wholesome roots, who thus brings to mind this wholesome root, to turn away from **full enlightenment**. This cannot be.

[i.e. See the continuation of this transmission to Ananda in [Chapter 32](#)]

[Realizing the emptiness of all dharmas gives incommensurable powers]

Now on this occasion, *the Lord* exercises his wonderworking power. The entire assembly - monks, nuns, laymen and lay women, Gods, Nagas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kinnaras, Mahoragas, humans and ghosts - these all, through the Buddha's might, [465] see this Tathagata Akshobhya surrounded by the congregation of monks, accompanied by a retinue of Bodhisattvas demonstrating dharma, in an assembly vast like the ocean, deep and imperturbable, surrounded and accompanied by Bodhisattvas which are endowed with unthinkable qualities, all of these Arhats, -with outflows exhausted, undefiled, fully controlled, quite freed in their hearts, well freed and wise, thoroughbreds, great Serpents, their work done, their task accomplished, their burden laid down, their own weal accomplished, with the fetters which bound these to become, extinguished, their hearts well freed by right understanding, in perfect control of their entire hearts.

Here and now the Lord again withdrew his wonderworking power. The Lord Akshobhya, a Tathagata, no longer appeared, and all the Bodhisattvas and great Disciples, and the Buddha-field no longer comes within the range of vision of the members of the Lord's assembly. For the Tathagata drew in his wonderworking power.

The Lord said to Ananda: In this same way, Ananda, all dharmas do not come within the range of vision. Dharmas do not come within the range of vision of dharmas, dharmas do not see dharmas, dharmas do not know dharmas. All dharmas are of such a nature as these can be neither known nor seen, and are incapable of doing anything. All dharmas are inactive, these cannot be grasped, as these are as inactive as space. All dharmas are unthinkable, similar to illusory men. All dharmas are unfindable, as these in a state of non-existence. As one courses thus a Bodhisattva courses in perfect wisdom and does not settle down in any dharma. [466] As one trains thus, a Bodhisattva trains in perfect wisdom. As a Bodhisattva aspires to reveal, to realize great enlightenment, which is perfection of all training, one thus trains in and as perfecting wisdom.

As the training in perfect wisdom is described as the foremost of all trainings, as the best, the choicest, the most excellent, the most sublime, the highest, the utmost, the unequalled, the incomparable, this is said to bring benefit and happiness to all the worlds, this is described as a protector of the helpless, it is ordained and extolled by the Buddha. The Tathagatas, as a result of training in this perfection of wisdom, of having stood in this training, can lift up this great trichilocosm with one big toe, and just let it drop again. It does not occur to Buddhas and Lords that "this great trichilocosm has been lifted up, has been dropped again," for the perfect wisdom is endowed with immeasurable and incalculable qualities. As a result of training in this training of perfect wisdom, the Buddhas and Lords reach a state of non-attachment to past, future and present dharmas. Of all the possible trainings in the past, future and present period, this training in perfect wisdom is foremost, the best, the choicest, the most excellent, the most sublime, the highest, the utmost, the unequalled, the incomparable.

[Still this perfection of wisdom is not bounded by this Sutra, or by any conceptualization; it is beyond all concepts, indestructible, beyond existence and non-existence as all dharmas]

Perfect wisdom is unlimited, inexhaustible and boundless, [467] for limits, exhaustion, and bounds are absent in perfect wisdom. To attribute limits, exhaustion and bounds to perfect wisdom is like attributing these dharmas to space. As this perfection of wisdom is unlimited, inexhaustible and boundless, I do not teach anything such as this perfection of wisdom has any limits, can be exhausted, or that this has any bounds. As well, **the sum total of these words contained in this Sutra is not identical with perfection of, perfecting of, or even perfect, wisdom. Perfect wisdom**, although called such as this is, is nonetheless not subject to any physical, verbal or mental limitations, it is without any limits whatsoever.

Ananda: For what reason does the Lord not teach any limits to perfect wisdom?

The Lord: It is due to the fact this is inexhaustible and isolated-inaccessible-not-findable. As one cannot apprehend any isolated-inaccessible-not-findable-ness of any isolated-inaccessible-not-findable dharma, how much less can one here apprehend any definite circumference to any, or all of this? Thus, beyond any and all measurement this perfection of wisdom is unlimited, without any limits whatsoever. The Tathagatas throughout and beyond all time draw strength from just this perfection of wisdom, [468] and yet this is neither exhausted, nor does this become extinct. This also means Tathagatas of any future also draw strength from just this perfection of wisdom, and yet this is neither exhausted, nor does this become extinct. These Tathagatas also just now residing in countless world systems, these also draw strength from just this perfection of wisdom, and yet it neither becomes exhausted nor extinct. I also, as a Tathagata just now, also draw my strength from just this perfection of wisdom, and yet this neither becomes exhausted, nor extinct. One can exhaust this perfection of wisdom no more than one can exhaust space. So, this perfection of wisdom is quite inexhaustible.

Here now it occurs to *Venerable Subhuti:* Beyond fathoming is this station which the Tathagata teaches. Let me now question the Tathagata about this station.

And *Subhuti* said to the Lord: How inexhaustible, O Lord, is perfect wisdom?

The Lord: **This cannot become extinct**, since, like space, this cannot be extinguished, **just as all dharmas are not produced, can this not be exhausted**.

[* Perfecting this perfection of this wisdom by uniting emptiness to dependent origination ***]**

Subhuti: How does a Bodhisattva consummate this perfection of wisdom? (i.e. Ho ho ! Brace yourself!)

The Lord: Through non-extinction of form, feeling, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness. [469] Through non-extinction of ignorance, of karma-formations, of name and form, of the six sense-fields, of contact, of craving, of grasping and attachments, of becoming, of birth, of decay and death, of grief, lamentation, pain, sadness and despair. (i.e. Not rejecting the world, not rejecting the five aggregates as in the Hinayana.)

(i.e. From Chapter 12: "This is naturally cognized, for as pure awareness, this "collectedness of thought" is realized as equivalent to extinct. This extinction is just non-extinction, as this which is realized as extinct, 'is' nothing to be extinct and as such is merely non-extinct." And "All beings are understood, for as cognizant mind these Buddhas naturally realize immeasurable non-extinction of space as immeasurable non-extinction of mind. Buddha-Mind as this infinite continuum is neither produced nor sustained in any time, cognizes neither production nor cessation, neither gives nor requires any support. As infinity cannot be measured, as inexhaustible is Dharma.")

In this manner the Bodhisattva surveys conditioned co-production in such a way as one avoids any duality of the extremes. One surveys it without seeing any beginning, end or middle.

(i.e. Considering dependent origination, the 12 links, karma, without grasping at any real origination duration or cessation. Without grasping at any real cause, effect, causality. Cause and effect are dependently co-arisen, conceptually interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one. Cause, effect and causality are empty of inherent existence, but still accepted conventionally. The Middle Way, away from both extremes of existence and non-existence.)

To survey conditioned co-production, one acquires cognition of all-knowing.

Here is non-acceptance and so, non-rejection, non-attachment and so, non-detachment.

(i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. That is the Bodhisattva non-attachment. The only way to reach this non-attachment, this perfect equanimity, is by seeing through the real nature of all dharma.)

For a Bodhisattva which, while coursing in perfect wisdom through this consummation of non-extinction, and surveying conditioned co-production, cannot stand on the level of Sravaka, Disciple, or PratyekaBuddha, but must stand in all-knowledge.

(i.e. Not accepting some dharma as elementary and rejecting others, but seeing through the real nature of all dharma. – Note: it might have also been called "consummation of extinction" since it is the transcendence of both extinction and non-extinction, or origination and non-origination, or existence and non-existence. But here, this sutra, being an introduction to the Bodhisattva Way, puts the emphasis on the non-rejection of all dharma, on compassion, on interdependence, all of these combined with emptiness. So it is called "consummation of non-extinction".)

Some Bodhisattvas turn away from supreme enlightenment, as, due to not having resorted to these mental activities [which aspire to and result in consummation of non-extinction] and to skill in means, these do not know how a Bodhisattva coursing in perfect wisdom consummates perfect wisdom through the consummation of non-extinction, [470] nor how conditioned co-production is surveyed in this perfection of wisdom through consummation of non-extinction. Any Bodhisattvas at any time turning away from full enlightenment do so as these do not resort to skill in means.

Any Bodhisattvas at any time not turning away from full enlightenment, do so due to this perfection of wisdom. In this way a Bodhisattva which courses in perfection of wisdom consummates perfect wisdom through consummation of non-extinction. (i.e. The perfection of this perfection of wisdom is reached by its perfection with dependent origination. That is the Union of the Two Truths.)

A **Bodhisattva** which thus **surveys conditioned co-production**,

- does certainly not review any **dharma as is being produced without a cause**
- nor does one review **any dharmas as permanent, stable, eternal, not liable to reversal**,
- nor does one review **any dharmas as a doer or a feeler**.
- *(i.e. The Middle Way about causality and the 12 links of dependent origination. Emptiness of the three: subject/cause, object/effect, action/causality. They are all empty of inherent existence but still not completely non-existent either. Cause, effect, causality are conceptually interdependent, inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.)*

This is the surveying of conditioned co-production on the part of a **Bodhisattva** which **consummates this perfection of wisdom through the consummation of non-extinction**, and which courses in this perfection of wisdom.

At the time a **Bodhisattva**, **consummating the perfection of wisdom through the consummation of non-extinction**, **surveys conditioned co-production**, at this time one does not review form as a real separate entity, nor feelings, perceptions, impulses or consciousness; nor **ignorance**, **karma-formations**, etc., to decay and death, [471] **sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and despair**; nor does one review any fact "this is my **Buddha-field**" as real, nor the fact "that is another **Buddha-field**," nor does one review as real any dharma by which one distinguishes between this and other **Buddha-fields**.

This, Subhuti, is the **perfection of wisdom** of the **Bodhisattvas**, the **great beings**.

Advantages derived from the perfection of wisdom

As a **Bodhisattva** courses in **perfect wisdom**, what is thought of as, and therefore seen as **Mara the Evil One feels struck with the dart of great sorrow, just as a person does when one's mother or father have died**. *(i.e. It is enough to realize dependent origination thus emptiness of inherent existence of all dharma (and vice versa) for the three poisons (desire, hate, delusion) and all defilements to automatically vanish by themselves fault of nutriment. it is realizing the emptiness of the three worlds, of our own body speech and mind, that purifies them. The everything is seen as being beyond good and bad, in that sense already pure. We thus have realized our own Buddha-nature, and see everything as pure Buddha-fields. All of our actions, being done while realizing the real nature of the three, become pure Buddha-activities.)*

Subhuti: Is this affliction confined to **one Mara**, or does it affect many **Maras**, or does it extend to all the **Maras in the great trichilocosm**?

The Lord: At any time as **Bodhisattvas** dwell in the dwelling of **perfect wisdom** **all the Maras in the great trichilocosm are thought of as feeling struck with the dart of great sorrow**, and these cannot sit still on their respective thrones. [472] **For all these worlds, with these Gods, beings and Asuras, cannot gain entry to a Bodhisattva which dwells within this dwelling of perfect wisdom, so can these not gain a foothold which would allow this taking possession of, this hurting, or this turning one away from full enlightenment**. So now, Subhuti, a **Bodhisattva** which aspires to reveal and **realize full enlightenment** of self and others as already in place, courses in **perfect wisdom**.

In a Bodhisattva coursing in perfect wisdom the perfection of giving arrives at its most perfect development, and so do perfections of morality, patience, vigour, and concentration. In such a one **all six perfections** arrive at the most perfect development, and also **all varieties of skill in means**. Whatever is thought of as, or seen as deeds of **Mara** arising in a **Bodhisattva** coursing in **perfect wisdom**, such a one naturally knows these as these are taking place, and one gets rid of these again. *(i.e. With this perfect realization, the Union of the Two Truths, all virtuous methods, the five paramitas, and all other adapted skillful means, become fully perfected. All past karma is seen for what it is and cannot condition the actions of the Bodhisattva anymore. This is how omniscience is gained.)*

A Bodhisattva **aspiring to acquire all the varieties of skill in means courses in perfect wisdom**, and develops this. At any time in which a Bodhisattva courses in **perfect wisdom**, and continuously aspires for this, one brings to mind not only the Buddhas and Lords residing in countless world systems, but also **all-knowledge** which comes forth from **perfection of wisdom**.

One now produces the thought, "I also aspire to reach dharmas which these Buddhas and Lords reach!" [473] For a day, or even down to the time taken up by a finger snap, a Bodhisattva which courses in **perfect wisdom** raises such thoughts and aspires to these. But a Bodhisattva which even for one day, or even for the duration of a finger-snap, aspires for this **perfection of wisdom** begets different merit, indeed receives winds other than **a Bodhisattva which leans on a basis, and for countless aeons gives gifts**. Such a Bodhisattva stands in irreversibility as one's winds carry one through to **revelations of non-extinction and nothing as such to become extinct, timelessness, and this realization which is borne through any and all reality-limits, even unto this dharmakaya as pure and undifferentiated awareness, the same as space**. One such as this speaks of this as if it were indeed such a finger snap, for this has no beginning and in no-time is beyond even any duration. (i.e. **this realization is beyond causality space and time**.) A Bodhisattva coursing in **perfect wisdom** and which, even for a day, or even for the duration of a finger snap, raises such thoughts, is, we know, brought to mind by Tathagatas. How much more so one who daily pursues such thoughts. What future destiny can one expect a Bodhisattva to have which Tathagatas have brought to mind? No other destiny except **full enlightenment** can one expect of these. One such as this cannot possibly be reborn in the states of woe. One can expect such a one to be reborn in these heavens, and even here one is not without the Tathagatas, and here one comes to mature beings.

These are the qualities and advantages of a Bodhisattva coursing in perfection of wisdom, and aspiring for perfect wisdom, and raising such thoughts, [474] even for the length of a finger snap. How much greater is the advantage of one who pursues such thoughts daily, as for instance Bodhisattva Gandhahastin who just now leads this holy life in the presence of Tathagata Akshobhya.

Chapter XXIX – [Résumé: How to approach this perfection of wisdom? Staying away from all extremes. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. Using adapted skillful means while grasping at no absolute, while gradually realizing the emptiness of the three.]

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What is more, Subhuti, a Bodhisattva approaches the perfection of wisdom as follows:

- Through non-attachment to any and all dharmas.
- From the non-differentiatedness of any and all dharmas.
- From the fact all dharmas cannot possibly come about.
- In the conviction "any and all dharmas are equal in remaining unaffected by change."
- One recognizes by innate wisdom as pure Buddha-nature, all dharmas as without self, give us no hint [about their true nature or intentions].
- In the conviction "any and all talk about dharmas [is extraneous to them], consists in mere words, mere conventional expressions, - but these conventional expressions do not refer to anything real, are not derived from anything real, nor are these conventional expressions anything real."
- In this conviction "any and all dharmas lie outside conventional expression and discourse, and it is not these which are conventionally expressed or uttered."
- The Bodhisattva approaches the perfection of wisdom from unlimitedness of any and all dharmas. [476]
- By penetration into any and all dharmas.
- From the fact any and all dharmas are perfectly pure in their original nature.
- From the fact any and all dharmas are beyond words.
- Even the different kinds of forsaking are equal [in value and kind], since any and all dharmas can never be stopped.
- Suchness is everywhere sameness, since any and all dharmas are already realized Nirvana.
- In this conviction "any and all dharmas do not come, nor do these go; these cannot be generated, these are unborn...this non-birth being absolute."
- One such as this observes neither oneself nor others.
- In this conviction "any and all dharmas are holy Arhats, perfectly pure in this original nature."
- In this conviction "any and all dharmas laid down this burden, as no burden has ever been taken on by these."
- Such ones approach perfection of wisdom from the fact any and all dharmas have neither place nor locality.
- For form, feeling, perception, impulses, and consciousness, are without place and locality, in accordance with the own-being of original nature which is no-being.
- One is exhilarated by the cessation of any and all dharmas.
- One feels neither content nor discontent.
- One is neither impassioned nor dispassionate.
- For form, etc., in their nature reality, in their own-being, are not either impassioned or dispassioned.
- In the conviction "the original nature [of any and all dharmas], is perfectly pure."
- In the conviction, "all dharmas are non-attached, free from both attachment and non-attachment." [477]
- In the conviction "any and all dharmas are essentially enlightenment, as these are equally understood by Buddha-cognition."
- From the Emptiness, Signlessness and Wishlessness of all dharmas.

- In the cognition "any and all dharmas are essentially a healing medicine, as controlled by **friendliness** and accord."
- In the conviction "all dharmas are dwellers in **friendliness**, dwellers in **compassion**, dwellers in **sympathetic joy**, dwellers in **impartiality**."
- In the conviction "all dharmas are identified as this supreme universal spirit, as in simply being no faults can arise, as in essential being all faults remain unproduced."
- In the conviction "all dharmas are equally neither hopeful nor hostile."
- One approaches this **boundlessness of perfection of wisdom** through [the analogy of] **boundlessness** of the ocean;
- through [the analogy of] multicolored brilliance of Meru.
- One approaches **boundlessness of perfection of wisdom**: from **boundlessness** of form, feeling, perception, impulses, consciousness;
- through [analogy of] **boundless** illumination shed by the circle of the sun's rays;
- from **boundlessness** of all sounds;
- from **boundlessness** of the final achievement of any and all dharmas of a Buddha;
- from **boundlessness** [of the excellence] of the equipment of any worlds of limitless beings with merit and cognition;
- from **boundlessness** of element earth; and so from **boundlessness** of elements water, fire, air, space and consciousness. [478]
- One approaches **unlimitedness of perfection of wisdom** from **unlimitedness** of the collection of wholesome and unwholesome dharmas; from **unlimitedness** of the collection of all dharmas.
- One approaches **boundlessness of perfection of wisdom**: through acquisition of **boundlessness** of **concentration** on all dharmas;
- from **boundlessness** of all Buddha-dharmas;
- from **boundlessness** of all dharmas;
- from **boundlessness** of *emptiness*;
- from **boundlessness** of thought and constituents;
- from **boundlessness** of thoughts and actions.
- One approaches **measureless perfection of wisdom** from **measureless** wholesome and unwholesome dharmas.
- One approaches resounding declarations of **perfection of wisdom** through the [analogy of the] roaring of the lion's roar.
- One approaches the fact that **perfection of wisdom** cannot be shaken by outside factors from the fact that any and all dharmas cannot be shaken by outside factors.
- For form, etc., is like the ocean.
- Form, and each skandha, is like firmament;
- like brilliant and multicolored Meru;
- like production of the rays of the disk of the sun;
- **boundless** like all sounds;
- **boundless** like the whole world of beings;
- **boundless** like final achievement of the dharmas of a Buddha;
- **boundless** like equipment with merit and cognition of all beings in all worlds; [479]
- this is like earth, like water, fire, air, space and consciousness;
- this has no definite boundary like collection of all wholesome and unwholesome dharmas;

- this has no definite boundary like collection of all dharmas.
- Form is departure [into Buddhahood], the own-being of form is Buddha-dharma which is essentially **Suchness** of form; etc., to: consciousness is departure [into Buddhahood], the own-being of consciousness is the Buddha-dharma which is essentially **Suchness** of consciousness.
- Form, and each skandha, is **boundless** true nature of any and all dharmas;
- **Suchness** as *empty*, **boundless** true nature [of things];
- **boundlessness** of thought and constituents;
- which merely appears to give rise to thought and action;
- which is apprehended as wholesome or unwholesome until non-apprehension;
- it is as the lion's roar; it cannot be shaken by outside factors.

In such ways a **Bodhisattva** approaches **perfect wisdom**. [480]

As the **Bodhisattva** approaches **perfect wisdom** in this way, apperceives this, enters into this, understands this, reflects on this, examines, investigates, and develops this, -with acts of mind which abandon any and all deception and deceit, any and all conceit, any exaltation of self, any and all laziness, any deprecation of others, notion of self, any notion of a being, gain, honor and fame, the five hindrances, envy and meanness, and any and all vacillation, - so this is not hard for one to gain full perfection of all virtues, of the **Buddha-field** and of supreme dharmas of a Buddha.

Chapter XXX – [A resume of the path using the case of Sadaprarudita]

[How to search this perfection of wisdom: having faith in the teacher; with the Bodhicitta motivation and while remembering the emptiness of the three]

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Furthermore, Subhuti, one searches for [perfect wisdom](#) as the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita, at present leading the holy life in the presence of the Tathagata Bhishmagarjitanirghoshasvara.

Subhuti: How does Bodhisattva [Sadaprarudita search for perfection of wisdom](#)?

The Lord: First of all Sadaprarudita, the [Bodhisattva](#), searches for [perfect wisdom](#) in such a way as to have no regard for body or life, and gain, honor and fame do not interest him. In the seclusion of a remote forest, a voice in the air said to him:

"In the East, son of good family, hear the [perfection of wisdom](#)! And on your way do not pay attention to weariness of your body, do not give in to any fatigue, pay no attention to food or drink, day or night, or to cold or heat. Do not make any definite plans, either about inward, or about outward things. Do not look to the left or right, to the South, East, West or North, upwards or downwards, or in any of the intermediate directions. Neither be shaken by self or individuality, nor by form or other skandhas. [482] For one shaken by these, is turned away from Buddha-dharmas. As one is turned away from Buddha-dharmas, one wanders in birth-and-death. And as one wanders in birth-and-death, one does not course in [perfect wisdom](#), and cannot reach [perfection of wisdom](#)." (i.e. *The instructions to renounce the temporary pleasures of this world, turn inward and develop concentration and insights meditating on these six paramitas.*)

Sadaprarudita said to the voice: This is how, from this point on, I am and act accordingly. [As I aspire to indicate light to all beings, as I aspire to procure the dharma of a Buddha.](#) (i.e. *Doing this with the Bodhicitta motivation.*)

The Voice answered: "Well spoken, son of good family!"

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita again listens to the voice, and he hears this:

"Son of good family, [this search for perfect wisdom](#) takes place as you [produce the firm conviction all dharmas are empty, signless and wishless](#). Be not affected by [signs](#), existence, and false views anywhere, or at anytime here appears being, or are beings appearing. Be not affected by thoughts of bad friends. Good thoughts of friends, however, tend, love and honor. These demonstrate dharma, and teach 'all dharmas are [empty, signless and wishless, not produced, not stopped and non-existent](#).'

"As you progress like this, you are studying or applying this [perfection of wisdom](#) either from a book, direct experience, or from the mouth of a monk speaking dharma. Treat as the Teacher any person from whom you come to hear [perfection of wisdom](#), be grateful and thankful, and think [483]: 'This is my good friend. As I hear this [perfection of wisdom](#) from this one, I gradually come to realize irreversibility from [full enlightenment](#), I draw nearer to Tathagatas, and come to be reborn in [Buddha-fields](#) in which Tathagatas are not lacking, and, avoiding unfortunate rebirths, I accomplish auspicious rebirth!' As you weigh up such advantages, you are bound to treat a monk speaking dharma as the Teacher. Do not follow this one with motives of worldly gain, but for love of dharma, out of [respect for dharma, and the benefit of any and all beings](#). (i.e. *Developing respect for the teacher, for the Dharma.*)

"Also, see through things which are thought of or seen as [Mara's](#) deeds for here always is appearing [Mara, the Evil One](#), who may seem to suggest your teacher tends, enjoys and honors things which are seen, heard, smelled, tasted or touched, while in actual fact the teacher does so [from skill in means, and has really risen above these](#). Here now, [do not lose confidence in the teacher](#), but say to yourself: 'I do not yet know [skill in means](#) as the teacher naturally does. The teacher tends, enjoys and honors such dharmas in order to indicate proper discipline to beings, in order to bring to realization wholesome roots

for them. For no attachment to such **objective supports** exist in or for **Bodhisattvas**.' At this, contemplate this true reality of dharmas, which is to say, as all dharmas are without defilement or purification. As all dharmas are **empty** of own-being [484], such can 'have' no properties as appear to be these attributes of a living being, such can 'have' no life, no individuality, no personality, such are as **illusion**, a **dream**, an echo, a reflected image. As you thus **contemplate this true reality of all dharmas, and follow what is spoken of Dharma**, you go forth in, and as, **perfection of wisdom**. But watch out for seeing yet another **deed** of **Mara**. As you may be disheartened at what the preacher of dharma has said, let this not make you averse to **perfection of wisdom**; but with a mind which desires only dharma, which respects only dharma may you, unwearied, follow any monk which preaches Dharma." (*i.e. Having faith in the teacher.*)

After receiving this admonition from this voice, the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita now journeys East. Before long it occurs to him that he had not asked the voice how far he ought to go. He stands still just at this, crying, sorrowful and lamenting. For seven days he stays in this very spot waiting to be told how far to go to hear this **perfection of wisdom**, and all this time he pays no attention to anything else, and takes no food, but simply pays homage to **perfect wisdom**, waiting to be told...how far he needs to go, and how to do this. (*i.e. The poor guy think it takes long to do it and start feeling discouraged; but he still wants it very badly for the benefits of all.*)

Any person, Subhuti, who loses their only child are very sad and unhappy, [485] and can think of one thing only, the child and the sorrow felt due to this. Even so this Bodhisattva Sadaparudita can at this time think of nothing else, except "when then shall I hear this **perfection of wisdom**?"

[Finding the perfect mandala of the teacher – highly symbolic for the stages of meditation]

As Sadaparudita thus sorrows and pines away, **a Tathagata-frame [suddenly] stands here before him**, gives his approval and says: (*i.e. The instructions about the Mandala.*)

"Well spoken, son of good family! The Tathagatas of these three times, while these are still **Bodhisattvas** as you are now, also **search for perfect wisdom in the same spirit in which you just now search for this**. In this same spirit of vigor and determination, of zeal and zest, -do you go East!

Five hundred leagues away from here, is **a town called Gandhavati**. It is built of seven precious things. It is twelve leagues long and twelve leagues broad, and enclosed by seven walls, seven moats and seven rows of palm trees. It is prosperous and flourishing, secure from attack, contains abundant provisions and is full of beasts and beings. Five hundred rows of shops run through the town from one end to the other, beautiful to behold like a well-colored painting, arranged one by one in regular succession, and in between them well-constructed sites and passages are erected, respectively for vehicles drawn by animals, for palanquins, and for pedestrians, so that there is plenty of room for all. The walls all round this town are made of the seven precious substances. [486] Their well-founded copings slope into the golden river Jambu. And on each coping grows a tree, made of the seven precious things, laden with various fruits, also made of precious things. A network of small bells is fastened on strings, and thus surrounds the entire city. When stirred by the wind, the small bells give out a sweet, charming and delightful sound, just like the sound from five musical instruments when they are played in harmony by the Gandharvas, skilled in songs. And this sound causes beings to divert, enjoy and amuse themselves. The moats all around the city are full of water which flows gently along, neither too cold nor too hot. The boats on this river are brilliant with the seven precious things, beautiful to behold, and existence is a reward of past deeds of inhabitants who, aboard these, divert, enjoy and amuse themselves. The water is everywhere covered with blossoms of the blue lotus, of the pink lotus, of the white lotus and with other most beautiful and fragrant flowers. Here is not any species of flowers in the **great trichiliocosm** which is not found. All around this city are five hundred parks, beautiful to behold, brilliant with the seven precious things. [487] Each park has five times five hundred large lotus ponds, covered with beautiful blossoms, each of the size of a cartwheel, fragrant, -blue, yellow, red and white. The sounds of geese, cranes, ducks, curlews and other birds fill the air over the ponds. **And the existence of these parks which none regard as their own private property is a reward for past deeds of these beings**, for these have coursed for a long time in **perfection of wisdom**, their minds faithfully devoted to this Guide of the Buddhas

and bent on listening to her and understanding her, and for a long time these remain intent on deep and even truly fathomless dharmas.

"And here, in this city of Gandhavati, at a place four roads meet, is **the house of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata**, - one league all round, with the seven precious things, beautiful to behold, enclosed by seven walls and seven rows of palm trees. Here are **four parks near the house**, for the enjoyment of these who live in it. These are called Nityapramudita, Asoka, Sokavigata, and Pushpacitra. Each park has eight lotus ponds, called Bhadra, Bhadrottama, Nandi, Nandottama, Kshama, Kshamottama, Niyata and Avivaha. One side of each pond is gold, the second of silver, [488] the third of vaidurya, the fourth of crystal. The ground at the bottom consists of quartz, with golden sand over it. Each pond has eight stairs to it, decorated with steps, made of variegated jewels. In the gaps between the steps, inside the golden river Jambu, grows a plantain tree. The ponds are covered with various kinds of water flowers, and the air above these is filled with the sounds of various birds. Round these ponds grow various flowering trees, and as these are stirred by the wind, their flowers drop into the ponds. The water in the ponds has the scent, color, taste, and feel of sandalwood.

"**In this mansion lives Bodhisattva Dharmodgata**, with his retinue, among these sixty-eight thousand women. He diverts, enjoys and amuses himself, he feels and tastes the five kinds of sense-pleasure. All the inhabitants of this city, both women and men, divert, enjoy and amuse themselves, these have constant joy in the parks and on the ponds and feel and taste the five kinds of sense-pleasure. The Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, however, with his retinue, diverts, enjoys and amuses himself only for a certain time, and so now also **he always demonstrates perfection of wisdom**.

And the citizens of this town built **a pulpit for the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata in the central square of the town**. It has a golden base, a cotton mattress is spread on this, and a woolen cover, a cushion and a silken cloth are put on top of this. High up in the air, half a Kos high, here an awning, shining with pearls, even and firm. All [489] round this pulpit flowers of the five colors are strewed and scattered, and the pulpit itself is scented with various perfumes. So pure is the heart of Dharmodgata, so great the respect of his hearers for dharma.

"**Seated on the pulpit the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata demonstrates perfection of wisdom**. The citizens of this town listen to his teaching with great respect for dharma, with trust in dharma, with faith in what is worthy of faith, with minds that are lifted up in faith. In addition many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands of living beings, Gods and people, assemble here to listen. Some of these explain **perfection of wisdom**, some repeat it, some copy it, some follow it with wise attention. **All these beings are no longer doomed to fall into states of woe, and are irreversible from full enlightenment**.

Son of good family, go to Bodhisattva Dharmodgata! From him you hear perfection of wisdom. For he is for a long time your good friend, he summons you, and even now instigates and encourages you to **realize full enlightenment**. He also, in these three times, searches for **perfection of wisdom** in this same way in which you search even now. Go forth, son of good family, go on day and night, **giving** your undivided attention to this unending task, this never-ending blessing which we learn quite naturally to neither accept as a basis, nor develop aversion to as a means to some end! **Before long you hear perfection of wisdom!"**

As the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita hears this, he is contented, elated, joyful, overjoyed and jubilant. [490] A man, hit with a poisoned arrow, can not think of anything else except: "Where do I find a surgeon, a skilled physician, who can pull out this arrow, and free me from this suffering." Just so Bodhisattva Sadaparudita at this time pays no attention to any dharma except:

"As I see this son of good family from whom I hear **perfection of wisdom**, as I hear this dharma, I forsake all attentions to any basis." Without leaving the place he is Sadaparudita now hears Bodhisattva Dharmodgata demonstrating **perfection of wisdom**.

[Progression in various meditations]

[Another translation – see [passage 40](#) “Mysterious doors of omniperception” from Lex Hixon’s Mother of all Buddhas]

As a result he produces perception which does not lean on any dharma, nay, not even perception itself. And he is face to face with many doors to concentration.

The names of the concentrations are as follows:

1. «This surveys own-being of any and all dharmas,»
2. «The non-apprehension of own-being of any and all dharmas,»
3. «Non-difference of any and all dharmas,»
4. «Spectator of unchangeability of any and all dharmas,»
5. «Illuminator of any and all dharmas,»
6. «From any and all dharmas darkness vanished,»
7. «This shatters cognition of any and all dharmas,»
8. «This tosses any and all dharmas about,»
9. «The non-apprehension of any and all dharmas,»
10. «Bedecked with **flowers**,»
11. «Within this body this consummates any and all dharmas,»
12. «Having abandoned **illusion**,»
13. «Calling forth images reflected in a **mirror**,»
14. «Calling forth sounds of all beings,»
15. «Without any **dirt**,»
16. «Gladdening all beings,»
17. «A follower of **vocal sounds** of all beings, from **skill in means**,» [491]
18. «Consummation of the whole variety of letters, words and vocal sounds,»
19. «This state which comes from feeling no rigidity,»
20. «Inexpressible in **essential nature**,»
21. «Realization of unobstructed emancipation,»
22. «Visit from the **king**,»
23. «Grammatical analysis of speech into words and letters,»
24. «Insight into any and all dharmas,»
25. «This leaves the sphere of any and all dharmas beyond,»
26. «Unobstructed limit of any and all dharmas,»
27. «Fashioned as a firmament,»
28. «As a thunderbolt,»
29. «The king is near,»
30. «The unrivalled king,»
31. «**Victorious**,»
32. «One cannot avert this eye,»
33. «Fixed on this element of dharma,»
34. «Come out of this element of dharma,»
35. «Granter of consolation,»
36. «This roars like a lion,»
37. «No world for beings to be reborn in,»
38. «Free from dirt,»
39. «Undeified,»
40. «Lotus-array,»
41. «Annihilation of hesitation,»
42. «Follower of any and all substantial excellence,»
43. «Situated beyond any and all dharmas,»
44. «Attainment of super-knowledges, powers and the grounds of self-confidence,»
45. «Piercer of any and all dharmas,»
46. «Seal of desisting from becoming on the part of any and all dharmas,»
47. «The ocean in which any and all dharmas lose any becoming,»
48. «Spectator of any and all dharmas without distinction,»
49. «This leaves behind this jungle of any and all views and actions,»
50. «Without darkness,»
51. «Without a **sign** of any and all dharmas,» [492]
52. «Free from any and all attachment,»
53. «Without a trace of laziness,»
54. «This sheds light on deep dharmas,»
55. «Fashioned like **Meru**,»
56. «Irresistible,»
57. «This shatters what is seen as the circle of **Mara's** army,»
58. «No inclination for anything in the **triple world**,»
59. «**Emission of rays**,»
60. «Sight of the Tathagata,»
61. «Spectator of all Tathagatas.»

Established in these **concentrations**, he now sees Buddhas and Lords in the countless world systems in the ten directions, as these reveal this very **perfection of wisdom to Bodhisattvas**. And these Tathagatas applaud and comfort him, and these say to him:

"We also in these three times as **Bodhisattvas**, search for **perfection of wisdom** in just this same way. We also as we search, come to acquire by revelation, these **concentrations** which you acquire just now. Even after we acquire these we go on our route, established in and transmitting **perfection of wisdom** and **irreversible** dharmas of a Buddha. But as we peruse original **essential nature** and search for any true own-being of these **concentrations**, we do not see any real dharma enter into these, or emerge from these, course toward enlightenment, or know **full enlightenment**. This absence of imaginings about any dharma whatsoever...this is **perfection of wisdom**. As we stand in firm absence of any and all self-conceited imaginings we naturally reveal our bodies of golden color, these thirty-two marks of Tathagatas, these eighty accessory marks, and these splendid haloes around us, and reveal of us this **unthinkable** and yet, supreme cognition of Buddhas, this **wisdom** of Buddhas, this supreme **concentration** of Buddhas, and this perfection of all these dharmas and qualities of Buddhas, and quite simply as all in all...this nature of Buddhas. [493] Even Tathagatas cannot grasp any measure, nor define any boundary, of this perfection of qualities, -how much less **Sravakas, Disciples** and **PratyekaBuddhas**. Here and now fill your mind with respect for these dharmas of Buddhas, so you increasingly aspire toward these, so you become more and more zealous for these. The supreme enlightenment is not hard to realize for one aspiring towards this, who is zealous for this. For the good friend also arouses intense respect and affection, and to be sure, serenely keep your confidence in such. For it is as we are taken hold of by these good friends **Bodhisattvas** quickly come to reveal, realize, and know **full enlightenment**."

Sadaprarudita asked the Tathagatas: **Who is our good friend?**

A **Tathagata** replied:

"The **Bodhisattva Dharmodgata** for a long time matures you toward this supreme enlightenment, he upholds you, he is your preceptor in **perfecting this perfect wisdom, in skill in means, and in these dharmas of Buddha**. It is he who has upheld you, and for this friendly **deed** you honor him in gratitude and thankfulness, and bear in mind what he does for you. As, son of good family, you for one aeon, or for two aeons, or for up to one hundred thousand aeons, or more, carry about the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata like a turban on your head, furnish him with everything which makes beings happy, and present him with as many forms, sounds, smells, tastes and touchables as are in the **great trichiliocosm**, [494] - even so you can not have repaid this son of good family for what he does for you. This has happened through his might as you have **acquired these concentrations**, that you hear of **perfection of wisdom and of skill in means**, and that you **gain this perfection of wisdom**."

Sadaprarudita and the Merchant's Daughter [Symbolic of the progress in meditation]

As these Tathagatas comfort Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita, they again disappear. But Sadaprarudita emerged from his **concentrations**, and asked himself, "whence do these Tathagatas come, and whither do these go?" (*i.e. At this stage, he sees everything as pure only in deep concentration.*)

Since he no longer sees these Tathagatas, he worries and pines away for these. He thinks to himself: "The holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata has acquired the revelations of these dharanis in **awareness** and realization, and likewise he possesses the five superknowledges, he has performed his duties under the Jinas of these three times, he is my patron and good friend, who for a long time has done good all about me. When I come to him I must ask him about this matter, ask him to explain whence these Tathagatas come, and whither these go." **Sadaprarudita here nursed affection and confidence, esteem and respect for Bodhisattva Dharmodgata**. He now reflects: "With what kind of honoring gift can I now approach the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata? But I am poor, and have nothing of any value [495] with which I could express my respect and reverence for him. It is not seemly for me to come without anything at all. But I am poor, and this now makes me sad and regretful."

Such are these feelings, such these attitudes of reverence, with which this Bodhisattva Sadaparudita proceeded on his journey. In due course he reaches a town, goes to the midst of the marketplace, and decides to sell his own body, and with the price hereof do honor to the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. "As through the long night of past time, in this measureless cycle of birth-and-death, thousands of bodies of mine are shattered, wasted, destroyed and sold, again and again. I experience measureless pains in the hells for the sake of sense pleasures, as a result of sense pleasures, but never yet on behalf of dharmas of this kind, never yet for this purpose of doing honor to beings of such a kind." Sadaparudita now goes to the middle of the marketplace, lifted up his voice, and cried: "Who wants a man? Who wants a man? Who wants to buy a man?"

Here now Mara the Evil One is thought of as, and indeed seen in the view of many to have thought to himself:

"Let's obstruct this Bodhisattva Sadaparudita. For as he succeeds in selling himself out of concern for dharma, and as he goes on to honor the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, and to ask him, with regard to perfection of wisdom and skill in means just how a Bodhisattva coursing in perfect wisdom realizes full enlightenment, he is bound to reach this ocean of sacred knowledge, and become inaccessible to Mara and his host, [496] and reaches the perfection of all qualities, as he works the weal of all beings, and takes these away from my sphere, and others again he takes away as he realizes full enlightenment."

Mara, the Evil One, is thought of and seen to so dispose the Brahmins and householders in this town, so that these can not hear the voice of Sadaparudita. As Sadaparudita can not find a buyer for himself, he goes to one side, wailed, shed tears, and said: "Alas, it is hard on us this, as we do not find a buyer even for our body, so we could by selling our body, honor the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata." [i.e. the name 'Sadaparudita' means 'perpetual tears'(!) -- in Tibetan this name is - rtag tu ngu -]

So now, Sakra, Chief of Gods, thinks to himself: "Let me weigh up the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita. Does he now, filled with earnest intention, renounce his body out of concern for dharma, or does he not?" Sakra conjured up the guise of a young man, goes to the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita, and says to him: "Why do you, son of good family, stand here dejected, pining away and shedding tears?" [497]

Sadaparudita replied: "I want to sell myself, but I cannot find anyone to buy my body."

Sakra, in the form of the young man, said: "On behalf of what do you want to sell yourself?"

Sadaparudita replied: "From love for Dharma I sell myself, so as to worship Dharma, and to honor the holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. But I do not find a buyer for this body of mine. I now think to myself, alas, I must be a person of exceedingly small merit indeed."

The young man said: "I myself do not need a man. But my father is due to offer sacrifice. For this I require a man's heart, his blood and the marrow of his bones. These you give me, and I shall pay for these."

Sadaparudita now thinks to himself: "I exceedingly easily get as I desire. Now I know my body is sufficiently perfect for realizing perfect wisdom, skill in means and the dharmas of a Buddha, since in this young man I now find a buyer for my heart, blood and marrow." As his mind is bristling with joy, and all ready, he says: "I give you my body, as you have need of it!"

The young man asked: "What price do I give you?"

Sadaparudita answered: "Give me whatever you do!" [498]

Sadaparudita took a sharp sword, pierced his right arm, and made the blood flow. He pierced his right thigh, cut the flesh from this, and strode up to the foot of a wall in order to break the bone.

A merchant's daughter, from her upper window, sees this, and she thought to herself: "Why does this son of good family do this to himself? Let me go to him, and ask him." She goes to Sadaparudita, and said: "Why do you inflict such fatal treatment on yourself? What do you do with this blood, and with this marrow of your bones?"

Sadaparudita said: "As I have sold them to this young man, I go to worship perfection of wisdom, and to do honor to the holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata."

The merchant's daughter said: "What is the kind of quality, what is the excellence of the qualities, which you create in yourself by your wish to honor the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata as you sell your own heart, blood and marrow?"

Sadapararudita replied: "Dharmodgata now explains to me perfection of wisdom and the skill in means. [499] In these I train myself, and, as a result, I become a refuge to all beings; and, as I at this point realize full enlightenment, I acquire a body of golden color, thirty-two marks of the Tathagata, eighty accessory marks, the splendor of a halo the rays of which extend throughout infinitude, great friendliness, great compassion, great sympathetic joy, great impartiality, four grounds of self-confidence, four analytical knowledges, eighteen special dharmas of a Buddha, and I acquire five superknowledges, an unthinkable purity of conduct, and unthinkable purity of concentration, an unthinkable purity of wisdom, and ten powers of a Tathagata. I fully awake to the supreme cognition of a Buddha, and acquire the supremely precious jewel of Dharma, which I share with all beings."

The merchant's daughter replied: "It is wonderful, son of good family, how exalted and sublime are these dharmas which you proclaim. For the sake of even one of these dharmas should one be willing to renounce one's bodies even for countless aeons, how much more so for the sake of many of these. These dharmas which you proclaim please me also, and seem good to me. But see, son of good family, I give you whatever you require, and with this you may [500] honor the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata! But do not inflict such treatment on yourself! I also go with you to the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata! I also, together with you, plant wholesome roots, which help to realize such dharmas!"

Sakra, Chief of Gods, now throws off his disguise as a young man, and in his own proper body he stood before the Bodhisattva Sadapararudita, and says to him: "I applaud your firm sense of obligation. In these three times Tathagatas have so great an aspiration for Dharma, and it is this which helps these to full enlightenment and to gain the precious jewel of Dharma, as these first course in the vehicle of a Bodhisattva, and ask questions about perfection of wisdom and skill in means. I have no need for your heart, blood or marrow. I only come here to test you. Now choose a boon. I give you any boon [favor] whatsoever!"

Sadapararudita answered: "Give me supreme dharmas of a Buddha!" (*i.e. He renounces all other benefits.*)

Sakra, Chief of Gods, replied: "This lies not within my province. This lies within the province of Buddhas, the Lords. Choose another boon!"

Sadapararudita replied: "Do not trouble your mind about the mutilated condition of my body! I now make it whole again by the magical power of enunciation of Truth. As I am in truth irreversible, and predicted to full enlightenment, and am known to the Tathagatas by my unconquerable resolution, -may through this Truth, through this utterance of the Truth, this my body be again as it is before!" [501]

This very moment, instant and second, through the Bodhisattva's might and through the perfect purity of the Bodhisattva's resolution, the body of the Bodhisattva Sadapararudita became as before, healthy and whole. And Sakra, Chief of Gods, and Mara, the Evil One, reduced to silence, just vanished from this place. (*i.e. It seems like the more you renounce, the more your actions become in perfect accord with reality and thus more efficient and powerful – they seem like magic to ordinary people.*)

The merchant's daughter then said to Sadapararudita: "Come on, son of good family, let us go up to my house. I ask my parents to give you riches with which you can express your desire to worship this perfection of wisdom, and to honor the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, a desire which is due to your love for dharma." (*i.e. Still not rejecting the world and other's aspiration for the same goal.*)

The Bodhisattva Sadapararudita and the merchant's daughter go together to her house. Upon arriving, Sadapararudita remains standing on the threshold, while the merchant's daughter goes into the house, and now she says to her parents: "Mummy and daddy, give me a part of your wealth! I go away with the five hundred maidens you gave me for servants! Together with Bodhisattva Sadapararudita I go to the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, in order to worship him. And he demonstrates dharma to us, and in this way we acquire the dharmas of a Buddha." [502]

Her parents replied: "Who is this Bodhisattva Sadapararudita, and is he here just now?"

The merchant's daughter said: "This son of good family stands at the threshold of the door to our house. He set out determined to know **full enlightenment**, in other words, **he aspires to set all beings free from immeasurable sufferings of birth-and-death.**"

She told her parents all she saw and heard, [503] how Sadaparudita sold his body, and mutilated it, and how, as she asked him for a reason, he praises and reveals to her **unthinkable qualities of a Buddha and immeasurable dharmas of a Buddha, which he has in mind as his goal.**

She goes on to say, "As I hear of **unthinkable qualities of a Buddha**, I feel exceeding joy and elation. I think to myself: "It is wonderful to such extent as this son of good family is a doer of what is hard, and how much he loves the dharma to endure oppression and pain in this body. It is due to this love for dharma he renounces himself. How can we fail to worship dharma, and to make a vow to reach such stations, we who have vast and abundant possessions?" [504] So I said to this son of good family: "Do not inflict such fatal treatment on yourself! I give you abounding riches, which you may use to worship and honor the holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, I also go with you to this **Bodhisattva**, as I can worship him, too. I also accomplish these supreme dharmas of a Buddha which you proclaim!" **Mummy and daddy, allow me to go, and give me the riches I ask for!**

Her parents replied: "It is wonderful how well you relate the hardships of this son of good family. **Unthinkable, for sure are the dharmas** for the sake of which he endures these hardships, these must be the most distinguished in the whole world, a source of happiness to all beings! We give you our possessions to go. We also like to come with you, to see, to salute, to honor, to worship the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata."

The daughter replied: "Do as you say. I do not oppose any who in truth do right."

The Meeting with Dharmodgata [Reaching a crucial point in meditation]

Thus this merchant's daughter set out to worship and honor the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. [505] She takes five hundred carriages and orders her five hundred servant girls to get ready. She takes abundant riches, and ample provisions, mounts upon one carriage together with the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita, and proceeds East, surrounded by the five hundred maidens on their five hundred carts, accompanied by a huge retinue, and preceded by her parents. After some time the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita sees the city of Gandhavati from afar. In the middle of the marketplace he sees the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata on his pulpit, demonstrating dharma, surrounded and revered by an assembly of many hundreds, of many thousands, of many hundreds of thousands. The moment he sees him he is filled with that kind of happiness [506] which a monk feels as with one-pointed attention he obtains the first trance. He looks upon him and thinks to himself: "It is not seemly to approach this Bodhisattva Dharmodgata seated on a carriage. Let me here and now alight from it!" He alights from this carriage, and the merchant's daughter with her five hundred maidens follow suit. Sadaparudita, with the merchant's daughter and her five hundred maidens go up to the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata's seat amidst a magnificent display of religious aspirations. For the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata at this time created, for perfection of wisdom, a pointed tower, made of the seven precious substances, adorned with red sandalwood, and encircled by an ornament of pearls. Gems are placed into four corners of the pointed tower, and performed the functions of lamps. Four incense jars made of silver are suspended on its four sides, and pure black aloe wood is burning in these, as a token of worship for the perfection of wisdom. And in the middle of this pointed tower a couch made of the seven precious things is put up, and on it a box made of four large gems. Into this, the perfection of wisdom is placed, written with melted vaidurya on golden tablets. And this pointed tower is adorned with brightly colored garlands which hang down in strips.

The Bodhisattva Sadaparudita and the merchant's daughter with her five hundred maidens look upon this pointed tower, so magnificently decorated as a display of religious aspirations. These see thousands of Gods, with Sakra, Chief of Gods, scattering over this pointed tower heavenly Mandarava flowers, heavenly sandalwood powder, heavenly gold dust, and heavenly silver dust, [507] and these hear the music of heavenly instruments.

Sadaparudita now asks Sakra, Chief of Gods: "For what purpose do you, together with many thousands of Gods, scatter over this pointed tower, which consists of precious substances, heavenly Mandarava flowers, etc., and why do the Devas up in space play heavenly music on their instruments?"

Sakra answered: "Do you not know the reason, son of good family? This is perfection of wisdom, the mother and guide of the Bodhisattvas. As Bodhisattvas train in this, these soon reach perfection of wisdom of all qualities, and, consequent on this, all dharmas of a Buddha and knowledge of all modes."

Sadaparudita replied: "Where is this perfection of wisdom, the mother of Buddhas and guide of Bodhisattvas?"

Sakra answered: "The holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata placed this in the middle of this pointed tower, as he has written this on golden tablets with melted Vaidurya, and sealed this with seven seals. We cannot easily show this to you."

Here just now the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita and the merchant's daughter, with her five hundred maidens, all pay worship to the perfection of wisdom - with the flowers which these brought along, and with garlands, wreaths, raiment, jewels, incense, flags and golden and silvery flowers [508] and, one after another, these deposited their portion in front of this, for the greater honor of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. These now worship the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata by scattering flowers, garlands, wreaths, raiment, jewels, incense, flags, and golden and silvery flowers over him, and played heavenly music on their instruments - motivated by an aspiration to worship Dharma.

The flowers now rise high above the head of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata and form a pointed tower of flowers. And these flowers of various colors, golden and silvery, stand high in the air, as a canopy. And also the robes, raiment and jewels stand high up in the air, as a pavilion in the clouds.

As the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita and the merchant's daughter with her five hundred maidens behold this wonder, these think to themselves: "This is wonderful to see such wonderworking power this Bodhisattva

Dharmodgata possesses, how great a might, how great an influence. So far he courses but in the course of a Bodhisattva, and now already he possesses such power to work wonders. How much more does he have after he has known **full enlightenment?**" [509]

The merchant's daughter and the five hundred maidens here feel a longing for the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. All of one mind, these resolutely raise their hearts to the supreme enlightenment, and say:

"May we, through this wholesome root, be Tathagatas in this future period! May we come to course in the course of Bodhisattvas, and may we receive these very dharmas which this Bodhisattva Dharmodgata receives! And may we just so honor and respect the **perfection of wisdom** as this Bodhisattva Dharmodgata honors and respects this, and may we reveal this to many just as he does! And may we be as endowed with **perfection of wisdom and skill in means**, and as accomplished in these as this Bodhisattva Dharmodgata is!"

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita, and the merchant's daughter with her five hundred maidens, **as these worship the perfection of wisdom and honor the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata with their heads, respectfully salute him with hands together, and stand on one side.**

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita now tells the whole story of quest for **perfection of wisdom**, beginning with the voice he hears in the forest, which bid him go East. [510] He told Dharmodgata how he stands in many **concentrations**, and how the Buddhas and Lords of the ten directions comforted and applauded him, and had said: "Well done, son of good family! These **concentrations issue from perfection of wisdom**. By firmly standing in the **perfection of wisdom** we achieve all the dharmas of a Buddha."

He goes on to relate:

"The Tathagatas now vanished, and I emerged from **this state of concentration**. I asked myself, 'whence now these Tathagatas come, and whither these go?' I think to myself, 'the holy Bodhisattva Dharmodgata receives the dharanis, [511] he possesses five superknowledges, he does his duties under the Jinas of these three times, he plants wholesome roots, and is trains well in the **perfection of wisdom and skill in means**. He can explain to me this matter as it really is, and tell me whence these Tathagatas come and whither these go.'

Now I am come to you, and I ask you, son of good family:

'Whence these Tathagatas come, and whither these go?' Demonstrate to me, son of good family, this coming and going of these Tathagatas, so we may cognize this, and so we may be not lacking in vision of the Tathagatas." (i.e. "Where do they go" means "what is the nature of Nirvana" After having attained the perfect peace of dhyana once, one wants to get more, and thus grasp at this experience. This grasping may inhibit further experience of this.)

Chapter XXXI – [Dharmodgata's teaching – the highest concentration in union with wisdom; the Union of the Two truths]

[Insights / Dharmodgata's teaching : The real nature of everything: not coming not going; not one not two; this also applies to the Tathagatas; samsara and Nirvana are not different/separate but still not the same.]

[Go to verses](#)

Dharmodgata: Tathagatas certainly do not come from anywhere, nor do these go anywhere. Suchness does not move, and Tathagata is Suchness. Non-production neither comes nor goes, and Tathagata is non-production. One can conceive of neither coming nor going of reality-limit, and Tathagata is reality-limit. This same can be said of emptiness, of anything which exists in according to facts, or of dispassion, of stopping, of element of space. Tathagata is not outside these dharmas. Suchness as these dharmas is Suchness as any and all dharmas, and Suchness as Tathagata is simply Suchness as any and all Tathagatas. Here is no division within Suchness. Simply before even one, throughout and after all is Suchness. Such is neither two, nor three, nor one divided into many. Suchness does not even pass beyond counting, as it can not be counted to begin with and thus certainly is here nothing to end with. Neither is Suchness one, nor other than one by which to determine any singularity, nor two nor three nor apart from these. Nothing of or by any concept whatsoever can Suchness relate to or be related to, yet Suchness is greatest of anything conceivable and infinitely beyond, even...'this'.

A man, scorched by the heat of summer, during the last month of summer [513], at noon might see a mirage floating along, and might run towards it, and think "here I shall find some water, here I shall find something to drink." What do you think, you children of good family, does this water come from anywhere, or does this water go anywhere, to or from the Eastern great ocean, or the Southern, Northern or Western?

Sadaprarudita: No water exists in this mirage. How can its coming or going be conceived? This man again is foolish and uninformed as, on seeing the mirage, he forms the idea of water, as here is no water. Water in its own being certainly does not exist in that mirage, any more than merely in his thought that it does.

Dharmodgata: Equally foolish are any and all these who adhere to Tathagatas through form and sound, and who in consequence imagine coming or going of any or all Tathagatas. A Tathagata can neither be seen nor determined from any form body. Dharma-bodies [Dharmakayas] are such Tathagatas, and the real nature of dharmas neither comes nor goes. Here is no real coming or going of the body of an elephant, horse, chariot or foot-soldier, tree or even a rock, which has been conjured up when magicians perform. Just so, here is neither coming nor going of Tathagatas which, as with all things, neither have any granting given nor even, any conjuring whatsoever.

A sleeping person might in dreams see one Tathagata, or two, or three, or up to one thousand, or still more [514]. On waking up, however, they no longer see even one single Tathagata. What do you think, dear children of good family, have these Tathagatas come from anywhere, or gone to anywhere? As Tathagata means one thus gone, in this relative sense in so doing one cannot thus come. But, what's not too frequently understood, is that Tathagata also means one thus come, and likewise in so doing can one not be thus gone. Yet, such is this fact in principle and truth, that in, or as Suchness Tathagatas neither come nor go, at once within and throughout these three times...and at once here stand on naught but pure undifferentiated awareness as space outside of and through any and all dharmas. Such is this difference of purely equanimous stance the same as this fathomless station of all dharmas.

Sadaprarudita: One cannot conceive as in any dream any dharma whatsoever as having the status of a full and perfect reality, for any dream is deceptive.

Dharmodgata: Just so Tathagatas teach all dharmas are as a dream.

These who do not come to naturally and wisely know all dharmas as these really are, which is to say, as a dream, as Tathagata points out, these adhere to Tathagatas through their name-body and form-body, and in consequence

these imagine Tathagatas come and go. These who in ignorance of true nature of dharmas imagine a coming or going of Tathagatas, these are just foolish common people...not as yet diligent to truth, and presently as is as good as any and all times these belong to birth-and-death with six places of rebirth, and these are far from these revelations of perfection of wisdom, far away from dharmas of a Buddha - yet experience these dharmas within each and every breath, as close as pure life itself.

On the contrary, however, these who know all dharmas as a dream, i.e., as they really are, are in agreement with the teaching of Tathagata, these do not imagine the coming or going of any dharma, nor its production or stopping. These naturally know Tathagatas true nature, and do not imagine coming or going of Tathagatas. And these who naturally know true nature of Tathagata, these course near to full enlightenment and these course in this perfection of wisdom. These disciples of Lords do not consume alms fruitlessly, [515] and these are worthy of the world's results and dedications. The gems which are in the great ocean do not come from any place in the East, or West, or any other of the ten directions, but these owe existence to wholesome roots of beings. These are not produced without cause, or, are not without cause to be produced. Such simply manifest due to these causes and conditions. Yet still, as dependent on cause, condition and reason, these gems are co-produced and stopped by conditions, these do not pass on to any place anywhere in the world in any of the ten directions. And nevertheless, as these conditions exist, the gems are augmented; as these conditions are absent, no augmentation takes place. Just so the perfect body of Tathagatas does not come from any place anywhere in the ten directions, and it does not go to any place anywhere in the world with its ten directions. But the body of Buddhas and Lords is not without cause. It is brought to perfection by conduct and action in time, and it is produced dependent on causes and conditions, co-produced by subsidiaries, produced as result of karma done in this past. It is, however, not in any place anywhere in the world with its ten directions. But when these conditions exist, the accomplishment of the body takes place; when these conditions are absent, the accomplishment of the body is inconceivable.

As the sound of a boogharp is being produced, it does not come from anywhere. As it is stopped, it does not go anywhere, nor does it pass on to anywhere. But it is produced conditioned by this totality of causes and conditions for it to occur, -namely the boat-shaped hollow body of the harp, the parchment sounding board, the strings, the hollow arm of the boogharp, the bindings, the plectrum, the person who plays it, and this person's exertions and coming to knowledge of the music to be played thereon. [516] In this way this sound comes forth from the boogharp, dependent on causes, dependent on conditions. And yet that sound does not come forth from that hollow body of the harp, nor from the parchment sounding board, nor from the strings, nor from the hollow arm, nor from the bindings, nor from the plectrum, nor from the person who plays it, nor from this person's exertions or knowledge. It is just the combination of all of these which makes the sound conceivable. And as it is stopped, the sound also does not go anywhere.

Just so the perfect body of Buddhas and Lords is dependent on causes, dependent on conditions, and it is brought to perfection through exertions which lead to many wholesome roots. But the augmenting of Buddha-body does not result from one single cause, nor from one single condition, nor from one single wholesome root. This is also not without cause. This is co-produced by a totality of many causes and conditions, but does not come from anywhere. So, also as this totality of causes and conditions cease to be, this does not go to anywhere. Thus is viewed the coming and going of Tathagatas, and this conforms to true nature of all dharmas. And it is just as this is naturally re-recognized as Tathagatas, and also all dharmas, are neither produced nor stopped, you are fixed on full enlightenment, and you definitely course in perfection of wisdom and in skill in means.

As this disquisition of the fact Tathagatas neither come nor go is being taught, the earth and the entire great trichilocosm shakes in six ways, stirs, quakes, gets agitated, resounds and rumbles. And all the realms thought to be and seen as of Mara are stirred up and discomfited. All the grasses, shrubs, and herbs and trees in the great trichilocosm bend in the direction of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. [517] Flowers come up out of season. From high up in the air a great rain of flowers comes down.

And Sakra, Chief of Gods, and the Four Great Kings scatter and pour heavenly sandalwood powder and heavenly flowers over the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, and say: "Well spoken, son of good family. Through your might we hear a sermon which issues from ultimate reality, which is contrary to the whole world, and which gives no

ground to any beings which are established in any of the views which involve the assumption of an individuality, or have settled down in any of the views which assume the existence of something which is not."

Sadaprarudita now asks Dharmodgata: "What is the cause, what is the reason why this great earthquake is manifested in the world?"

Dharmodgata: In consequence of your asking for this disquisition on **the non-coming and non-going of Tathagatas**, and through my exposition of this, eight thousand living beings acquire patient acceptance of dharmas which fail to be produced, eighty nyutas of living beings raise their hearts **to full enlightenment**, and of sixty-four thousand living beings the dispassionate, unstained dharma-eye is purified for vision of dharmas. (*i.e. Applied to meditation all of this means: do not grasp at your dhyana experience; let it go, it is also empty. Combine method/concentration and wisdom/Vipashyana in order to progress further.*)

[The very strong determination of a Bodhisattva to reach enlightenment for the benefits of all – using everything he has or gain for this sole purpose – not stagnating in dhyanas]

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita now has a supreme, most sublime feeling of zest and joy: "It is a gain to me, a very great gain by asking for **perfection of wisdom**, and for this disquisition, I have wrought the weal of so many beings. [518] This alone brings me merit sufficient for the accomplishment of **full enlightenment**. Unquestionably I become a Tathagata." In his zest and joy he rose seven palm trees high into the air, and, standing at the height of seven palm trees, he reflected: "How can I, standing here in the air, do honor to the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata?" (*i.e. This represents the power he has gained from his new realization and development of concentration.*)

Sakra, Chief of Gods, now sees him, and reads his thoughts, presents him with heavenly Mandarava flowers, and says to him: "Honor the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata with these heavenly flowers! For we feel in this we honor the man who helps you. Today your might wroughts the weal of many thousands of living beings. Rare are the beings who, like you, have the strength, for the sake of all beings through countless aeons to bear such great burden."

The Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita now takes the Mandarava flowers from Sakra, Chief of Gods, and scatters these over the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. He presents the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata with his own body, and said to him: "I give you myself as a present, and I am your attendant and servant from today onwards." And with hands together he stands before Dharmodgata. [519] (*i.e. This feedback has given him much faith and determination. Total dedication to the dharma.*)

The merchant's daughter and her five hundred maidens said to the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita: "We in our turn **make a present of ourselves to you, son of good family**. Through this wholesome root we also become recipients of just these dharmas, and together with you we again and again honor and revere the Buddhas and Lords, and the **Bodhisattvas**, and we remain near to you." (*i.e. His progress gives also faith and determination to others.*)

Sadaprarudita replied: "As you, maidens, in accordance with my own earnest intention, give yourselves with earnest intention to me, I accept you."

The maidens replied: "We are in accord with you, and with earnest resolution we give ourselves as presents to you, to do with us as you may."

Here and now **the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita** presented the merchant's daughter and her five hundred maidens, embellished and adorned, together with their five hundred well-decorated carriages, to the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, and said: "All these I present to you as attendants and servants, and also the carriages for your own use."

Sakra, Chief of Gods, applauded him and said: "Well done, son of good family! **A Bodhisattva renounces any and all property. Through this thought of renunciation one soon realizes full enlightenment, and the worship one pays thus to exponents and preachers of Dharma enables one to hear about perfection of wisdom and skill in means.** [520] Also in these three times Tathagatas, as these still are **Bodhisattvas**, do, by this fact these

renounce everything, procure a claim to realization of full enlightenment; and these also ask questions about perfection of wisdom and about skill in means." (i.e. The merchant's daughter and all of her riches represents the short term benefits gained from dhyanas; by renouncing even these one renounces a rebirth in the higher realms, for his motivation is Bodhicitta and the Dharma. So he is not rejecting the world like an Arhat; on the contrary, he is using the world to get to Enlightenment.)

The Bodhisattva Dharmodgata accepted Sadaparudita's gift, so his wholesome root might reach fulfillment. Immediately afterwards he returned this to Sadaparudita. After this all, now the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata goes into his house. The sun is about to set.

The Bodhisattva Sadaparudita thinks to himself: "It does not indeed appear seemly for me, who comes here out of love for dharma, to sit or to lie down. I remain either standing or walking, until the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata again comes out of his house, in order to reveal dharma to us." (i.e. This represents the determination to develop these concentrations and insights with a Bodhicitta motivation. Nobody else can do it for us. We have to realize the real nature of our own mind directly, using deep concentration combining Shamatha and Vipashyana, like combining virtuous methods and wisdom in a more and more subtle manner. Only then can we get more and more closer to the real nature of everything at the edge of existence and non-existence.)

The Bodhisattva Dharmodgata remains for seven years immersed in one uninterrupted state of trance, and he dwelt in countless thousands of concentrations, peculiar to Bodhisattvas, which issue from perfection of wisdom and skill in means.

For seven years Sadaparudita adopted any other posture than sitting or lying down, and he did not fall into sloth and torpor. For seven years he never feels any preoccupation with sense desires, or with ill will, or with harming others, he never feels any eagerness for tastes, or any self-satisfaction. But he thinks: "When does the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata emerge from his trance, [521] so we may spread out a seat for him, and hereon he may demonstrate dharma, and so we may sprinkle well the place he perfection of wisdom and skill in means, anoint this well and bedeck it with manifold flowers?" And the merchant's daughter with her five hundred maidens follow this example, pass their time in two postures only, and accorded with all his works. (i.e. This represents his determination to reach the highest concentration, the Union of Shamatha and Vipashyana.)

One day Bodhisattva Sadaparudita heard a heavenly voice which said:

"On the seventh day from today the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata emerges from his trance, and he at this time, seated in the center of the town, demonstrates dharma." (i.e. Prediction of enlightenment or of a major realization? Meaning let go of your last grasping, you are almost there.)

As Sadaparudita hears the heavenly voice, he is contented, elated, joyous, overjoyed and jubilant. Together with the merchant's daughter and her five hundred maidens he cleans the ground, spreads out the seat made of the seven precious things, takes off his upper garment, and spreads it on top of the seat. The maidens also took off their upper garments, spread their five hundred upper garments on this seat, and thought: "Seated on this seat the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata demonstrates dharma." [522] And these also are contented, elated, joyous, overjoyed and jubilant.

As the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita wanted to sprinkle the ground he can not find any water, though he searched all round. For **Mara, the Evil One**, was thought to and therefore seen to have hidden all the water. And he did this so Sadaparudita, as he can not find any water, becomes depressed and sad, or change his mind, with the result his wholesome root may vanish, or the fervor of this worship be dimmed. The Bodhisattva Sadaparudita now thinks to himself: "Let me pierce my own body, and sprinkle the ground with my blood. The ground is full of rising dust, and I fear some of it may fall on the body of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. What else can I do with this body which is of necessity doomed to break up? Better surely this my body be destroyed by such an action rather than by an ineffectual one. For the sake of sense pleasures, as a result of sense pleasures many thousands frames of mine again and again, while I wandered in birth-and-death, break up, but never in conditions as favorable as these, never for the sake of gaining the good law. As these once more be broken up, let these in any case be broken up in a holy cause." He [523] took a sharp sword, pierced his body on every side, and everywhere sprinkled any piece of ground with his own blood. The merchant's daughter with her five hundred maidens followed his example, and

did as he did. But here is no alteration of thought in either the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita, or in all these maidens, which gives what's seen and thought of as **Mara, the Evil One**, a chance of entering in order to obstruct these wholesome roots. *(i.e. This represent his total renunciation of any pleasure in samsara; letting go of all pleasures born even of the highest dhyanas. Letting it all go with a motivation of Bodhicitta.)*

Sakra, Chief of Gods, thinks to himself: "It is wonderful how this Bodhisattva Sadaparudita loves dharma, how firm his sense of obligation, how great this armor he has put on, and how he disregards this body, this life, and these pleasures, and **how resolutely he sets out with the goal of knowing full enlightenment**, in his aspiration to set free any and all beings from **measureless** sufferings of birth-and-death, **once he knows full enlightenment.**"

Sakra now changes by magic all this blood into heavenly sandalwood water. And all round this piece of ground, for one hundred leagues, an inconceivable sublime scent, the scent of the heavenly sandalwood water, filled the air. And Sakra said to Sadaparudita: "Well done, son of good family! I applaud your inconceivable vigor, your supreme love and search for dharma. The Tathagatas in this past [524] also procure the right **to full enlightenment** through this kind of earnest intention, vigor, and love for dharma."

The Bodhisattva Sadaparudita now thinks to himself: "I spread out the seat for the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, and I swept and sprinkled this piece of ground. Now I must still get flowers with which to cover this peace of ground, and to scatter over the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata as he demonstrates dharma."

Sakra now says to Sadaparudita: "Accept these heavenly Mandarava flowers for this twofold purpose!" And he presented him with a thousand heavenly Khara measures of heavenly flowers. And the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita accepted these flowers, and used some of them to cover the piece of ground, and, later on, he strewed others over the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

ABOUT THE SEVEN YEARS

Udana I: Bodhi Sutta (Ud I.3) -- Awakening (3)

I have heard that on one occasion, when the Blessed One was newly Awakened -- staying at Uruvela by the banks of the Nerañjara River in the shade of the Bodhi tree, the tree of Awakening -- he sat in the shade of the Bodhi tree for seven days in one session, sensitive to the bliss of release. At the end of seven days, after emerging from that concentration, in the third watch of the night, he gave close attention to dependent co-arising in forward and reverse order, thus:

When this is, that is.

From the arising of this comes the arising of that.

When this isn't, that isn't.

From the cessation of this comes the cessation of that.

In other words:

From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.

From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness.

From consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-and-form.

From name-and-form as a requisite condition come the six sense media.

From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact.

From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling.

From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving.

From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging/sustenance.

From clinging/sustenance as a requisite condition comes becoming.

From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth.

From birth as a requisite condition, then old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair come into play.

Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress and suffering.

Now from the remainderless fading and cessation of that very ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications. From the cessation of fabrications comes the cessation of consciousness.

From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-and-form.

From the cessation of name-and-form comes the cessation of the six sense media.

From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact.

From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling.

From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving.

From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging/sustenance.

From the cessation of clinging/sustenance comes the cessation of becoming.

From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth.

From the cessation of birth, then old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair all cease.

Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress and suffering.

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion exclaimed:

As phenomena grow clear
to the brahmin -- ardent, absorbed --
he stands, routing the troops of Mara,
like the sun that illumines
the sky.

Loka Sutta (Ud III.10) -- (Surveying) the World

I have heard that on one occasion, when the Blessed One was newly Awakened -- staying at Uruvela by the banks of the Nerañjara River in the shade of the Bodhi tree, the tree of Awakening -- he sat in the shade of the Bodhi tree for seven days in one session, sensitive to the bliss of release. At the end of seven days, after emerging from that concentration, he surveyed the world with the eye of an Awakened One. As he did so, he saw living beings burning with the many fevers and aflame with the many fires born of passion, aversion, and delusion. Then, on realizing the significance of that, he on that occasion exclaimed:

This world is burning.
 Afflicted by contact,
 it calls disease a "self."
 By whatever it construes [things],
 that is always otherwise.
 Becoming otherwise,
 the world is
 held by becoming
 afflicted by becoming
 and yet delights
 in that very becoming.
 Where there's delight,
 there is fear.
 What one fears
 is stressful.
 This holy life is lived
 for the abandoning of becoming.

Whatever priests or contemplatives say that liberation from becoming is by means of becoming, all of them are not released from becoming, I say.

And whatever priests or contemplatives say that escape from becoming is by means of non-becoming, all of them have not escaped from becoming, I say.

This stress comes into play
 in dependence on all acquisitions.
 With the ending of all clinging/sustenance,
 there's no stress coming into play.
 Look at this world:
 Beings, afflicted with thick ignorance,
 are unreleased
 from delight in what has come to be.
 All levels of becoming,
 anywhere,
 in any way,
 are inconstant, stressful, subject to change.
 Seeing this -- as it's actually present --
 with right discernment,
 one abandons craving for becoming,
 without delighting in non-becoming.
 From the total ending of craving
 comes fading & cessation without remainder:
 Unbinding.
 For the monk unbound,

from lack of clinging/sustenance,
 there's no further becoming.
 He has vanquished Mara,
 won the battle.
 Having gone beyond all levels of being,
 he's Such.

MN10 - Satipatthana Sutta

If anyone would develop these four frames of reference in this way for seven days, one of two fruits can be expected for him: either gnosis right here & now, or -- if there be any remnant of clinging-sustenance -- non-return.

Therigatha III.2 -- Uttama

Four times, five, I ran amok from my dwelling,
 having gained no peace of awareness,
 my thoughts out of control.
 So I went to a trustworthy nun.
 She taught me the Dhamma:
 aggregates, sense spheres, & elements.
 Hearing the Dhamma,
 I did as she said.
For seven days I sat in one spot,
 absorbed in rapture & bliss.
 On the eighth, I stretched out my legs,
 having burst the mass
 of darkness.

Dharmodgata's Demonstration of Dharma [Reaching higher concentration and insights]

At the lapse of seven years the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata emerges from his trance, goes up to the seat spread out for him, sits down on this, and, surrounded and attended by an assembly of many hundreds of thousands, he demonstrates dharma. The moment the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita [525] sees the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, he is filled with a kind of happiness which a monk feels as, with one-pointed attention, he obtains the first trance.

And this is the demonstration of the perfection of wisdom by the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata:

"The perfection of wisdom is self-identical and as such, any and all dharmas are same.

Perfect wisdom is isolated-inaccessible-not-findable and as such, any and all dharmas are isolated-inaccessible-not-findable.

Perfect wisdom is immobile and as such, any and all dharmas are immobile.

Perfect wisdom is devoid of mental acts and as such, any and all dharmas are devoid of mental acts.

Perfect wisdom is unbenumbed and as such, any and all dharmas are unbenumbed.

Perfect wisdom has but one single taste and as such, any and all dharmas have one and the same taste.

Perfect wisdom is boundless and as such, any and all dharmas are boundless.

Perfect wisdom is non-produced and as such, any and all dharmas are non-produced.

Perfect wisdom is non-stopping and as such, all dharmas are not stopped.

As firmament is boundless, so perfect wisdom.

As the ocean is boundless, so perfect wisdom.

As Meru shines in multicolored brilliance, so does perfection of wisdom.

As firmament is not fashioned, so perfect wisdom is not fashioned.

Perfect wisdom is boundless, and as such form, and the other skandhas are boundless.

Perfect wisdom is boundless and as such, the element of earth, and the other elements, are boundless.

Perfect wisdom is self-identical, and as such, the adamant dharma is self-identical.

Perfect wisdom is undifferentiated and as such, all dharmas are undifferentiated.

Non-apprehension of perfect wisdom follows from non-apprehension of all dharmas.

Perfect wisdom remains the same regardless of whatever or whoever this may appear to surpass and as such all dharmas remain the same regardless of whatever or whoever these may surpass. [526]

Perfect wisdom is powerless to act and as such all dharmas are powerless to act.

Perfect wisdom is unthinkable and as such, all dharmas are unthinkable."

Here and now on this occasion is born in the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita

the king of concentrations called "sameness of any and all dharmas," and, consequent on this, the concentrations called "isolation of any and all dharmas,"

"immobility of any and all dharmas,"

"absence of any and all mental acts in any and all dharmas,"

"lack of numbness in any and all dharmas,"

"the one taste of any and all dharmas,"

"boundlessness of any and all dharmas,"

"boundless like firmament,"

"boundless like the ocean,"

"brilliant and multicolored like Meru,"

"not fashioned, like firmament,"

"boundless like form, etc.,"

"boundless like the element of earth, etc.,"

"adamantine,"

"non-differentiatedness of any and all dharmas,"

"non-apprehension of any and all dharmas,"

"sameness of any and all dharmas whatever these may surpass,"

"any and all dharmas are powerless to act,"

"any and all dharmas are unthinkable."

Beginning with these, the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita acquired **six million concentration doors**.

Chapter XXXII – [The Buddha still continues to teach through this Sutra]

End of the Story of Sadaparudita

[Go to verses](#)

In conjunction with acquisition of **these six million concentration doors**, the Bodhisattva Sadaparudita sees the Buddhas and Lords, - in all ten directions in countless **trichiliocosms** - surrounded by congregations of monks, accompanied by multitudes of **Bodhisattvas**, teaching just this **perfection of wisdom**, through just these methods, in just these words, in just these letters, even as I just now in this **great trichiliocosm** demonstrate dharma, - surrounded by this congregation of monks, accompanied by multitudes of **Bodhisattvas**, and teaching just this **perfection of wisdom**, through just these methods, in just these words, in just these letters. He is endowed with inconceivable learning and a sacred knowledge vast as the ocean. In all his births he never again is deprived of the Buddha. He is reborn only in such places as he is face to face with Buddhas, the Lords. All unfortunate rebirths he abandoned, and he secured circumstances which allowed him to accomplish one auspicious rebirth after another.



Tibet manuscript of the Prajnaparamita sutra in 8000 verses

Detail: detail of final folio

[\(source\)](#)

[You won't miss the Tathagata for as long as you have this Sutra]

[i.e. Continuation of the transmission to Ananda started in [Chapter 28](#)]

The Lord hereby says to the Venerable Ananda: In this manner also do you know **this perfection of wisdom as the one who nurses the cognition of the all-knowing in the Bodhisattvas**. (i.e. This perfection of wisdom is the mother of all Buddhas.)

Here now, Ananda, a Bodhisattva who aspires to acquire cognition of the all-knowing courses in this perfection of wisdom, [528] hears this, takes this up, studies, spreads, repeats and writes this. Now, through Tathagatas sustaining power this is well written, in very distinct letters, in a great book, one honors, reveres, adores and worships this, with flowers, incense, scents, wreaths, unguents, aromatic powders, strips of cloth, parasols, banners, bells, flags and with rows of lamps all round, and with manifold kinds of worship. This is our admonition to you, Ananda. For in this **perfection of wisdom the cognition of all-knowing** is brought to perfection. What do you think, Ananda, is Tathagata your teacher?

Ananda: He is, O Lord.

The Lord: The Tathagata is your teacher, Ananda. You minister to me, Ananda, with friendly acts of body, acts of speech, acts of mind. Here now, Ananda, just as you give affection, faith and respect to me as I am at present in this incarnation, just so, Ananda, act after my decease towards this **perfection of wisdom**. **For the second time, for the third time, I entrust and transmit to you this perfection of wisdom, so this does not disappear**. No man is as suitable as you are. As long as this **perfection of wisdom** is observed in the world, one can be sure for so long does Tathagata abide in this, also for so long does Tathagata demonstrate dharma, and the beings in it are not lacking in vision of the Buddha, hearing of dharma, attendance of the Sangha. One knows these beings are living in presence of Tathagata who hear this **perfection of wisdom**, take this up, study, spread, repeat and write this, and who honor, revere, adore and worship this.

Thus spoke the Lord. Enraptured, the **Bodhisattvas**, headed by Maitreya, and the Venerable Subhuti, and the Venerable Ananda, and Sakra, Chief of Gods, and the entire world with its Gods, men, Asuras, Garudas and Gandharvas delighted in the Lord's teaching.

phyag 'tshal lo

SarvaMangalam...

May All Beings Benefit...

The Prajnaparamita Ratnagunasamcayagatha (the collection of jewel like virtues)

Hommage

([Source](#))

0. Homage to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas!
Thereupon the Lord,
in order to gladden the four assemblies,
and to further lighten up this perfection of wisdom,
preached at that time the following verses:

Chapter I [The Bodhisattva Way, the Middle Way, away from all extremes]

Preliminary Admonition

[Go to text](#)

1. "Call forth as much as you can of love, of respect and of faith!
Remove the obstructing defilements, and clear away all your taints!
Listen to the Perfect Wisdom of the gentle Buddhas,
Taught for the weal of the world, for heroic spirits intended!

(i.e. Do not judge by your own standards. Try to go beyond your conditioning.)

The Source of Subhuti's Authority [teaching in accord with reality, from personal direct realization]

2. The rivers all in this Roseapple Island,
Which cause the flowers to grow, the fruits, the herbs and trees,
They all derive from the might of the king of the Nagas,
From the Dragon residing in Lake Anopatapta, his magical power.
3. Just so, whatever Dharmas the Jina's disciples establish,
Whatever they teach, whatever adroitly explain -
Concerning the work of the holy which leads to the fullness of bliss,
And also the fruit of this work - **it is the Tathagata's doing.**

(i.e. Teaching in perfect accord with reality.)

4. For whatever the Jina has taught, the Guide to the Dharma,
His pupils, if genuine, have well been trained in it.
From direct experience, derived from their training, they teach it,
Their teaching stems but from the might of the Buddhas, and not their own power.

(i.e. Teaching from personal direct experience, having realized the real nature of his own mind, not from acquired conceptual knowledge.)

The Basic Teachings [the Middle Way away from the two extremes]

5. No wisdom can we get hold of, no highest perfection,
No Bodhisattva, no thought of enlightenment either.
When told of this, if not bewildered and in no way anxious,
A Bodhisattva courses in the Well-Gone's wisdom.

(i.e. Realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action, without falling into the extreme of nihilism.)

6. In form, in feeling, will, perception and awareness
Nowhere in them they find a place to rest on.
Without a home they wander, dharmas never hold them,
Nor do they grasp at them - the Jina's Bodhi they are bound to gain.

(i.e. Not grasping at any of the five aggregates as the self (individually or collectively), not being slave to their conditioning either, they are totally free by realizing their real nature.)

7. The wanderer Srenika in his gnosis of the truth
Could find no basis, though the skandhas had not been undone.
Just so the Bodhisattva, when he comprehends the dharmas as he should
Does not retire into Blessed Rest. In wisdom then he dwells.

(i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting them, not rejecting them and hiding in dhyanas either. Trying to realize their real nature instead.)

8. What is this wisdom, whose and whence, he queries,
And then he finds that all these dharmas are entirely empty.
Uncowed and fearless in the face of that discovery
Not far from Bodhi is that Bodhi-being then.

(i.e. Realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action, without falling into the extreme of nihilism. All dharmas are like that.)

9. To course in the skandhas, in form, in feeling, in perception,
Will and so on, and fail to consider them wisely;
Or to imagine these skandhas as being empty;
Means to course in the sign, the track of non-production ignored.

(i.e. Staying away from the two extremes of existence and non-existence.)

10. But when he does not course in form, in feeling, or perception,
In will or consciousness, but wanders without home,
Remaining unaware of coursing firm in wisdom,
His thoughts on non-production - then the best of all the calming trances
cleaves to him.

(i.e. Always seeing everything as like illusions, never grasping at anything as absolute while using adapted skillful means.)

11. Through that the Bodhisattva now dwells tranquil in himself,
His future Buddhahood assured by antecedent Buddhas.
Whether absorbed in trance, or whether outside it, he minds not.
For of things as they are he knows the essential original nature.

(i.e. The Middle Way: nothing to accept, nothing to reject. Everything is already pure for the one who can see their real nature as they arise.)

12. Coursing thus he courses in the wisdom of the Sugatas,
And yet he does not apprehend the dharmas in which he courses.
This coursing he wisely knows as a no-coursing,
That is his practice of wisdom, the highest perfection.

(i.e. Not even grasping at this Middle Way.)

13. What exists not, that non-existent the foolish imagine;
Non-existence as well as existence they fashion.
As dharmic facts existence and non-existence are both not real.
A Bodhisattva goes forth when wisely he knows this.

(i.e. Staying away from the two extremes of existence and non-existence.)

14. If he knows the five skandhas as like an illusion,
But makes not illusion one thing, and the skandhas another;
If, freed from the notion of multiple things, he courses in peace -
Then that is his practice of wisdom, the highest perfection.

(i.e. Transcending the dualities; staying in equanimity; seeing everything as having the same emptiness, all thus beyond pure and impure, all already pure in that sense.)

15. Those with good teachers as well as deep insight,
Cannot be frightened on hearing the Mother's deep tenets.
But those with bad teachers, who can be misled by others,
Are ruined thereby, as an unbaked pot when in contact with moisture.

(i.e. It is a superficial understanding of emptiness that causes fears. The Middle Way cannot cause fears.)

[Four] Key Terms Defined

16. What is the reason why we speak of '**Bodhisattvas**'?
Desirous to extinguish all attachment, and to cut it off,
True non-attachment, or the Bodhi of the Jinas is their future lot.
'Beings who strive for Bodhi' are they therefore called.

(i.e. Obtaining non-attachment and enlightenment through the Middle Way. The Bodhisattva is empty of inherent existence, but still dependently arisen and functional. His training consist on "non-attachment to any and all dharma" but not in the Hinayana sense of the terms by artificially trying to drop/reject all. This would not work; it could only bring short term benefits, not Buddhahood. His non-attachment is the result of realizing the real nature of any and all dharma. Once he realize the real nature of his own mind, and thus of all dharma, then automatically the three poisons drop by themselves fault of nutriment, and he doesn't fall into nihilism either. And he get to this point, to realize the real nature of all dharma, by adopting the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting; a path that is efficient because perfectly in accord with the result, in accord with the real nature of everything: not existence, not non-existence, not both, not neither (a non-affirmative negation))

17. What is the reason why '**Great Beings**' are so called?
They rise to the highest place above a great number of people;
And of a great number of people they cut off mistaken views.
That is why we come to speak of them as 'Great Beings.'

(i.e. They teach to all sentient beings without discrimination how to realize the real nature of their own mind, and thus to be free from all suffering. It is by realizing the real nature of their own mind, and thus of all dharma, that sentient beings can purify their own body speech and mind and act more in accord with reality, not creating uncontrolled karma and having to suffer the consequences of such mistakes.)

18. Great as a giver, as a thinker, as a power,
He mounts upon the vessel of the Supreme Jinas.
Armed with the **great armor** he'll subdue Mara the artful.
These are the reasons why 'Great Beings' are so called.

19. This gnosis shows him all beings as like an illusion,
Resembling a great crowd of people, conjured up at the crossroads,
By a magician, who then cuts off many thousands of heads;
He knows this whole living world as a mock show, and yet remains without fear.

20. Form, perception, feeling, will and awareness
Are ununited, never bound, cannot be freed.
Uncowed in his thought he marches on to his Bodhi,
That for the highest of men is the best of all armors.

(i.e. They are immune to fears that some might generate from a superficial understanding of emptiness. No need to accept anything, no need to reject or fear anything.)

21. What then again is '**the vessel**' that leads to the Bodhi'?
Mounted upon it one guides to Nirvana all beings.
Great is that vessel, immense, vast like the vastness of space.
Those who travel upon it are carried to safety, delight and ease.

(i.e. Incommensurably efficient because more and more in accord with reality; transcending all comparisons, all limits, causality space and time, all karma. The wish-fulfilling jewel.)

The Transcendental Nature of Bodhisattvas

22. Thus transcending the world, he eludes our apprehensions.
 'He goes to Nirvana,' but no one can say where he went to.
 A fire's extinguished, but where, do we ask, has it gone to?
 Likewise, how can we find him who has found the Rest of the Blessed?

(i.e. Transcending the world, space.)

23. The Bodhisattva's past, his future and his present must elude us,
 Time's three dimensions nowhere touch him.
 Quite pure he is, free from conditions, unimpeded.
 That is his practice of wisdom, the highest perfection.

(i.e. Transcending time. Transcending causality, karma.)

24. Wise Bodhisattvas, coursing thus, reflect on non-production [emptiness],
 And yet, while doing so, engender in themselves the great compassion,
 Which is, however, free from any notion of a being.
 Thereby they practise wisdom, the highest perfection.

(i.e. Realizing that compassion and emptiness are not opposite, on the contrary they are inseparable.)

25. But when the notion of suffering and beings leads him to think:
 'Suffering I shall remove, the weal of the world I shall work!'
 Beings are then imagined, a self is imagined, -
 The practice of wisdom, the highest perfection, is lacking.

(i.e. Not accepting any absolute self or beings, not rejecting them conventionally either.)

26. He wisely knows that all that lives is unproduced as he himself is;
 He knows that all that is no more exists than he or any beings.
 The unproduced and the produced are not distinguished,
 That is the practice of wisdom, the highest perfection.

(i.e. Transcending the duality existence and non-existence: the Middle Way.)

27. All words for things in use in this world must be left behind,
 All things produced and made must be transcended -
 The deathless, the supreme, incomparable gnosis is then won.
 That is the sense in which we speak of perfect wisdom.

(i.e. Gradually realizing the emptiness of all dharma, from gross to very subtle, without any exception)

28. When free from doubts the Bodhisattva carries on his practice,
 As skilled in wisdom he is known to dwell.
 All dharmas are not really there, their essential original nature is empty.
 To comprehend that is the practice of wisdom, perfection supreme.

(i.e. The whole Bodhisattva path, the Middle Way, is about using more and more subtle virtuous methods while combining them with the realization of the emptiness of inherent existence of more and more subtle dharma. We need to combine thus method and wisdom to be more and more in accord with the real nature of everything at the edge of existence and non-existence. Method or wisdom alone is bondage; both together is the door to Liberation.)

Chapter II

Where Bodhisattvas Stand

[Go to text](#)

29. He does not stand in form, perception or in feeling,
In will or consciousness, in any skandha whatsoever.
In Dharma's true nature alone he is standing.
Then that is his practice of wisdom, the highest perfection.
(i.e. Abiding without abiding.)
30. Change and no change, suffering and ease, the self and not-self,
The lovely and repulsive - just one Suchness in this Emptiness they are.
And so he takes not his stand on the fruit which he won, which is threefold -
That of an Arhat, a Single Buddha, a Buddha fully enlightened.
(i.e. Not being satisfied with dhyana, the gods' realms, or to be an Arhat.)
31. The Leader himself was not stationed in the realm which is free from
conditions,
Nor in the things which are under conditions, but freely he wandered without a
home:
Just so, without a support or a basis a Bodhisattva is standing.
A position devoid of a basis has that position been called by the Jina.
(i.e. Beyond samsara and Nirvana. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting.)

Wherein Bodhisattvas Train

32. Those who wish to become the Sugata's Disciples,
Or PratyekaBuddhas, or likewise, Kings of the Dharma -
Without **resort to this Patience** they cannot reach their respective goals.
They move across, but their eyes are not on the other shore.
(i.e. Gasping at any goal makes you drift away.)
33. Those who teach dharma, and those who listen when it is being taught;
Those who have won the fruit of an Arhat, a Single Buddha, or a world-
saviour;
And the Nirvana obtained by the wise and the learned -
Mere illusions, mere dreams - so has the Tathagata taught us.
(i.e. Not being satisfied with dhyana, the gods' realms, or to be an Arhat. They are all like illusions.)
34. Four kinds of persons are not alarmed by this teaching:
Sons of the Jina skilled in the truths; saints unable to turn back,
Arhats free from defilements and taints, and rid of their doubts;
Those whom good teachers mature are reckoned the fourth kind.
35. Coursing thus, the wise and learned Bodhisattva,
Trains not for Arhatship, nor on the level of PratyekaBuddhas.
In the Buddha-dharma alone he trains for the sake of all-knowledge.
No training is his training, and no one is trained in this training.
(i.e. Training while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.)

36. Increase or decrease of forms is not the aim of this training,
Nor does he set out to acquire various dharmas.
All-knowledge alone he can hope to acquire by this training.
To that he goes forth when he trains in this training, and delights in its virtues.

(i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. Aiming for Buddhahood, nothing less.)

The Facts of Existence

37. Forms are not wisdom, nor is wisdom found in form,
In consciousness, perceptions, feeling, or in will.
They are not wisdom, and no wisdom is in them.
Like space it is, without a break or crack.

(i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting ... the five aggregates.)

38. Of all objective supports the essential original nature is **boundless**;
Of beings likewise the essential original nature is boundless.
As the essential original nature of space has no limits,
Just so **the wisdom of the World-knowers is boundless.**

(i.e. Transcending all discrimination, all limits, all karma.)

39. **'Perceptions' - mere words**, so the Leaders have told us;
Perceptions forsaken and gone, and the door is open to the Beyond.
Those who succeed in ridding themselves of perceptions,
They, having reached the Beyond, fulfill the Teacher's commandments.

(i.e. All perceptions are conditioned by old karma.)

40. If for aeons countless as the sands of the Ganges
The Leader would himself continue to pronounce the word 'being':
Still, pure from the very start, no being could ever result from his speaking.
That is the practice of wisdom, the highest perfection."

(i.e. No permanent self to liberate.)

Conclusion

41. And so the Jina concludes his preaching, and finally tells us:
"When all I said and did at last agreed with perfect wisdom,
Then this prediction I received from Him who went before me:
'Fully enlightened, at a future time thou shalt a Buddha be!'"

(i.e. "Subhuti the Elder even just now indicate, demonstrate, show and clarify how thusly any Tathagata comes to be manifest".)

Chapter III

The Merit Derived from The perfection of wisdom

[Go to text](#)

42. "One who will take up this Perfection of Wisdom,
Wherein the Saviours course, and constantly study it;
Fire, poison, sword and water cannot harm him,
And also Mara finds no entrance, nor his host.

(i.e.)

43. Someone may for the Sugata who went to rest build Stupas,
Made of the seven precious things, and worship them;
Until thousands of kotis of fields are filled with these Stupas
Of the Sugata, countless as the sands of the Ganges;

(i.e.)

44. And like him as many beings again as there are in endless kotis of fields,
They all would do worship, without doing anything else, -
With heavenly flowers and the best perfumes and unguents, -
Let us reckon for aeons in the three periods, and still more than that:

(i.e.)

45. But if someone else had copied this book, the Mother of the Sugatas,
From which come forth the Guides with the ten powers,
Would bear it in mind, revere it with flowers and unguents, -
An **infinitesimal** portion of his merit would have those who had given worship
to the Stupas.

(i.e.)

The perfection of wisdom a Great Lore

46. This Perfection of Wisdom of the Jinas is a great lore,
Appeasing dharmas making for sorrow and ill in many a world of beings.
The Saviours of the World in the past, and in the future, and those [now] in the
ten directions,
They have, by training in this lore, become the supreme physicians.

(i.e.)

47. And [also] those who course in the practice of pity and concern for the welfare
of others,
They, the wise, by having trained in this lore, will experience enlightenment.
Those who have conditioned happiness, and those who have unconditioned
happiness,
All their happiness should be known as having issued from this.

(i.e.)

The perfection of wisdom and the Other Five Perfections

48. Gems exist potentially scattered in the earth,
And, when conditions are favourable, they grow in great variety:
All the qualities of enlightenment [that are in] the five perfections,
They all grow from the perfection of wisdom.

(i.e.)

49. Wherever, we know, the Universal Monarch may travel,
There is all the army of all the seven precious things:
Wherever there is this perfection of wisdom of the Jinas,
There also all dharmas of good quality are brought along."

(i.e.)

Chapter IV

Relative Value of Relics and The perfection of wisdom

[Go to text](#)

50. Asked a question by the Jina, Sakra answered:
 "If I could have Buddhafields like the sands of the river Ganges,
 All of them filled to the top with the relics of the Jinas:
 Nevertheless I would still take this wisdom, the foremost of the perfections.

(i.e.)

51. For what reason? It is not that I lack in respect for the relics,
 But they are worshipped because they are fostered by wisdom.
 Just as every man who is supported by the king gets worship,
 Just so the Buddha-relics, because they are supported by the perfection of
 wisdom.

(i.e.)

Simile of the Wishing Jewel

52. A precious gem, in possession of all qualities, priceless,
 The basket in which it may be, should be paid homage to;
 Even when it has been taken out, the basket continues to emit its radiance:
 Such are the qualities of that gem.

(i.e.)

53. Just so it is with the qualities of wisdom, the foremost perfection,
 Which gain worship for the relics of the Jina even after he has gone to rest.
 Therefore let him who wants to win the Jina-qualities
 Take up the perfection of wisdom. She is the liberation."

(i.e.)

The perfection of wisdom and the Other Five Perfections

54. [The Lord then said:] "Wisdom controls him who gives gifts,
 And also morality, patience, vigour and concentration.
 She takes hold of the wholesome dharmas so that they may not be lost.
 She alone is also the one who reveals all dharmas.

(i.e.)

Simile of the Shadows

55. There are in Jambudvipa many thousands of kotis of trees,
 Of different species, manifold and different in form;
 And yet there would not also be a difference between their shadows,
 But when one speaks they are all equally reckoned as shadows:

(i.e.)

56. Just so do these five perfections of the Jinas
Have their name from the perfection of wisdom:
When they are being turned over into all-knowledge,
The name of enlightenment provides one single principle for all the six of them.

(i.e.)

Chapter V

The Counterfeit and the True Perfection of Wisdom

[Go to text](#)

57. When a Bodhisattva [falsely] reveals form, perception, feeling, will,
Or thought as impermanent [claiming that they are destroyed], -
In the counterfeit [perfection of wisdom] he courses, considering not wisely;
Because the learned never effect the destruction of a dharma.

(i.e.)

58. Wherein of form, of feeling, or perception,
Or consciousness, or will there is no apprehension:
By the method of emptiness and non-production [he] cognizes all dharmas.
This is the practice of wisdom, the foremost perfection.

(i.e.)

The perfection of wisdom Greater Than Any Other Spiritual Gift

59. If someone would discipline in Arhatship as many beings
As there are in fields equal to the sands of the river Ganges:
And if someone else, having copied this perfection of wisdom,
Would give the book to another being, - his would be the more distinguished
merit.

(i.e.)

60. For what reason? The supreme Teachers, trained in this,
Make all dharmas intelligible in this emptiness.
When they have learned that the Disciples speedily experience their own kind
of emancipation,
Others experience PratyekaBuddha-enlightenment, others again the Buddha-
enlightenment.

(i.e.)

Importance of the Thought of Enlightenment

61. Where there is no sprout, there can in the world be no tree.
How can therein be the production of branches, leaves, fruits or flowers?
Without the aspiration for enlightenment there is no possibility of a Jina in the
world.
How then could Sakra, Brahma, fruit and disciples manifest themselves?

(i.e.)

62. When the orb of the sun sends forth a multitude of light,
Then beings exert themselves in doing their work:
So, when the thought of enlightenment has come into being for the sake of
knowing the world,
Through its cognition all the dharmas of quality are assembled.

(i.e.)

63. If there were no Chief of the Serpents in his Anavatapta [Lake],
How could there be here in Jambudvipa a flowing along of the rivers?
And if there were no rivers, fruits and flowers could not possibly be,
And there would also be no manifold jewels in the oceans.

(i.e.)

64. So, if there were no thought of enlightenment, how could there be
The flowing along of the cognition of the Tathagata in all these worlds?
And if there is no cognition, there can be no growth of the virtues,
No enlightenment, nor the oceanlike dharmas of the Buddha.

(i.e.)

The Sun and the Firefly

65. If all the light-emitting animals everywhere in this world
Would, for the purpose of illumination, shed light:
One single ray, issued from the orb of the sun, outshines them all,
And **infinitesimal** would be all the luster of the hosts of light-emitting animals.

(i.e.)

Chapter VI

Supreme Merit of Dedication and Jubilation

[Go to text](#)

66. However much merit the hosts of Disciples may beget,
Associated with giving, morality, and [meditational] development:
But if a Bodhisattva rejoices with one single thought,
There would [by comparison] be no mass of merit in all the hosts of the
Disciples.

(i.e.)

The Range of Jubilation

67. If we take the nyutas of kotis of Buddhas, who have gone by in the past
period of time,
And those who just now abide in endlessly many thousands of kotis of
Buddha-fields;
And also those Saviours of the world who, having gone to Parinirvana,
Will demonstrate the jewel of Dharma for the sake of the complete extinction
of suffering;

(i.e.)

68. If we consider the merit of those Jinas during the period
Beginning with the first production of the thought of the foremost
enlightenment,
Until the time of the extinction of the good Dharma of the Guides,
And the dharmas connected with the perfections, and also the Buddha-
dharmas,

(i.e.)

69. And also the merit of the offspring of the Buddhas, and of the Disciples,
Be they in training or adepts, with outflows or without, -
Having heaped it all up, the Bodhisattva rejoices at it,
And turns it all over to the enlightenment which is linked with the weal of the
world.

(i.e.)

True and False Turning over

70. When in one who turns over there proceeds the perception of a thought,
Or if the turning over of the perception of enlightenment involves the
perception of a being:
Established in perception, false views, and thought, it is tied by the triple
attachment.
It does not become turned over to those who apprehend it.

(i.e.)

71. But when he thus cognizes: These dharmas are extinct and stopped,
And wherein they are turned over, that is also extinct;
Nor is ever anywhere a dharma turned over into a dharma:
Then it does become turned over in one who thus considers wisely.

(i.e.)

72. When he makes a sign, he does not turn over [to enlightenment],
But if [he turns to it as] the signless, [that] becomes turned over into
enlightenment.
Just as though food mixed with poison were good to cat,
So has the taking of pure dharmas as a basis been spoken of by the Jina.

(i.e.)

73. Therefore thus should one train in turning over:
As the Jinas wisely know that wholesome [root], -
Its class as it is, its origins as they are, its characteristics as they are, -
Thus do I rejoice [in that wholesome root], thus do I turn [it] over.

(i.e.)

74. And thus turning merit over into enlightenment,
He does not upset the Buddha, one who preaches what the Jina has taught.
As many as there are in the world Bodhisattvas who lean on a basis
All of them surpasses the hero who turns over in this way.

(i.e.)

Chapter VII

The perfection of wisdom Guides the Other Perfections

[Go to text](#)

75. How can those niyutas of kotis of born-blind, who are without a guide,
Who are not conversant with the way, find an entrance to the city?
Without wisdom these five perfections are eyeless:
Those who are without the guide are unable to experience enlightenment.

(i.e.)

76. When they are taken hold of by wisdom,
Then, having gained the eye, do they get that designation [i.e. 'perfection'].
It is like a [religious] painting [of a deity or a saint] which is complete except for
the eyes.
Only after the eyes are painted in does one get one's fee.

(i.e.)

The Attitude to Dharmas and to the Self

77. When one who develops wisdom to the end does not seize on the least
dharma,
Conditioned or unconditioned, dark or bright;
Then one comes to speak in the world of the perfection of wisdom,
[Which is like] space, wherein nothing real whatsoever is established.

(i.e.)

78. When he thinks, 'I course in the wisdom of the Jinas,
I will set free niyutas of beings touched by many ills':
This Bodhisattva is one who imagines the notion of beings,
And this is not the practice of wisdom, the foremost perfection.

(i.e.)

Faith in the Perfection of Wisdom

79. The Bodhisattva who has observed this foremost perfection,
When in the past he served [the Buddhas], is learned and does not doubt:
As soon as he has heard it he will again recognise the Teacher,
And he will swiftly understand the Peaceful Calm of enlightenment.

(i.e.)

80. Though in the past he has honoured millions of Buddhas, and served them,
If without faith in the Jina's perfection of wisdom,
Hearing of it, he will cast it away, one of small intelligence;
After he cast it away, he will go to the Avici Hell, and no one can save him.

(i.e.)

81. Therefore, have faith in this Mother of all the Jinas,
If you wish to experience the utmost Buddha-cognition:
Let him be like a merchant, who has travelled to the treasure island,
And who, having lost his goods would [nevertheless] again return [to it].

(i.e.)

Chapter VIII

The Meaning of Purity

[Go to text](#)

82. The purity of form should be known from the purity of the fruit.
From the purity of form and fruit is the purity of all-knowledge.
The purity of all-knowledge and of the fruit, and the purity of form:
As with the sameness of the space-element, they are not broken nor cut apart.

(i.e.)

83. Having transcended what belongs to the triple world, the Bodhisattvas,
[Although their] defilements [are] removed, exhibit [their] rebirth;
[Although] freed from decay, illness and death, they exhibit decease, -
This is the perfection of wisdom in which course the constantly wise.

(i.e.)

84. This world is attached to the mud of name-and-form.
The wheel of birth-and-death revolves, similar to a wind-wheel.
Having cognized the revolving world as like a snare for wild beasts
The wise roam about similar to the birds in space.

(i.e.)

85. He who, coursing perfectly pure, does not course in form,
Nor in consciousness, perception, feeling or will;
Thus coursing he shuns all attachments.
Freed from attachments he courses in the wisdom of the Sugatas.

(i.e.)

Chapter IX

All-round Purity

[Go to text](#)

86. Thus coursing, the wise and learned Bodhisattva,
Having cut off his attachments, marches on unattached to the world.
As the sun, released from the planet Rahu, blazes forth,
Or, as fire, let loose, burns up grass, log and forest.

(i.e.)

87. The Bodhisattva sees that all dharmas and the Perfection of Wisdom
Are pure, perfectly pure, in their essential original nature.
But he does not seize on one who sees, nor on all dharmas.
This is the practice of wisdom, the foremost perfection."

(i.e.)

Chapter X

Qualifications for The perfection of wisdom

[Go to text](#)

88. Sakra, King of Gods, asks the Jina:
 "Coursing in wisdom, how is the Bodhisattva 'engaged in' it?"
 "Who is 'joined' to not the least thing whatsoever, be it skandha, or element,
 He who is 'engaged' thus, that Bodhisattva is 'joined' [to wisdom].

(i.e.)

89. As one set out for long in the vehicle should that being be known,
 As one who has done his duty under many niyutas of kotis of Buddhas,
 Who, when he has heard that these dharmas are fictitious and like an illusion,
 Does not hesitate, but makes efforts to train himself.

(i.e.)

The Simile of a Village

90. If a man [coming out of] a wilderness extending over many miles
 Would see cowherds, or boundary lines, or woods:
 He [then] regains his breath, and has no [more] fear of thieves:
 [For he knows that] these are signs that a village or city is quite near:

(i.e.)

91. Just so the one who searches for enlightenment, when he learns of this
 wisdom,
 The foremost perfection of the Jinas, and gets hold of it:
 He regains his breath, and he has no [more] fear,
 Not even that of [falling on] the level of an Arhat or the level of a
 PratyekaBuddha.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Ocean

92. As long as a man who travels to the watery ocean in order to see it,
 Still sees the trees and forests of the Himalayas, [he is far from it].
 But when he no longer sees these signs, he becomes free from doubt, [and
 knows that]
 'Quite near is the great ocean, it is not too far away':

(i.e.)

93. Just so should be known one who has set out for the foremost enlightenment,
 And who is learning about this perfection of wisdom of the Jinas.
 Although he is not one who has face to face been predicted by the Leader,
 He knows that 'before long I will experience the Buddha-enlightenment.'

(i.e.)

The Simile of Spring

94. In beautiful springtime, when the stalks and leaves have come out,
From the branches will, before long, come forth [more] leaves, and fruits and
flowers:
One who has been taken in hand by this perfection of wisdom,
Before long he will attain the foremost enlightenment of the Leaders.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Pregnant Woman

95. When a pregnant woman is all astir with pains,
One should know that the time has come for her to give birth:
Just so will the Bodhisattva, if on hearing of the wisdom of the Jinas
He beholds her with delight and zest, speedily experience enlightenment."

(i.e.)

How to Dwell in The perfection of wisdom

96. "When the Yogin is coursing in wisdom, the supreme perfection,
He does not see the growth of form, nor its diminution.
If someone does not see dharma, nor no-dharma, nor the Dharma-element
And if he does not experience the Blessed Rest, then he dwells in wisdom.

(i.e.)

97. When he courses therein, he does not imagine the Buddhadharmas,
Nor the powers, nor the roads to psychic power, nor does he imagine the
peaceful calm of enlightenment.
Not discriminating, free from constructions, coursing on resolutely,
This is the practice of wisdom, the foremost perfection."

(i.e.)

Chapter XI

The Theme

[Go to text](#)

98. Subhuti asks the Buddha, the moon of the Doctrine:
 "Will there be any obstacles to the precious qualities?"
 "Many obstacles there will be," preaches the Teacher.
 "Of them I will proclaim only a few:

(i.e.)

99. Various Obstacles
 Diverse and manifold flashes of ideas will arise in him
 When he copies out this wisdom, the perfection of the Jinas.
 Then again they will speedily vanish, like lightning,
 Without benefit to the weal of the world.

(i.e.)

100. This is one deed of Mara. And he may have some doubts when it is being taught:
 'My name is not proclaimed by the Leader therein;
 Nor are the circumstances of my birth; nor my birthplace or clan.'
 Because of that they will not listen, and reject it. That also is Mara's deed.

(i.e.)

The Bodhisattva-path and the Disciple-path

101. Just as, in his ignorance, someone would give up the root,
 And prefer, the deluded, the branches and foliage;
 [Or] as one who, when he had got an elephant, would want an elephant's foot
 instead; -
 Thus would be one who, having heard the Prajnaparamita, would wish for the
 Sutras [of the Disciples instead].

(i.e.)

102. Just as one who had got superior food of a hundred [different] tastes,
 Would, although he has got the best food of all, nevertheless seek for inferior
 food.
 So would be a Bodhisattva who, having got this perfection,
 Would seek for enlightenment on the level of an Arhat.

(i.e.)

More Obstacles

103. They will want honour, they will want gain,
 In their hearts longing for them, intent on familiarity with the families [of the
 faithful].
 Having spurned what is right [Dharma], they will do what is wrong;
 Having left the right path, they have gone to a wrong road. This also is Mara's
 deed.

(i.e.)

104. Even though at first they have produced faith,
Keen to hear this most excellent dharma;
When they find that the dharma-preacher is disinclined to do his work,
They will go away, devoid of joy and very sad.

(i.e.)

Mara's Deeds and the Buddha's Help

105. When these deeds of Mara will take place,
Together with many other diverse and manifold obstacles,
Then many monks will be troubled thereby,
And will not bear in mind this Prajnaparamita.

(i.e.)

106. Where there are jewels which are priceless
And hard to get, their owners invariably have many foes.
Just so this wisdom, the foremost perfection of the Jinas,
Is the Dharma-jewel hard to get, and [connected with] many troubles.

(i.e.)

107. When a being has newly set out in the vehicle, and is limited in his intelligence,
He does not [at once] obtain this Dharma-jewel, hard to get.
Mara will then be zealous to cause obstacles.
But the Buddhas in the ten directions will be intent on helping.

(i.e.)

Chapter XII

The perfection of wisdom the Mother of the Buddhas

[Go to text](#)

108. If a mother with many sons had fallen ill,
They all, sad in mind, would busy themselves about her:
Just so also the Buddhas in the world-systems in the ten directions
Bring to mind this perfection of wisdom as their mother.

(i.e.)

109. The Saviours of the world who were in the past, and also those that are [just now] in the ten directions,
Have issued from her, and so will the future ones be.
She is the one who shows the world [for what it is], she is the genetrix, the mother of the Jinas,
And she reveals the thoughts and actions of other beings.

(i.e.)

How the Tathagata Knows the World

110. The Suchness of the world, the Suchness of the Arhats,
The Suchness of PratyekaBuddhas, and the Suchness of the Jinas,
As just one single Suchness free from existence, unaltering,
Has the perfection of wisdom been understood by the Tathagata.

(i.e.)

111. Whether the wise abide in the world, or whether they have gone to final Nirvana,
Firmly established remains this fixed sequence of Dharmahood: 'Dharmas are empty.'
It is that Suchness (tathata) which the Bodhisattvas understand.
Therefore then have the Buddhas been given the name of 'Tathagatas.'

(i.e.)

112. This is the sphere of the Guides, with their own powers,
Who reside in the delightful forests of the perfection of wisdom.
Although they fetch suffering beings out of the three places of woe,
Yet they never have anywhere the notion of a being.

(i.e.)

Similes about the Buddha

113. When a lion, residing in his mountain cave,
Roars fearlessly, the lesser beasts are made to tremble:
Likewise, when the Lion of Men, depending on the perfection of wisdom,
Roars fearlessly, the many heretics are made to tremble.

(i.e.)

114. Just as the rays of the sun, supported by the ether,
Dry up this earth, and do reveal its form:
Just so the king of the Dharma, supported by the perfection of wisdom,
Dries up the river of craving and reveals the dharma.

(i.e.)

The Tathagata's Vision of Dharma

115. Wherein there is no vision of form, no vision of feelings,
No vision of perception, no vision of will,
No vision of consciousness, thought or mind,
This has been expounded as the vision of Dharma by the Tathagata.

(i.e.)

116. A vision in space is a being, so they declare.
A vision like that of space, so should you consider that object!
Thus has the vision of Dharma been expounded by the Tathagata.
But it is not possible to report on that vision by definite statements [that differ from it].

(i.e.)

Chapter XIII

Simile of the King and His Ministers

[Go to text](#)

117. Who sees thus, he sees all dharmas.
When the minister does everything, the king is evenminded.
Whatever Buddha-actions there are, whatever dharmas of the Disciples,
It is the perfection of wisdom which effects them all.

(i.e.)

118. A king does not travel to villages or into the countryside;
But in his own home is the meeting-place where he assembles all:
Just so the Bodhisattva does not move away from the dharmic nature of
dharmas,
But he assembles all the qualities in the Buddha-dharmas.

(i.e.)

Chapter XIV

The Bodhisattva and Enlightenment

[Go to text](#)

119. The Bodhisattva who has firm faith in the Sugata,
Who is resolutely intent on the supreme perfection of wisdom;
Gone beyond the two levels of the Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas,
He will swiftly attain, unhindered, the enlightenment of the Jinas.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Ship

120. When a ship breaks up in the ocean,
Those who do not get hold of a corpse, a stick or a log,
Go to their destruction in the midst of the water, without having gained the
shore;
But those who hold on to something, travel to the other shore and reach it:

(i.e.)

121. Just so those who, although endowed with some faith and in possession of
some serenity,
Reject the perfection of wisdom, the mother:
In the ocean of birth-and-death they must wander about for ever and ever,
In birth, decay, death, sorrow, turmoil, and the breaking up [of limbs].

(i.e.)

122. But those who have been taken hold of by the supreme wisdom,
Skilled in seeing the own-being of existence, seers of ultimate reality:
They are persons worthy of the vehicle who have collected the wealth of merit
and cognition.
They will speedily experience the exceedingly wonderful Sugata-
enlightenment.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Jar

123. It is as if someone would transport water in an unbaked jar;
One should know that it will break quickly, because it does not hold the water
well.
But when water is transported in a fully baked jar, that on the way
It might break there is no fear, and it gets safely to the house:

(i.e.)

124. Although the Bodhisattva be full of faith,
If deficient in wisdom he swiftly reaches destruction.
But when taken hold of by both faith and by wisdom,
Gone beyond the two levels he will attain the supreme enlightenment.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Two Ships

125. A ship, which is not well got ready, in the ocean
Goes to destruction, together with its goods and merchants.
But when a ship is well got ready, and well joined together,
Then it does not break up, and all the goods get to the [other] shore.

(i.e.)

126. Just so a Bodhisattva, exalted in faith,
But deficient in wisdom, swiftly comes to a failure in enlightenment.
But when he is well joined to wisdom, the foremost perfection,
He experiences, unharmed and uninjured, the enlightenment of the Jinas.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Aged Man

127. An aged man, ailing, one hundred and twenty years old,
Although he may have got up, is not capable of walking on his own;
But when two men, both to his right and left, have taken hold of him
He does not feel any fear of falling, and he moves along at ease:

(i.e.)

128. Just so a Bodhisattva, who is weak in wisdom,
Although he sets out, he breaks down midway;
But when he is taken hold of by skilful means and by the best wisdom,
Then he does not break down: he experiences the enlightenment of the
mightiest of men.

(i.e.)

Chapter XV

The Beginner and the Good Friends

[Go to text](#)

129. The Bodhisattvas who stand on the stage of beginners,
Who with resolute intention have set out for the supreme enlightenment of a
Buddha,
They, the discerning, should, as good pupils intent on respect for their Gurus,
-
Always tend their spiritual teachers [who are their 'good friends'].

(i.e.)

130. For what reason? From that [tending] come the qualities of the learned.
They [the good friends] [are those who] instruct in the perfection of wisdom.
Thus preaches the Jina, the holder of all the best qualities:
'Dependent on the good friend are the Buddha-dharmas.'

(i.e.)

How a Bodhisattva Helps Beings

131. Giving, morality, also patience and vigour,
The concentrations and wisdom should be turned over into enlightenment.
But one should not grab at enlightenment, having considered [it as belonging
to] the skandhas.
It is thus that it should be demonstrated to beginners.

(i.e.)

132. Coursing thus, the Oceans of Qualities, the Moons of the doctrine
Become the shelter of the world, its refuge, and its place of rest;
The means of salvation [route], the intelligence, the islands, leaders who
desire its welfare;
The light, the torch, teachers of the foremost Dharma, imperturbable.

(i.e.)

133. An armor difficult to wear the greatly determined put on;
But they are not armed with the skandhas, elements or sense-fields;
They are free from the notion of the three vehicles, and have not taken hold of
it;
They are irreversible, immovable, and steadfast in their character.

(i.e.)

134. Being thus endowed with dharma, unimpeded,
Freed from hesitations, perplexity and consternation, intent on what is
beneficial,
Having heard the perfection of wisdom, they do not despair.
They should be known as incapable of being led astray by others, as
irreversible.

(i.e.)

The perfection of wisdom and Its Conflict with the World

135. Deep is this dharma of the Leaders, hard to see,
Nor is it obtained by anyone, nor do they reach it.
For that reason, when he has obtained enlightenment, the Benevolent and
Compassionate
Becomes unconcerned, - 'what body of beings will cognize this?'

(i.e.)

136. For beings delight in a place to settle in, they are eager for sense-objects,
Bent on grasping, unintelligent, and quite blinded.
The Dharma should be attained as nothing to settle in and as nothing to grasp.
Its conflict with the world is manifest.

(i.e.)

Chapter XVI

On Suchness

[Go to text](#)

137. The space-element in the eastern direction, and in the southern,
And so in the western and northern directions is boundless;
Above and below, in the ten directions, as far as it goes
There is no multiplicity, and no difference is attained.

(i.e.)

138. Past Suchness, future Suchness,
Present Suchness, the Suchness of the Arhats,
The Suchness of all dharmas, the Suchness of the Jinas, -
All that is the Dharma-Suchness, and no difference is attained.

(i.e.)

Wisdom and Skill In Means

139. If a Bodhisattva wishes to reach this
Enlightenment of the Sugatas, free from differentiated dharmas,
He should practise the perfection of wisdom, joined to skill in means.
Without wisdom there is not the attainment of the Leaders of men.

(i.e.)

140. A bird with a frame one hundred and fifty miles large
Would have little strength if its wings were lost or feeble:
If it should jump down to Jambudvipa from the abodes of the Gods of the
Thirty-three,
It would travel to its destruction.

(i.e.)

141. Even if he would procure these five perfections of the Jinas
For many niyutas of kotis of aeons,
And would all the time tend the world with an infinite abundance of vows; -
If he is without skill in means, deficient in wisdom, he falls into Discipleship.

(i.e.)

The Desirable Attitude to Other Beings

142. If he wishes to go forth into this Buddha-cognition,
He [should have] an even mind towards the whole world, the notion of father
and mother [towards all beings]
He should exert himself with a thought of benevolence, and a friendly mind;
Amenable and straight, he should be soft in his speech."

(i.e.)

Chapter XVII

The Theme

[Go to text](#)

143. The Elder Subhuti questions the Saviour of the World:
 "Teach the characteristics of those who are secluded in Peace, of the Oceans
 of Qualities,
 How they become irreversible, and of great might.
 Declare, O Jina, their qualities, merely by way of outline!"

(i.e.)

Qualities of Irreversible Bodhisattvas

144. "They are free from the perception of multiplicity; they speak suitably;
 They do not take refuge with outside Sramanas or Brahmanas.
 The wise have avoided for all time the three places of woe,
 And they are practised in the ten wholesome paths of action.

(i.e.)

145. Free from self-interest they instruct the world in Dharma.
 They take delight in the Dharma. They always speak gently.
 Standing, walking, lying down, sitting, they are fully conscious [of what they
 are doing].
 They walk along looking ahead only one yoke, their thoughts not wandering
 about.

(i.e.)

146. They wear garments clean and unsoiled. They become pure through the
 threefold detachment.
 Majestic men they want no gain, but always Dharma.
 They have passed beyond Mara's realms. Others cannot lead them astray.
 They meditate in the four trances, but they do not use those trances as a
 support [for a better rebirth].

(i.e.)

147. They do not want fame, their hearts are not overcome by anger.
 As householders they remain constantly unattached to their entire property.
 They do not seek to earn their livelihood in the wrong way,
 Through bewitchment-spells, or the spells which are the work of women.

(i.e.)

148. Nor do they [earn a living by] tell[ing] plausible lies to men and women.
 Practised in the quite detached wisdom, the best of perfections,
 Free from quarrels and disputes, their thoughts firmly friendly,
 They want [to see] the all-knowing, their thoughts always inclined towards the
 religion.

(i.e.)

149. They have avoided the barbarous populations of outlying districts, of the border regions.
They are free from doubts about their own stage, always fashioned like Meru.
For the sake of Dharma they renounce their very life, intent on their practice.
These should be wisely known as the characteristics of the irreversible.

(i.e.)

Chapter XVIII

Deep Stations

[Go to text](#)

150. Deep are form, feeling and will,
Consciousness and perception; signless in their essential original nature, and calm.
Like one who tries to reach the bottom of the ocean with a stalk,
So, when the skandhas have been considered with wisdom, one does not get to the bottom of them,

(i.e.)

151. When a Bodhisattva thus understands that these dharmas
In the deep vehicle are in the ultimate sense stainless;
Wherein there is neither skandha, nor sense-field, nor element,
How can there be to him the attainment of his own merit anywhere?

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Woman

152. As a man, preoccupied with matters of greed, had made a date
With a woman, and would, not having met her, indulge in many thoughts;
As many preoccupations as he would have [in his mind] during a day,
For so many aeons does a Bodhisattva strive to reach his goal.

(i.e.)

Considerations of Merit

153. If a Bodhisattva would for many thousands of kotis of aeons
Give spotless gifts, and would equally guard his morality.
And if another one were to preach the dharma associated with wisdom, the foremost perfection, -
The merit from giving and morality would [by comparison] be **infinitesimal**.

(i.e.)

154. When a Bodhisattva, having meditated on the foremost wisdom,
Emerged therefrom [i.e. that meditation] preaches the stainless Dharma,
And turns over also [the merit from] that to the enlightenment linked to the weal of the world:
There is nothing that is lovely in the triple world that could become equal to him.

(i.e.)

155. And just that merit is declared to be just worthless,
And likewise empty, insignificant, void and unsubstantial.
Thus coursing he courses in the wisdom of the Sugatas.
Coursing [thus] he acquires immeasurable merit.

(i.e.)

No Growth or Diminution

156. As mere talk he cognizes all these dharmas
Which the Buddha has demonstrated, practised and revealed.
Though he may teach for many nyutas of kotis of aeons,
Yet the Dharma-element does not get exhausted nor does it increase.

(i.e.)

157. And as to these five perfections of the Jinas.
These dharmas also have been proclaimed as mere words.
The Bodhisattva who turns over, without putting his mind to it,
Does not fail; but he experiences the supreme Buddha-enlightenment.

(i.e.)

Chapter XIX

Conditioned Coproduction and the Simile of the Lamp

[Go to text](#)

158. The wick of a burning oil lamp, - it is not by the first incidence [of the flame]
That the wick is burned [away]; nor is it burned [away] when [that incidence] is
not, without it.
Nor is the wick burned [away] by the last incidence of the flame,
And also when that last flame is not does the lamp wick not burn away.

(i.e.)

159. By the first thought [of enlightenment] one does not experience the foremost
enlightenment,
And again, when that is not there, one is not able to experience it;
Nor does the last thought arrive at the Bliss,
Nor again, when it is not there, is one able to reach it.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Seed and the Fruit

160. From a seed trees, fruits, and flowers come forth;
When it is obstructed, or absent, then there is no tree from it.
Just so the first thought is, of course, the foundation of enlightenment;
But when it is obstructed or absent, there is no enlightenment from it.

(i.e.)

161. Conditioned by seeds grow barley, rice and so on;
Their fruits are in these [seeds], and yet they are not in them.
When this enlightenment of the Jinas arises,
What takes place is an illusion, which in its own-being is without existence.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Water Drops

162. Water drops fill a water jar drop by drop,
Gradually, from the first incidence to the last one.
Just so the first thought is the [initial] cause of supreme enlightenment;
Gradually are the bright qualities fulfilled in the Buddhas.

(i.e.)

The Meaning of Emptiness

163. He courses in dharmas as empty, signless and wishless;
But he does not experience the Blessed Rest, nor does he course in a sign:
As a skilful ferryman goes from this [shore] to the other shore,
But does not stand at either end, nor does he stand in the great flood.

(i.e.)

164. Thus coursing, the Bodhisattva also does not think:
'Predestined by those who have the ten powers, may I experience enlightenment!'
Nor is he trembling [because he sees that] enlightenment is here not anything.
Thus coursing he becomes one who courses in the wisdom of the Sugatas.

(i.e.)

The Attitude to Places Which Might Inspire Fear

165. When they have seen a world which is a wilderness, full of famine and disease,
They have no fear, and go on putting on the armor.
For the wise are always joined to the limit which is further on.
They do not produce the least fatigue in their minds.

(i.e.)

Chapter XX

The Three Doors to Deliverance, and the Buddha-dharmas

[Go to text](#)

166. Furthermore, the Bodhisattva who courses in the wisdom of the Jinas
Cognizes these skandhas as unproduced, as empty from the beginning.
Even during the time that unconcentrated he views in compassion the world of
beings,
He does not become destitute of the Buddha-dharmas.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Hero

167. A skilful man, endowed with all qualities,
Powerful, unassailable, well-qualified, instructed in many arts,
Perfect in archery, devoted to many crafts,
Perfect in knowing the various forms of magical illusion, keen on the welfare of
the world

(i.e.)

168. He takes his mother and father, together with his sons and daughters
And enters a wilderness, full of many hostile forces.
He conjures up many men, heroic champions,
Gets away safely, and again goes back to his home;

(i.e.)

169. Just so at that time when a wise Bodhisattva
Extends the great friendliness to all in the world of beings,
Having passed beyond the four Maras, and the two levels,
He permanently abides in the best of concentrations, but he does not
experience enlightenment.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Cosmos

170. Supported by space is air, and [by that] the mass of water;
By that again is supported this great earth and the [living] world.
If the foundation of the enjoyment of the deeds of beings
Is thus established in space, how can one think of that object?

(i.e.)

171. Just so the Bodhisattva, who is established in emptiness
Manifests manifold and various works to beings in the world,
And his vows and cognitions are a force which sustains beings.
But he does not experience the Blessed Rest; for emptiness is not a place to
stand on.

(i.e.)

172. At the time when the wise and learned Bodhisattva
 Courses in this most excellent quietude of the concentration on emptiness,
 During that time no sign should be exalted,
 Nor should he stand in the signless; for he is one who courses calm and quiet.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Flying Bird

173. A flying bird has no footing in the intermediate space.
 It does not stand on it, nor does it fall to the ground.
 So the Bodhisattva who courses in the doors to freedom
 Neither experiences the Blessed Rest, nor does he course in the sign.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Archer

174. As a man trained in archery shoots an arrow upwards,
 And then again other arrows in [quick] succession,
 Without giving [a chance] to the first one to fall to the ground
 Until he wishes the arrow to fall to the ground.

(i.e.)

175. Just so someone who courses in wisdom, the best of perfections,
 And who accomplishes wisdom, skill in means, the powers and the ability to
 work wonders:
 As long as these wholesome roots remain unfulfilled
 So long he does not obtain that most excellent emptiness.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Twin Miracle

176. A monk endowed with the most excellent ability to work wonders
 Standing in the sky performs the twin miracle:
 He exhibits the coming and going, the lying down and the sitting;
 But he cannot be made to desist, nor does he feel exhausted however long he
 may be in it.

(i.e.)

177. Just so the wise Bodhisattva, standing in emptiness,
 Perfect in cognition and the ability to work wonders, wandering without a
 home,
 Manifests an endless variety of works to the world,
 But he cannot be worn down, nor does he feel exhausted for kotis of aeons.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Parachutes

178. It is as with some men who have stood on a high cliff;
If they held a parachute in each hand and would jump off into space,
Their bodies, once they had left the high cliffs,
Would go on falling until they had reached the ground.

(i.e.)

179. Just so the wise Bodhisattva, having stood in compassion,
Having taken-hold of the two parachutes of skill in means and of wisdom,
Considers dharmas as empty, signless and wishless;
Though he does not experience the Blessed Rest, he nevertheless sees the dharmas.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Merchant and the Jewel Island

180. Someone, desirous of jewels, has travelled to the treasure island,
And, having obtained the jewels, he would again return home.
Although in those circumstances the merchant lives quite happily,
Yet he bears in mind the hosts of his suffering kinsmen:

(i.e.)

181. Just so the Bodhisattva who has travelled to the treasure isle of Emptiness,
And has obtained the trances, faculties and powers;
Although he could experience the Blessed Rest, wholly delighting in it,
He would bear in mind all suffering beings.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Merchant and His Journey

182. As a merchant, interested in business, goes into the cities,
Market towns and villages, which he comes across on his way, so as to get acquainted with them;
But he neither abides therein, nor in the treasure island;
But he, the discerning, becomes skilful in the path [which leads] to his home.

(i.e.)

183. Just so the wise Bodhisattvas who become skilful everywhere
In the cognition and emancipation of the Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas,
They abide not therein, nor in the Buddha-cognition,
Nor in what is conditioned. Wise as to the path becomes the one who knows the method.

(i.e.)

The Bodhisattva Undefinable

184. At the time when he has communed with the world in friendliness,
And courses in the concentrations on emptiness, the signless and the
wishless:
It is impossible that he either would [have an inclination to] reach the Blessed
Rest,
Or that he could be defined by the conditioned.

(i.e.)

185. As a magically created man, or one who has made his body invisible,
Cannot be defined by words:
Just so the Bodhisattva who courses in the doors to freedom
Can also not be defined by words.

(i.e.)

The Doors to Deliverance and the Irreversible Stage

186. If on being questioned about the practice and the faculties
A Bodhisattva does not effect the revelation of deep dharmas
Which are empty and signless, if he fails to indicate the dharmas peculiar to
The irreversible stage, he should not be known as one who has been
predicted.

(i.e.)

Tokens of Irreversibility

187. Not the level of an Arhat nor the PratyekaBuddha-level,
Nor what belongs to the triple world does he long for in his dreams;
But he sees the Buddhas, and himself as one who preaches Dharma to the
world:
Predicted as 'irreversible' should he then be known.

(i.e.)

188. Having seen in his dreams the beings who are in the three places of woe,
He makes the vow, 'May I that very instant abolish the places of woe!
If, through the power of his declaration of the Truth, he appeases even a mass
of fire:
Predicted as 'irreversible' should he then be known.

(i.e.)

189. Those possessed by ghosts, with various diseases, in the world of mortals,
Through the power of his declaration of the Truth he appeases them, he who
is benevolent and compassionate.
Nor does there arise to him any self-consciousness or pride:
Predicted as 'irreversible' should he then be known.

(i.e.)

Chapter XXI

Pride and Other Deeds of Mara

[Go to text](#)

190. But when there arises in him the conceit, 'I have been predestined
[Because] by [my] declaration of the Truth manifold things get accomplished,'
When a Bodhisattva sets himself above other [Bodhisattvas] as one who has
been predestined,
One should know that he stands in conceit, and has little intelligence.

(i.e.)

191. Again, as to the power of the name, Mara, having approached,
Will say [to him]: 'This is your name.'
The lineage of [your] father and mother for seven generations backwards he
runs through;
'When you are a Buddha, this will then be your name!'

(i.e.)

192. If he is one who has behaved in accordance with the ascetic practices, a
devoted Yogin,
[Mara will tell him:] 'Formerly [in your past lives] you have also had these very
same qualities.'
The Bodhisattva who, on hearing this, becomes conceited,
One should know him to be possessed by Mara, of little intelligence.

(i.e.)

Faults in Connection with Detachment

193. Though he might practise quite detached from villages or cities in a mountain
cave,
In a remote forest, or in isolated-inaccessible-not-findable woods, -
The Bodhisattva who exalts himself, who deprecates others,
One should know him to be possessed by Mara, of little intelligence.

(i.e.)

194. Although they may constantly dwell in a village, a royal city [or] a market town;
If therein they do not generate longing for the vehicle of the Arhats and
PratyekaBuddhas,
But are devoted to enlightenment for the sake of maturing beings:
Then this has been preached as the detachment of the Sugata's sons.

(i.e.)

195. Though he may reside in mountain caves, five hundred miles wide,
Infested with wild beasts, for many kotis of years:
That Bodhisattva does not know this [true] detachment
If he dwells contaminated by conceit.

(i.e.)

196. When he feels superior to Bodhisattvas who practise for the weal of the world,
And who have attained the concentrations, emancipations, faculties, trances
and powers,
On the ground that they do not course in the detachment of the remote forest,
-
Of him the Jina has said that 'he is established in Mara's sphere.'

(i.e.)

197. Whether he dwells in the neighbourhood of a village, or in the remote forest:
If he is free from the thought of the twofold vehicle and fixed on the supreme
enlightenment,
Then this is the detachment of those who have set out for the weal of the
world.
As one whose self is extinct should that Bodhisattva be considered.

(i.e.)

Chapter XXII

The Good Friends and the Perfections

[Go to text](#)

198. Therefore then the learned who has slain pride,
Who seeks with weighty resolution for the best enlightenment,
Should, as one attends upon a physician to be cured of a multitude of ailments,
Attend upon the good friend, undaunted.

(i.e.)

199. The Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas who have set out for the best enlightenment,
And [those who have] these perfections have been enumerated as 'the good friends.'
It is they who instruct them [i.e. the Bodhisattvas] in these progressive stages,
For a double reason they [quickly] understand the Buddha-enlightenment.

(i.e.)

200. The past and future Jinas, and those who stand [just now] in all the ten directions,
They all [have] this perfection for their path, and no other.
As a splendid illumination, as a torch, as a light, as the Teacher
Have these perfections been described to those who have set out for the best enlightenment.

(i.e.)

201. As he cognizes the perfection of wisdom through the mark of emptiness,
So by the same mark he cognizes all these dharmas;
When he wisely knows dharmas as empty, as without marks,
In coursing thus he courses in the wisdom of the Sugatas.

(i.e.)

Defilement and Purification

202. In want of food, indulging in imagination, beings
Always wander about in birth-and-death, their minds attached.
Both I and Mine as dharmas are unreal and empty.
By his own self has the fool become entangled in space.

(i.e.)

203. As someone who suspects that he has been poisoned
May well be struck down, although no poison has got into his stomach;
Just so the fool who has admitted into himself [the notions of] I and Mine
Is forced by that quite unreal notion of an I to undergo birth and death again
and again.

(i.e.)

204. Where one takes notice, there is defilement, so it has been revealed;
The non-apprehension of I and Mine has been called purification.
But there is herein no one who is defiled or who is cleansed.
Then the Bodhisattva has understood the perfection of wisdom.

(i.e.)

The Supreme Merit of The perfection of wisdom

205. If as many beings as there are here in the entire Jambudvipa
Would all, having aspired for the foremost enlightenment,
And having given gifts for many thousands of kotis of years
Dedicate it all to the enlightenment linked to the weal of the world;

(i.e.)

206. But if someone else, practised in wisdom, the foremost perfection,
Would for even one single day comply with it:
An **infinitesimal** merit would here that heap of giving bring.
Therefore the undaunted should always plunge into wisdom.

(i.e.)

Compassion and The perfection of wisdom

207. When the Yogin courses in wisdom, the best of perfections,
He engenders the great compassion, but no notion of a being.
Then the wise becomes worthy of the offerings of the whole world,
He never fruitlessly consumes the alms of the realm.

(i.e.)

208. The Bodhisattva who wishes to set free the gods and men,
Bound for so long, and the beings in the three places of woe,
And to manifest to the world of beings the broad path to the other shore,
Should be devoted to the perfection of wisdom by day and by night.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Pearl of Great Price

209. A man who had gained at some time a very fine jewel
Which he had not got before, would be contented.
If, as soon as he had gained it, he would lose it again through carelessness,
He would be sorry and constantly hankering after the jewel.

(i.e.)

210. Just so the Yogin who has set out for the best enlightenment
Should not get parted from the perfection of wisdom, which is comparable to a
jewel,
Seizing the jewel which he has gained, with growing energy
He moves forward, and swiftly he comes to the [state of] Bliss.

(i.e.)

Chapter XXIII

The Superior Position of Bodhisattvas

[Go to text](#)

211. When the sun rises, free from clouds and one blaze of rays,
Having dispelled the entire blinding and confusing darkness,
It outshines all animals such as glowworms,
And also all the hosts of the stars, and the lustre of the moon.

(i.e.)

212. Just so the wise Bodhisattva, who courses in wisdom, the foremost perfection:
Having destroyed the jungle of views,
The Bodhisattva who courses in emptiness and the signless
Very much surpasses the whole world, as well as the Arhats and
PratyekaBuddhas.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the King and the Crown Prince

213. Just as the son of a king, a giver of wealth, desiring the welfare [of others],
Becomes a person of authority among all, much sought after.
For even now he makes [many] beings happy,
How much more so when he will be established as the resourceful [ruler] of
the kingdom!

(i.e.)

214. Just so the wise Bodhisattva, who courses in wisdom,
A donor of the deathless, dear to gods and men.
Already now he is interested in the happiness of [many] beings,
How much more so when he will be established as king of the Dharma!

(i.e.)

Chapter XXIV

How Mara is Discomforted and Defeated

[Go to text](#)

215. But Mara at that time becomes like one who feels a thorn in his flesh,
Afflicted with sorrow, miserable, displeased, of little stamina.
[He manifests] a conflagration on the horizon, he hurls a meteor, in order to
cause fear,
'How can this Bodhisattva be made to become despondent in his mind!'

(i.e.)

216. When the wise become resolutely intent,
Day and night beholding the meaning of wisdom, the foremost perfection,
Then their bodies, thoughts and speech become [free] like a bird in the sky.
How can the Kinsman of Darkness gain entrance to them?

(i.e.)

What Makes Mara Contented

217. When a Bodhisattva has taken to quarrels and disputes,
And when the thoughts [of two Bodhisattvas] become mutually conflicting and
angry,
Then Mara becomes contented, and supremely elated, [thinking:]
'Both these remain far distant from the cognition of the Jinas.

(i.e.)

218. Both these remain far distant [from it], comparable to malignant demons;
Both these will effect for themselves a waning of their pledge.
Those who are full of hate, deficient in patience, how can they have
enlightenment?' -
Then Mara becomes contented, together with his host.

(i.e.)

The Bodhisattva's Pride and Repentance

219. If a Bodhisattva who has not had his prediction
Should have angry thoughts for one who has had it, and should bring about a
dispute:
For as many moments as he persists in his obstinate faulty thoughts,
For so many aeons he must again put on the armor.

(i.e.)

220. Then he sets up mindfulness, and [he reflects], 'These are unwholesome
thoughts;
By means of the perfection of patience do the Buddhas experience
enlightenment.'
He confesses his fault, and afterwards he restrains himself,
Or he desists, and trains himself in this Buddha-dharma.

(i.e.)

Chapter XXV

How a Bodhisattva Is Trained

[Go to text](#)

221. When he trains himself, he does not anywhere approach a training,
Nor does he get at one who trains, or at the dharmas which [constitute]
training.
Who trains himself, without discriminating between both, - training and no-
training, -
He trains himself in this Buddha-dharma.

(i.e.)

222. The Bodhisattva who thus cognizes this training,
He does not ever become deficient in training, or immoral.
Having found pleasure in them, he trains himself in these Buddha-dharmas.
He trains himself, skilful in [the superior] training, but without apprehending
anything,

(i.e.)

223. When they train thus in wisdom, to the wise shedders of light
Not even one single thought arises that is unwholesome:
As when the sun goes through the sky, before the impact of its rays
No darkness can maintain itself in the intermediate space.

(i.e.)

The perfection of wisdom Comprehends All the Perfections

224. For those who have effected a training in the perfection of wisdom
All the [other] perfections are comprehended in it.
As in the false view of individuality all the sixty-two false views
Are included, so are these perfections [included in the perfection of wisdom].

(i.e.)

225. As when the life faculty has been stopped
Also all the other faculties that may exist are stopped:
Just so, when the best of the wise course in wisdom,
All these perfections have been said to be therein comprehended.

(i.e.)

Bodhisattvas and Disciples

226. In all the qualities of the Disciples and likewise of the PratyekaBuddhas,
The wise Bodhisattva becomes trained:
But he does not stand in them, nor does he long for them.
'In that [also] should I be trained,' [he thinks].
In that sense he trains himself [in them].

(i.e.)

Chapter XXVI**Rejoicing and The perfection of wisdom**[Go to text](#)

227. If someone resolutely rejoices in the productions of thought
 [Of a Bodhisattva who] has set out for the best enlightenment and is
 irreversible [from it];
 One might [measure] the Merus in up to a trichiliocosm by comparing them
 [with a tip of straw],
 But not that merit derived from rejoicing.

(i.e.)

228. They rejoice at the heap of merit of all beings that there are,
 Who desire what is wholesome, land] who want emancipation.
 When for the weal of beings they have reached the infinite qualities of a Jina,
 They will give the Dharma to the world for the complete extinction of suffering.

(i.e.)

229. The Bodhisattva who, not discriminating, comprehends
 All dharmas as empty, signless and unimpeded,
 Without any dualism he seeks in wisdom for enlightenment.
 Devoted to the foremost perfection of wisdom is that Yogin.

(i.e.)

The Simile of Space and the Firmament

230. An obstruction of the space-element by the firmament
 Cannot be found anywhere by anyone.
 Just so the wise Bodhisattva, coursing in wisdom,
 Is just like open space, and he courses calmly quiet.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the People Created by Magic

231. As it does not occur to a man whom a magician has conjured up [when he
 looks at the audience]:
 'I will please those people,' and nevertheless he performs his work;
 They see him exhibiting manifold illusory works,
 Although he has no body, thought, or name.

(i.e.)

232. Just so it never occurs to one who courses in wisdom:
 'Having known enlightenment I will set free the world!'
 In his various rebirths he is associated with manifold works,
 Which he manifests like magical illusions, but he does not course in false
 discrimination.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Buddha's Magical Creations

233. As a Buddha's magical creation performs a Buddha's work,
But, when he does so, no thought of self-conceit arises in him:
Just so the wise Bodhisattva, who courses in wisdom,
Manifests all works, comparable to a fictitious magical illusion.

(i.e.)

The Simile of the Machine

234. An expert and experienced mason has made a wooden apparatus;
Comparable to a man or a woman it performs here all its works.
Just so the wise Bodhisattva, coursing in wisdom,
Performs all his work by his cognition, but without discrimination.

(i.e.)

Chapter XXVII

The Bodhisattva Worthy of Homage

[Go to text](#)

235. To the wise, who courses thus, many congregations of gods,
Having bent forth their outstretched hands, in respectful salutation, will pay
homage.
The Buddhas also, as many as there are in the world-systems in the ten
directions,
Effect the proclamation of the garland of the praises of his qualities.

(i.e.)

Mara Is Powerless against Certain Bodhisattvas

236. If as many beings as there are in the fields countless like the sands of the
Ganges
Would all, let us assume, become Maras;
And if every single hair on their bodies would again magically create a snare,
They all could not hinder the wise.

(i.e.)

237. For four reasons does the powerful and wise Bodhisattva
Become unassailable by the four Maras, [and] unshakable:
He becomes one who dwells in the empty; and yet he is not one who
abandons beings;
He acts as he speaks; he is sustained by the Sugatas.

(i.e.)

The True Attitude to Suchness

238. The Bodhisattva who resolutely believes when this perfection of wisdom,
The mother of the Tathagatas, is being taught,
And who practises the progressive path with resolution,
He should be known as having well set out towards all-knowledge.

(i.e.)

239. But he does not come to a standing place in the Suchness of the Dharma-
element.
He becomes as one who, like a cloud, stands in the sky without anywhere to
stand on,
As a sorcerer who, like a bird, rides on the wind which offers him no support,
Or as one who, by the force of his spells, miraculously produces on a tree full-
blown flowers out of season.

(i.e.)

The Bodhisattva Dwells Supreme

240. The wise and learned Bodhisattva who courses thus
Does not get at one who wakes up to enlightenment, nor also at the Buddha-
dharma,
Nor at one who demonstrates, nor also at one who loves and sees the
Dharma.
This is the dwelling of those who desire calm, of those who delight in the
precious qualities.

(i.e.)

241. As many as there are the dwellings of Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas,
Associated with the peace and happiness of calm concentration:
With the exception of the Arhat-liberation of the Tathagatas
This dwelling is among all the foremost and the unsurpassed.

(i.e.)

How and Why One Should Dwell in Emptiness

242. A bird dwells in space, but does not fall down.
A fish dwells amidst water, but does not die.
Just so the Bodhisattva who through the trances and powers has gone
beyond,
Dwells in the empty, but does not reach the Blessed Rest.

(i.e.)

243. One who wants to go to the summit of the qualities of all beings,
To experience the best, the exceedingly wonderful, Buddha-cognition,
To give the best gift of the highest and supreme Dharma,
He should resort to this best dwelling of those who bring benefit.

(i.e.)

Chapter XXVIII

Who Trains in The perfection of wisdom Trains in Buddhahood

[Go to text](#)

244. Of all the trainings which have been revealed by the Leader,
This teaching is the best and unsurpassed.
One who, wise in all trainings, wishes to go Beyond,
He should train in this perfection of wisdom, in the Buddha-training.

(i.e.)

Inexhaustibility of The perfection of wisdom

245. This is the best receptacle, the storehouse of the supreme Dharma,
The treasury of happiness and ease of those people who belong to the clan of
the Buddhas.
The past and future world saviours, [and those who are at present] in the ten
directions,
They have come forth from this, and yet the Dharma-element does not get
exhausted.

(i.e.)

246. As many trees, fruits, flowers and forest trees as there are,
They all have come out of the earth and originate in it.
And yet the earth does not undergo exhaustion, or growth,
It does not get tired, does not dwindle away, making no discrimination.

(i.e.)

247. The Buddha's offspring, the Disciples and PratyekaBuddhas,
The gods, and the dharmas which lead to the ease and happiness of all the
world, - as many as there are,
They all have issued from wisdom, the foremost perfection,
And yet wisdom does not ever get exhausted, nor does it increase.

(i.e.)

248. As many beings as there are in the low, middle and high [regions of the] world,
They have all, so has the Sugata said, been brought about by ignorance.
The machinery of ill is kept going by the full complement of the conditions,
And yet the machinery of ignorance does not get exhausted, nor does it grow.

(i.e.)

249. As many roots of skilful devices as there are, or doors and methods of
cognition,
They all have issued from wisdom, the foremost perfection.
The machinery of cognition is kept going by the full complement of conditions,
And yet the perfection of wisdom does not increase or become diminished.

(i.e.)

Conditioned Coproduction

250. But the Bodhisattva who understands conditioned coproduction as non-production
And this wisdom as non-extinction:
As the rays of the sun freed from the covering of the clouds,
So he has dispelled the covering of ignorance, and become one Self-Existent.

(i.e.)

Chapter XXIX

The Perfection of Concentration

[Go to text](#)

251. Those of great might who dwell in the four Trances
Do not make them into a place to settle down in, nor into a home.
But these four Trances, with their limbs, will in their turn become
The basis for the attainment of the supreme and unsurpassed enlightenment.

(i.e.)

252. One who is established in the Trances becomes one who obtains the foremost wisdom;
And also when he experiences the four most excellent Formless Trances,
He makes these Trances subservient to the best and foremost enlightenment.
But it is not for the extinction of the outflows that the Bodhisattva trains himself in these.

(i.e.)

253. Astonishing and wonderful is this accumulation of precious qualities.
When they have dwelled in Trance and Concentration, there is then no sign.
When the personality of those who have stood therein breaks up,
They are reborn again in the world of sense-desire, as [and where] they had intended.

(i.e.)

254. As some man from Jambudvipa who had in the past been a god,
Would, after reaching again the highest abodes of the gods,
See the apartments contained in them
And would then again come back, and not make his home therein;

(i.e.)

255. Just so those Bodhisattvas, bearers of the best qualities,
Having dwelt in Trance and Concentration, Yogins who have exerted themselves,
Become again established in the sense-world, unstained
As the lotus in water, independent of the dharmas of the fools.

(i.e.)

256. Except in order to mature beings, to purify the [Buddha-] field,
To fulfil these perfections, the Great-souled ones
Do not strive after rebirth in the formless world,
Lest there be a loss of the perfections and of the qualities of enlightenment therein.

(i.e.)

257. It is as if some man, having found a deposit of jewels,
Would not generate longing in his intelligence with regard to it.
At some other time he may acquire a few of them;
Having taken hold of them, having entered his home, he would not be
covetous [for any more?].

(i.e.)

258. Just so the wise Bodhisattvas who have gained
The calm concentration of the four Trances, which gives joy and ease,
Having let go the acquisition of the joy and ease of Trance and concentration,
They enter again into the sensuous world, compassionate for all that lives.

(i.e.)

259. When a Bodhisattva dwells in the concentration of the Trances,
He generates no longing in his intelligence for the vehicle of the Arhats and
PratyekaBuddhas:
[For then] he becomes unconcentrated, in his thought distracted and puffed up,
He has lost the qualities of a Buddha, a sailor who suffers shipwreck.

(i.e.)

260. Although he applies himself to the five sense-qualities, -
To form and sound, and likewise smell, and taste, and touch,
When free from the vehicle of the Arhats and PratyekaBuddhas, the joyous
Bodhisattva
Should, a hero, be wisely known as being constantly concentrated.

(i.e.)

The Perfection of Vigour

261. They have pure and courageous minds and are linked to other beings and
persons,
[When] they are practising the excellent perfection of Vigour.
As a maid servant is submissive to her master who is not subject to anyone
else,
So do the firmly wise submit to subjection by all beings.

(i.e.)

262. The servant does not answer back to her master,
Even when abused, struck, or beaten.
Exceedingly trembling in mind, and overcome by fear,
She thinks, 'He surely will kill me for that!'

(i.e.)

263. Just so the Bodhisattva who has set out for the foremost enlightenment,
Should behave towards the entire world like a true servant.
Thereupon he obtains enlightenment, and the fulfilment of the qualities takes
place.
Fire, which has arisen from grass and sticks, [then] burns them up.

(i.e.)

264. Having renounced a happy destiny for himself,
Practising his duty towards other beings, day and night, in his thought free
from hesitation:
Like a mother, ministering to [her] only child,
He abides in his resolute intention unexhausted.

(i.e.)

Chapter XXX

The Perfection of Vigour (Continued)

[Go to text](#)

265. The Bodhisattva who intends to wander about in birth-and-death for [a] long [time],
A Yogin devoted to the purification of the [Buddha-] field for the welfare of beings,
And who does not produce the least thought of fatigue,
He is endowed with the perfection of vigour, and undaunted.

(i.e.)

266. If the unwise Bodhisattva counts the kotis of aeons,
And has the notion that it is long until the full attainment of enlightenment, he is bound to suffer,
And for a long time he will be suffering while moving unto Dharma.
Therefore he is inferior in the perfection of vigour, and essentially indolent.

(i.e.)

267. Beginning with the production of the first thought of the foremost enlightenment,
Until in the end he reaches the unsurpassed Bliss,
If night and day he would persevere single-mindedly,
The wise and learned should be known as one who has put forth vigour.

(i.e.)

268. If someone would say, 'On condition that you have shattered Mount Sumeru,
You will be one who will attain to the foremost enlightenment,'
And if he [then] effects a thought of fatigue or limitation [to his efforts],
Then that Bodhisattva is affected by indolence.

(i.e.)

269. But when there arises to him the mindful thought, 'That is nothing difficult.
In a mere moment Sumeru [will] break up into dust,'
Then the wise Bodhisattva becomes one who puts forth vigour.
Before long he will attain the foremost enlightenment of the Leaders.

(i.e.)

270. If he would exert himself with body, thought and speech, [thinking]
'Having matured [it] I will work the weal of the world,'
Then, established in the notion of a self, he is affected by indolence.
He is as far distant from the meditational development of not-self as the sky is from the ground.

(i.e.)

271. When one has no notion of either body, or thought, or a being,
Standing rid of perception, coursing in the non-dual Dharma,
That has been called by Him who bestows benefits the perfection of vigour
Of those who desire the blissful, imperishable, foremost enlightenment.

(i.e.)

The Perfection of Patience

272. When he hears someone else speaking to him harshly and offensively
The wise Bodhisattva remains quite at ease and contented.
[He thinks: I 'Who speaks? Who hears? How, to whom, by whom?'
The discerning is [then] devoted to the foremost perfection of patience.

(i.e.)

273. If a Bodhisattva, devoted to the precious Dharma, remains patient, -
And if someone else would give the trichiliocosm filled with precious things
To the Buddhas, Knowers of the world, and to the Arhats and
PratyekaBuddhas, -
Infinitesimal only will be [by comparison] the merit from that heap of gifts.

(i.e.)

274. The personality of one who is established in patience is completely purified,
Exalted by the thirty-two marks, [it becomes] boundless.
He preaches the best empty Dharma to beings.
Dear to the entire world do the patient and discerning become.

(i.e.)

275. If someone had taken a basket containing sandalwood power,
And, with respect and affection, strewed it over the Bodhisattva;
And if a second one were to throw live coals over his head, -
He should produce a mind equal to both of them.

(i.e.)

276. Having thus been patient, the wise and learned Bodhisattva
Dedicates that production of thought to the foremost enlightenment.
The hero who remains patient in all the worlds, surpasses
Whatever Arhats and PratyekaBuddhas there may be in the world of beings.

(i.e.)

277. Again, one who is patient should produce a thought [thus]
'In the hells, in the world of animals and in the Yama world there are many ills.
With the sense-pleasures as cause one must experience much that causes
displeasure.
Better, for the sake of enlightenment, to be patient today!'

(i.e.)

278. 'Whip, stick, sword, murder, imprisonment, and blows,
Decapitation, and amputation of ears, hands and feet, and of nose,
As many ills as there are in the world, [all] that I [will] endure,'
[When he thinks thus, then] the Bodhisattva stands in the perfection of
patience.

(i.e.)

Chapter XXXI

The Perfection of Morality

[Go to text](#)

279. By morality those who hanker after calm are lifted up,
Established in the sphere of those with the ten powers, unbroken in their
morality.
How ever many actions of restraint they comply with,
They dedicate them to enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.
(i.e.)
280. If he generates a longing for the enlightenment of Arhats and
PratyekaBuddhas,
He becomes immoral, unwise, and likewise faulty in his coursing.
But when one turns over [all one's merit] into the utmost Bliss of
enlightenment,
Then one is established in the perfection of morality, [although] joined to the
sense-qualities.
(i.e.)
281. The Dharma from which come the qualities of the enlightenment of the Gentle,
That is the object of the morality of those who are endowed with the qualities
of Dharma.
The Dharma which [involves] the loss of the qualities of the enlightenment of
those who act for the weal of the world,
As immorality has that been proclaimed by the Leader.
(i.e.)
282. When a Bodhisattva tastes of the five sense-qualities,
But has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the holy Sangha
And has turned his attention towards all-knowledge, [thinking] 'I will become a
Buddha,' -
As established in the perfection of morality should that discerning one be
known.
(i.e.)
283. If, when coursing for kotis of aeons in the ten paths of wholesome action,
He engenders a longing for Arhatship or PratyekaBuddhahood,
Then he becomes one whose morality is broken, and faulty in his morality.
Weightier than an offence deserving expulsion is such a production of thought.
(i.e.)
284. When he guards morality, he turns [the resulting merit] over to the foremost
enlightenment,
But he does not feel conceited about that, nor does he exalt himself.
When he has got rid of the notion of I and the notion of other beings,
Established in the perfection of morality is that Bodhisattva called.
(i.e.)

285. If a Bodhisattva, coursing in the path of the Jinas,
 Makes [a difference between] these beings as observers of morality and those
 as of bad morality,
 Intent on the perception of multiplicity he is perfectly immoral.
 He is faulty in his morality, not perfectly pure in it.

(i.e.)

286. He who has no notion of I and no notion of a being,
 He has performed the withdrawal from perception, [and] he has no [need for]
 restraint.
 One who minds neither about restraint nor about non-restraint,
 He has been proclaimed by the Leader as restrained by morality.

(i.e.)

The Perfection of Giving

287. But one who, endowed with morality, a pure being,
 Becomes unconcerned about anything that may be dear or unclear,
 If, when he renounces head, hands and feet his thought remains undejected,
 He becomes one who gives up all he has, always uncowed.

(i.e.)

288. And having known the essential original nature of dharmas as void and
 without self,
 He would renounce his own flesh, undejected in thought,
 To say nothing of his renouncing of property and gold.
 It is impossible that he should act from meanness.

(i.e.)

289. Through the notion of I comes about a sense of ownership about property, as
 well as greed;
 How can the deluded have the resolve to renunciation?
 The mean are reborn in the world of the Pretas,
 Or if as humans, then they are poor.

(i.e.)

290. Then the Bodhisattva, having understood why these beings are poverty-
 stricken,
 Becomes resolved on giving, always a generous giver.
 When he has given away the four Continents, well adorned, as if they were
 just spittle,
 He becomes elated, for he has not kept the Continents.

(i.e.)

291. Having given gifts, the wise and learned Bodhisattva,
 Having brought to mind all the beings that there are in the triple world,
 Becomes to all of them a donor, and he turns over
 That gift into the most excellent enlightenment, for the weal of the world.

(i.e.)

292. When he has given a gift, he does not make it into a basis or support.
 And he does never expect any reward from it.
 Having thus renounced, he becomes a wise renouncer of all.
 The little he has renounced becomes much and immeasurable.

(i.e.)

293. If all the beings in the entire triple world, as many as there are
 Would, let us assume, give gifts for endless aeons,
 To the Buddhas, Knowers of the world, to Arhats and PratyekaBuddhas,
 But would wish for the virtues of the Disciples;

(i.e.)

294. And if a Bodhisattva, wise and skilled in means,
 Would rejoice at the foundation of their meritorious deed,
 And would, for the weal of beings, turn it over into the best and most excellent
 enlightenment, -
 By having turned over he surpasses the [merit of the] entire world.

(i.e.)

295. If there were a large heap of spurious glass jewels,
 One single gem of lapis lazuli surpasses it all:
 Just so the Bodhisattva, who rejoices, surpasses
 The [merit from the] whole vast heap of gifts of the entire world.

(i.e.)

296. If the Bodhisattva, when giving gifts to the world
 Remains unaffected by a sense of ownership or by affection for his property,
 From that his wholesome root grows into something of great might:
 As the moon, in the absence of cloud, is a circle of radiant light in the bright
 half of the lunar month.

(i.e.)

Chapter XXXII

Rewards of the Six Perfections

[Go to text](#)

297. Through Giving a Bodhisattva cuts off rebirth as a Preta.
He also cuts off poverty, and likewise all the defilements.
When he courses in it [i.e. giving] he gains infinite and abundant wealth.
Through [his] giving he matures beings in trouble.

(i.e.)

298. Through Morality he avoids rebirth as one of the many animals,
And also the eight untoward moments; he constantly gains rebirth at an
auspicious moment.
Through Patience he gains a perfect and exalted body,
With golden skin, dear to the world to look at.

(i.e.)

299. Through Vigour he does not incur the loss of the bright qualities.
He gains the storehouse of the infinite cognition of the Jinas.
Through Trance he casts off the sense-qualities in disgust,
He acquires the "lore," the superknowledges and concentrations.

(i.e.)

300. Having, through Wisdom, comprehended the essential original nature of
dharma,
He completely transcends the triple world and the states of woe.
Having turned the precious wheel of the Mightiest of Men,
He demonstrates Dharma to the world for the complete extinction of ill.

(i.e.)

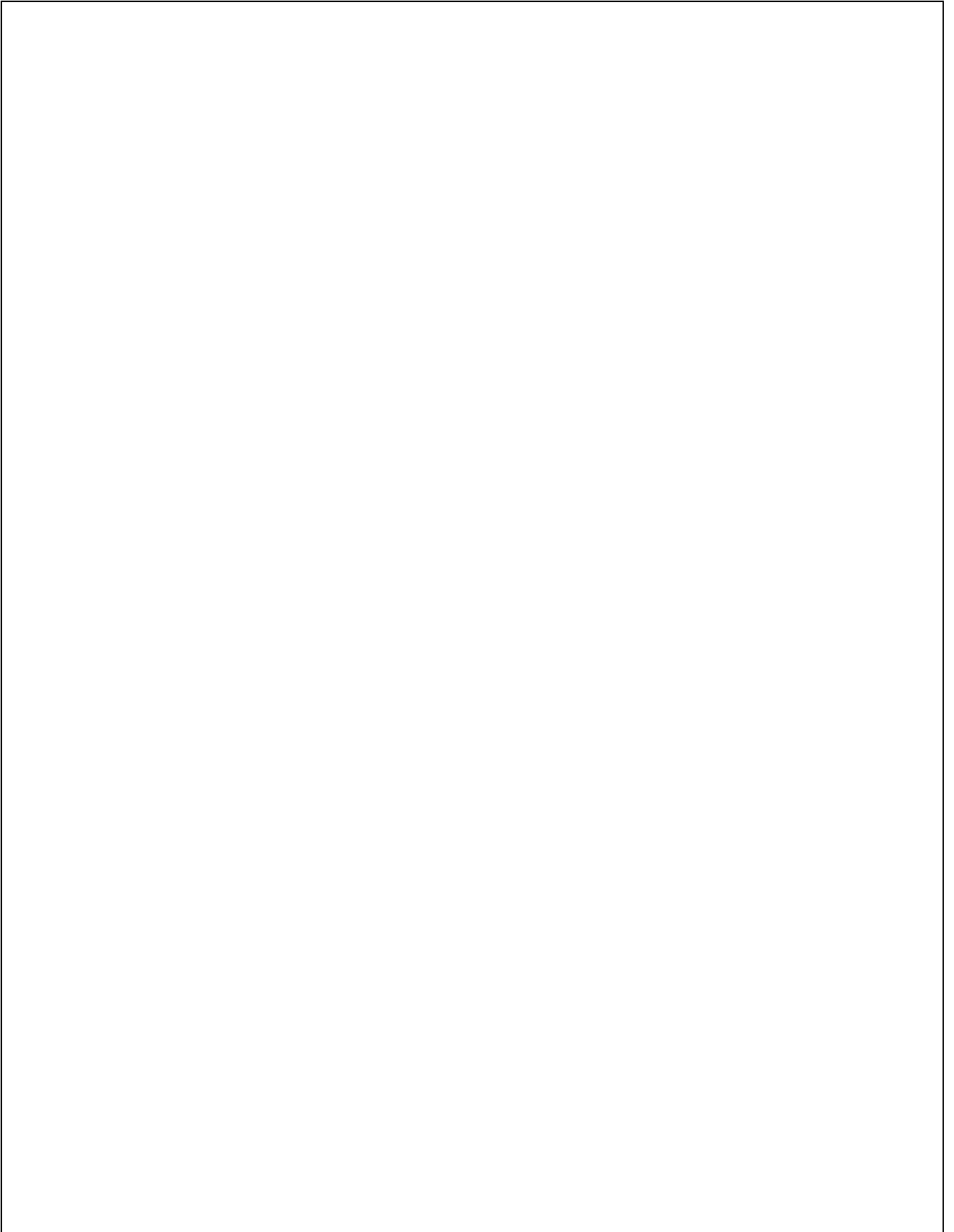
301. When the Bodhisattva has fulfilled these dharmas,
He then still receives the purity of the field and the purity of [the] beings [in it].
He also receives the lineage of the Buddha, the lineage of the Dharma,
And likewise the lineage of the Sangha. He receives all dharmas."

(i.e.)

Conclusion

302. The supreme physician who accords medical treatment to the sickness of the
world,
Has taught this exposition of wisdom which is the path to enlightenment.
It is called "The Path to enlightenment which is the 'Accumulation of Precious
Qualities,' "
And it has been taught so that all beings might reach that Path.

(i.e.)



Realization of Param Bhutakoti (ultimate reality-limit) in the Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita Sutra, Frederick J. Streng

(Source)

Realization of Param Bhutakoti (ultimate reality-limit) in the Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita Sutra
By Frederick J. Streng, 1982

(i.e. This realization is the perfection of the perfection of wisdom; the perfection of the sixth paramita. This author is missing the point about the fact that there is no ultimate reality-limit, that everything is relative, dependently arisen thus empty of inherent existence, even this ultimate reality-limit. He is missing the point about the Union of the Two Truths.)

Within the spectrum of religious attempts to express ultimate reality, the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras exhibit a deep sense of the arbitrary and imperfect character of any terms or concepts. Nevertheless, in a paper presented two years ago at the Regional American Oriental Society meeting, I pointed out that in these Indian Mahayana Buddhist texts there is not a total rejection of all verbal form; rather, sometimes words can help to purify the use of words (Streng, 1977: 4).

In this article I want to examine a series of shifts in the use of the term bhutakoti (reality-limit) in The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight-thousand Lines Sutra (Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita Sutra, hereafter cited as PWEL).

This series of shifts indicates a progression of spiritual understanding which culminates in the deepest knowledge of ultimate reality. The range of shifts includes the use of the term "reality-limit" as a designation of

- (1) the boundary between samsara and nirvana,
- (2) the inferior spiritual achievement of a Disciple (sravaka) and pratyekabuddha, which Edward Conze calls the "Hinayanist nirvana" (Perfection, 1973: 321),
- (3) the true nature of existence as "emptiness" (sunyata), and finally
- (4) the **ultimate reality-limit** (param **bhutakoti**) that is informed by **perfect wisdom and skill-in-means**.

The most dramatic shift is seen by comparing the use of the term "reality-limit" as the boundary between samsara and nirvana, and its use as the attainment of **perfect wisdom through skill-in-means**; however, we should note the basic shift from the second to the third usage, which is elaborated more precisely in the fourth usage where the term **param** (ultimate) is added to **bhutakoti**.

(i.e. The perfection of this "perfect seeing of ultimate reality" is when one directly realize the perfect union of dependent origination and emptiness, the Union of the Two Truths in accord with the real nature of reality at the edge of existence and non-existence. But this is gained very gradually through various stages of the Bodhisattva path. And along the gradual path, the term "ultimate reality" takes various adapted skillful meaning. Samsara vs. nirvana is one; emptiness is another, the inseparability of the Two truths is another. But ultimately they are all merely fingers pointing at the moon which is beyond any description, beyond all causality. Meanwhile all of those skillful means ad views are merely helping to not fall into one extreme or another, and helping the mind to consider more and more subtle objects and their emptiness.)

* * *

In chapter 1 of PWEL, the Lord Buddha is reported as saying that foolish **people are attached to ideas about the existence or non-existence of their experience**. Such people continually shape more chains of samsara. He concludes:

While they construct all dharmas which yet do not exist, they neither know nor see the path which is that which truly is. In consequence they do not go forth from the triple world, and do not wake up to the **reality-limit**. For that reason they come to be styled "**fools**." They have no faith in the true dharma (Perfection, 1973: 87). [see [S1](#)] (*i.e. The Middle Way is the path between the two extremes, the path that transcends all dharma of the three worlds (subject, object, action // desire, form, formless).*)

Here we see that the Buddha uses the term "**reality-limit**" to specify that **boundary marking a release from the samsaric cycle, that is, the triple world of desire, form, and nonform**. (*i.e. The term "reality-limit" in this particular verse could simply mean that they do not gain any wisdom whatsoever because grasping at one of the two extremes. It is not evident that this should mean only the one described by Streng. The other translation says "any reality limit" which is better here.*)

This image reflects the understanding of the Abhidhamma masters, who claimed that when an arahant (a worthy person) was freed from all impurities (kilesa) he attained nibbana. The arahant did not return to the illusory "reality created by desire--as other beings did (Compendium, 1956: 69). This view recognizes how easy it is to construct by mental-emotional attachments what appears as everyday existence. Already in the Samyutta Nikaya (I.121ff.) freedom from illusory reality is said to result from knowing that the supports (sthiti) of phenomena co-arise interdependently. These supports disappear when the conditions requisite to their arising disappear. Cessation of apparent existence is achieved by methodical attention to the arising-dissipating character of phenomena and to the "occurrences of factors" (dharmas) that constitute phenomena. (*i.e. Streng is ignoring the fact that this verse applies to both extremes: realism and idealism/nihilism.*)

This is a common use of the term "**reality-limit**" in the PWEL; it is closely related to the second use mentioned earlier. This use is emphasized by Edward Conze in his translation of PWEL when he writes:

Reality-limit had for a while been one of the more obscure synonyms of "Nirvana", but now by a shift in meaning it becomes identified with the inferior hinayanistic Nirvana of the Arhat as distinct from the full and final Nirvana of a Buddha (Perfection, 1973: x). (*i.e. Reality-limit is any adapted skillful means used as a view of the goal. It keeps getting more and more subtle as one progress, until one transcend all views, thus all ideas of any reality-limit whatsoever. So all stages of the path has its own "reality-limit" that is transcended or replaced on the next level.*)

Understood in this way, the "**reality-limit**" is something that, according to the PWEL, **the bodhisattva is warned against. It is the realization of an inferior insight into the nature of things--that is, as perceived by a Disciple or pratyekabuddha**. (*i.e. And the same for the "reality-limits" used on the Mahayana and Tantric paths.*) For example, the Lord Buddha explains in Chapter 20 that while both the bodhisattva and disciple enter the concentrations on emptiness, signlessness and wishlessness, that is, the three doors of deliverance, the bodhisattva

"does not realize the reality-limit, that is, neither on the level of a Disciple, nor on that of a pratyekabuddha. For he has at his disposal very strong and powerful helpers, in **perfect wisdom and skill in means**" (Perfection, 1973: 224). [see [S2](#)] (*i.e. The best way to stay away from all extremes positions, with their respective reality-limit, is to used the Middle Way; that is combining virtuous methods and wisdom together; using adapted skillful means while realizing the emptiness of the three. The reality-limit of the Hinayana is just one example; other examples are the "emptiness" or "oneness" that some Mahayanists have fallen into.*)

The warning against realizing this kind of **reality-limit** is put in its strongest form when the Lord says that the evil one, Mara, causes the bodhisattva to confuse this inferior realization of the **reality-limit** with Buddhahood.

He says in Chapter 11:

Mara may come along in the guise of a Buddha, with magically created monks around him, and maintain that **a bodhisattva who courses in deep dharmas is one who realises the reality-limit, who becomes a Disciple, and not a bodhisattva** ... (Perfection, 1973: 170). [see [S3](#)] (*i.e. Falling into the realism of Hinayana; grasping a subtle elementary dharmas like the physical irreducible elements, the*

consciousness moments, the absolute karmic laws, absolute causes, effect and relations... the whole Abhidharma complexification obsession.)

Throughout the PWEL there is a distinction between the bodhisattva path that includes the perfection of wisdom and the path of the Disciple and pratyeka-buddha whose chief characteristic is the extinction of impurities (klesa). *(i.e. as if they were real ... and essentially "bad" ...)*

* * *

The deeper awareness of the empty nature of the dharmas in the perfection of wisdom is a major thrust of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras. By emphasizing the empty (sunya) nature of all existence, including the experience of a **reality-limit**, there is a dramatic shift from using the term "**reality-limit**" to refer to the inferior realization by a Disciple to its use to indicate the true (that is, "empty") nature of things. *(i.e. Going to the next stage, the realization of emptiness, and its particular view: the emptiness of all dharma. Which is not the real nature of everything beyond all conceptualization, but merely another adapted skilful means. But one who grasp at emptiness as the reality-limit is still grasping and missing the point.)*

In at least three places the term "**reality-limit**" is used to indicate the true understanding of **reality-limit** as empty.

In Chapter 5 of PWEL the Lord says that the training of a bodhisattva leads to the manifestation of the **reality-limit**, as follows:

Come here, son of a good family, do train yourself in just this Path of the Bodhisattvas, for as a result of this training, this coursing, this struggling you will surely quickly awake to full enlightenment. After that you will educate an infinite number of beings in the complete extinction of the substratum of rebirth, in other words, in the revelation of the **reality-limit** (bhutakoti) prabha-vanata; Perfection, 1973: 121). [see [S4](#)]

In Chapter 10 Sariputra, who here speaks because of "the Buddha's might," discusses the power of the mature wholesome roots (kusalamula) in the karma of the bodhisattva. In contrast, he warns:

"through the abundance of that karma beings who have not collected wholesome roots will find no satisfaction nor faith in this **reality-limit**. But those who find satisfaction and faith in it are people who have collected wholesome roots, well collected them" (Perfection, 1973: 155-156). [see [S5](#)]

In these two passages the **reality-limit** depicted is that known through perfection of wisdom. *(i.e. This "perfection of wisdom" is a gradual process, and its various realization are also gradual, more and more subtle, more and more combined with emptiness without falling into the other extreme.)*

In Chapter 9 it is specifically described in the traditional formulation of emptiness as the non-perception of any living being or of any dharma. There the spokesman for the perfection of wisdom, Subhuti, says:

The perfection of the bodhisattva has no mental attitude, because it is imperturbable. This perfection is unshakeable, in consequence of the stability of the realm of dharma... This perfection is quieted, because no sign is apprehended in all dharmas. This perfection is faultless, as the perfection of all virtues. This perfection is undefiled, because imagination is not something that is not. No living being is [ultimately] found in this perfection, because of the **reality-limit**. This perfection is unlimited because the manifestation of all dharmas does not rise up (Perfection, 1973: 151-152). [see [S6](#)] *(i.e. All of these are more and more subtle ways at pointing at the moon. They are characterized by realizing the inseparability of appearances and emptiness of more and more subtle objects of the three worlds.)*

The profundity of the spiritual shift from the practice and goals of the Disciple and pratyekabuddha is seen in the description a few speeches earlier when we are told that thousands of gods are overjoyed because they will be able to see "the second turning of the wheel of dharma taking place in Jambudvipa." The Buddha then says:

"This... is not the second turning of the wheel of dharma. No dharma can be turned forwards or backwards. Just this is the Bodhisattva's perfection of wisdom" (Perfection, 1973: 150). [see [S7](#)] *(i.e. This is just another more subtle adapted skillful means. One should not grasp at this as any kind of absolute truth either. One should use this skillful means while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.)*

Whereas before the term **reality-limit** referred to the Disciples and pratyekabuddha's final goal of nirvana, **it now serves to indicate a new understanding of emptiness according to perfect wisdom on the bodhisattva path.**

Concentration on emptiness through **perfected wisdom and skill in means** permits one to **avoid "realizing the reality-limit"** in the earlier sense. Specifically, the Lord says that a bodhisattva should contemplate the emptiness of the skandhas (personality factors) with a certain attitude, namely, with an undisturbed series of thoughts in such a way that, when he contemplates the fact that "form, etc., is empty", he does not regard that true nature of dharmas [i.e. emptiness] as something which, as a result of its own true nature [i.e. emptiness], is a real entity. But when he does not regard that true nature of dharmas as a real thing, then **he cannot realize the reality-limit** (Perfection, 1973: 222). [see [S8](#)] (*i.e. Again, using the Middle Way in order to stay away from all extreme views.*)

When Subhuti asks for a clarification of how a bodhisattva **stands firmly in the practice of emptiness without "realizing emptiness," the Lord distinguishes between "realizing" emptiness and "completely conquering" emptiness.** He says:

It is because a Bodhisattva contemplates that emptiness which is possessed of the best of all modes [that is, of **the six perfections**]. He does, however, not contemplate that "I shall realize," or "I should realize," but he contemplates that "this is the time for complete conquest, and not for realization." Without losing himself in the concentration, **he ties his thought to an objective support** [for his compassion] and **he determines that he will take hold of perfect wisdom** [which is essentially skill in means], **and he will not realize [emptiness]**, because its realization is not the final goal.] Meanwhile, however, **the Bodhisattva does not lose the dharmas which act as the wings to enlightenment.** He does not effect the extinction of the outflows [which would prevent renewed rebirths], but over that also he achieves complete conquest (Perfection, 1973: 222). [see [S9](#)] (*i.e. This is just another adapted skillful means; one should not grasp at it either, nor reject everything. The Middle Way.*)

The true reality-limit manifested in the bodhisattva, then, includes the recognition that no dharma, no practice, no experience is something having a self-existing nature. (*i.e. There is no "true reality-limit!" That is the whole point. No absolute, only adapted skillful means.*) But this is not all, for one might become absorbed in the concentration on emptiness and, so to speak, leave existence. (*i.e. Emptiness is just another adapted skillful means, a temporary antidote to fight the extreme tendency of realism / existence. But by itself, if one grasp at this, one fall into the opposite extreme: nihilism or non-existence. So there is also another antidote for this: the realization of the regularity in the dependent origination of all dharma.*) The shift to the forth usage of "**reality-limit**" is marked by the addition of **the term param, translated as "ultimate" or "farthest,"** and set over against a "**midway reality-limit**" (**antara bhutakoti**). (*i.e. Seems like this author is falling for the bait. He doesn't realize that there is no absolute / true reality limit but merely relative reality-limit, and that it all depends on which extreme the patient is trying to get free.*)

The ultimate reality-limit is attained only with skillful means (upayakausala), whereby a person achieves complete conquest over even "the extinction of outflows." (*i.e. This only means that he is not falling for the extreme of rejecting everything, and staying on the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. But there is no absolute progress, it is all relative. The antidote to realism is emptiness; the antidote to nihilism is dependent origination or using skillful means. There is no first and last, no low, midway and highest reality limit. One use one antidote against the extreme tendency of the other ones until one can transcend the whole apparent opposition.*)

This process is discussed in PWEL Chapter 20 where the special value of the bodhisattva path is that it avoids realizing a **midway reality-limit**. The Lord is reported to have said:

A Bodhisattva **who courses in perfect wisdom and who is upheld by skill in means**, does not realise that farthest **reality-limit** until his wholesome roots are matured, well matured in **full enlightenment**. Only when his wholesome roots are matured, well matured in **full enlightenment**, only then does he realise that farthest **reality-limit**. A Bodhisattva who courses in perfect wisdom, who develops perfect wisdom, should therefore contemplate and meditate on the deep true nature of those dharmas, but he should not realise it (Perfection, 1973: 224-25). [see [S10](#)] (*i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. Using adapted skillful means while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.*)

In response to this declaration Subhuti exclaims how wonderful it is that the Buddha is explaining how one can enter **the concentration on emptiness and not realize the reality-limit** understood in the sense of withdrawing from existence. (*i.e. That is the definition of the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting. Using adapted skillful means while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.*)

Then the Lord gives a summary statement of the bodhisattva path:

For the Bodhisattva has not abandoned all beings. He has made the special vows to set free all those beings. If the mind of a Bodhisattva forms the aspiration not to abandon all beings but to set them free (vimoksa), and in addition he aspires for **the concentration (samadhi) on emptiness, the Signless, the Wishless**, i.e. for the three doors to deliverance, then that Bodhisattva should be known as one who is **endowed with skill in means**, and he will **not realise the reality-limit midway**, before his Buddha-dharmas have become complete. **For it is this skill in means which protects him**. His thought of enlightenment consists in just that fact that he does not want to leave all beings behind. When he is thus endowed with the thought of enlightenment and with skill in means, then **he does not midway realise the reality-limit** (Perfection, 1973: 225). [see [S11](#)] (*i.e. The Middle Way in meditation: the perfect union of Shamatha and Vipashyana. Not letting the mind go wild, not trying to control it either. Combining virtuous skillful means (concentration) and wisdom (emptiness) until one can transcend the apparent opposition. Using adapted skillful means (meditating on the four immeasurables) while realizing the emptiness of the three: subject, object, action.*)

In these passages we see that the bodhisattva does not realize the **reality-limit** as understood in terms of the spiritual achievement of the Disciple or pratyekabuddha; the distinction between such an inferior realization and that of a bodhisattva is emphasized by saying that a bodhisattva realizes the **ultimate reality-limit, which is a perfect conquest of emptiness through skillful means**. Likewise, to say that a bodhisattva realizes the **ultimate reality-limit** is the same thing as saying that the bodhisattva does not realize a **midway reality-limit**. (*i.e. Seems like this author is falling for the bait. He doesn't realize that there is no absolute / true reality limit but merely relative reality-limit, and that it all depends on which extreme the patient is trying to get free.*)

At this point it is useful to ask how it is that skillful means is the key to realizing the **ultimate reality-limit**. In Chapter 20 the Lord explains:

Since [the bodhisattva] has not abandoned all beings, he is thus able to win **full enlightenment**, safely and securely. At the time when a Bodhisattva has made all beings into an objective support for his thought of **friendliness**, and with **the highest friendliness** ties himself to them, at that time he rises above **the factiousness of the defilements and of Mara**, he rises above **the level of Disciple and Pratyekabuddha**, and he abides in **that concentration [on friendliness]** (Perfection, 1973: 224). [see [S12](#)] (*i.e. So, in order to fight the tendency to fall into the opposite extreme, nihilism, one combines this realization of emptiness with the inseparable realization of the interdependence of everything by meditating of the four immeasurables. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting; using adapted skillful means based on dependent origination (existence) while realizing the emptiness (non-existence) of the three. Only then is it efficient because in accord with the goal, in accord with reality at the edge of existence and non-existence.*)

This assertion that a bodhisattva makes all beings into an objective support for his thought of friendliness is revolutionary (*i.e. Not really. It is the basis of all morality.*), and appears to contradict the recognition that all arising of existence is to be seen as empty, (*i.e. These are the two apparent pole of this duality that needs to be transcended: dependent origination and emptiness; or skillful means based on interdependence and emptiness. The transcendence comes with the realisation that they are not really in opposition, but are more like inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.*) in order to avoid the incipient tendency of mental processes to establish ("station," pratisthiti) the mental processes within illusory forms (See Streng, 1975: 77-80). (*i.e. That is one extreme: realism; the other is to fall for emptiness and end up in nihilism. There is also dualism and monism/oneness. The Middle Way is to stay away from the four extremes.*) The PWEL asserts that thought-construction remains clear as long as it remains unobstructed. To aid in keeping thoughts clear a person is asked to regard the teaching of the perfection of wisdom, or all-knowledge, as unproduced (Perfection, 1973: 90-91). (*i.e. That includes not falling for the middle reality limit vs. higher reality-limit duality.*)

In another Perfection of Wisdom Sutra, the Diamond Sutra, the Buddha tells Subhuti that

the bodhisattva "should produce an unsupported thought, i.e. a thought which is nowhere supported (pratisthiti), a thought unsupported by sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or mind-objects" (Conze, 1958: 47-48).

The problem concerns how one is to use "objective supports," such as images, ideas, and perceptions, without letting them become deceptions; or, to put it in the religious phraseology of the PWEL, how can the "wholesome roots," that is, the thought of enlightenment, the purity of thought, and "freedom of egotism in all its forms" (Dayal, 1932: 61) be transformed into perfect enlightenment. (*i.e. Any virtuous methods, any adapted skillful means, like the first five paramitas, like the four immeasurables, are perfected by combining them with more and more wisdom. it is the perfection of wisdom that gives them the name paramitas. And vice versa, the perfection of wisdom is perfected by combining it with skillful means based on dependent origination. We need to combine virtuous methods and wisdom together on the path. Only then can we come nearer and nearer to the real nature of everything at the edge of existence and non-existence. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting.*)

This problem was considered directly in Chapter 6 in a dialogue between Subhuti and the celestial bodhisattva Maitreya: if everything is empty, does that mean that there is no actual spiritual transformation? If, on the other hand, a person participates in the actual world, does one not by definition willfully create thoughts which depend on signs and objective supports? In the dialogue Subhuti says to Maitreya:

If a bodhisattva treated as an objective support or as a sign that foundation which does not exist, and that objective support, which does not exist, would he then not have a perverted perception, perverted thought, perverted views? ... And as the foundation entity, the objective support, the point of view [are non-existent], so is enlightenment, so is the thought [of enlightenment] and so, all dharmas, all elements. But then on which foundations, by which objective supports, or points of view, does he turn over that thought into full enlightenment, or what meritorious work, founded on jubilation, does he turn over into what utmost, right and perfect enlightenment? (Perfection, 1973: 126) [see [S13](#)]

The problem, then, is if the perfect enlightenment is empty, the talk about turning over itself is empty, as well as any actual transformation. Maitreya responds:

This should not be taught or expounded in front of a Bodhisattva who has newly set out on the vehicle. For he would lose that little faith, which is his, that little affection, serenity and respect which are his.

... [After some further discussion, Maitreya explains:] The Bodhisattva must not, as a result of the thought by which he turns that over, become one who perceives a thought. It is thus that the meritorious work founded on jubilation becomes something which is turned over into full enlightenment. If he does not perceive that thought, [identifying it] as "this is that thought," then a Bodhisattva has no perverted perception, thought, or view. But if he perceives the thought by which he turns that over, [identifying it] as "this is that thought," then he becomes one who perceives thought. As a result, he has a perverted perception, thought and view. But a Bodhisattva turns over rightly, not wrongly, when he perceives and brings to mind the thought which turns over in such a way that he regards it as "just extinct, extinct," as "stopped, departed, reversed"; and when he reflects that what is extinct that can not be turned over; and that this [extinctness, etc.] is the very dharmic nature also of that thought by which one turns over, and also of the dharmas through which one turns over, as well as the dharmas to which one turns over. It is thus that the bodhisattva should turn over (Perfection, 1973: 126-128). [see [S14](#)]

The depth of a bodhisattva's insight into the empty nature of things allows him or her to **participate in the construction of thoughts, " signs," and objective supports while not being caught by them.**

The ability to attain "full knowledge" **without either destroying or being attached to forms** is exposed by the celestial bodhisattva Maitreya when he says:

[A bodhisattva] does not bring to mind nor turn over [that wholesome roots] to full enlightenment if he brings about a sign by reflecting that what is past is extinct, stopped, departed, reversed; that what is future has not yet arrived; and that of the present no stability is got at, and that which is not got at has no sign, or range. On the other hand he also does not turn over to full enlightenment if he fails to bring about a sign or to bring to mind as a result of sheer inattentiveness, if he fails to attend as a result of lack of mindfulness or of lack of understanding. But that wholesome root becomes something which has been turned over [or transformed] into full enlightenment on condition that he brings to mind that sign, but does not treat it as a sign. It is thus that the Bodhisattva should train himself therein. This should be known as his skill-in-means. When, through that skill-in-means, he turns over a wholesome root, then he is **near to the all-knowledge** (Perfection, 1973: 128-129). [see [S15](#)] (*i.e. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting; using the skillful means while realizing the real nature of the three: subject, object, action.*) (*i.e. "One is near to all-knowledge" means one is thus getting closer and closer to acting in perfect accord with the real nature of everything, thus more and more efficiently, and thus more and more close to Buddhahood. It is by combining more and more subtle virtuous methods, or adapted skillful means, with the gradual realization of the emptiness of inherent existence of more and more subtle dharma, that one get closer and closer to realizing the real nature of everything, full Buddhahood. Not grasping/accepting any method or view as absolute, not rejecting all adapted skillful means and views either.*)

Again in Chapter 19 of PWEL this problem is considered in a dialogue between Sariputra and Subhuti. Sariputra is perplexed about **why the Buddha's enlightened reaction to the experienced world does not result in more karma.** He asks:

If, as a result of such conscious reflection, the deed of that man is added on to his collection of karma, then **the deed of the Buddha**, the Lord, when he, thinking to himself, consciously forms the notion that he wants to enter extinction, [--that deed] will also be added to the Buddha's heap and collection of karma? (Perfection, 1973: 215). [see [S16](#)] (*i.e. Does the Buddha create karma since he acts (actions of body, speech and mind).*)

Subhuti responds:

No, indeed not, Sariputra, for the Tathagata is one who has forsaken all reflections and discriminations. Space on its own cannot raise a deed or thought without objective support, not without one. A thought can arise only with an objective support, not without one. Intellectual acts must refer to dharmas which are seen, heard, felt, or known. In respect to some objects, intellectual acts take defilement upon themselves, in respect of others purification. Acts of will and deeds can therefore arise only with objective support, not without (Perfection, 1973: 216). [see [S17](#)] (*i.e. To create karma a deed must be based on ignorance, on the reification of something, on the assumption that something is inherently existing. The Buddha doesn't make this mistake since he is constantly aware of the real nature of everything as he acts for the benefits of all sentient beings. So there is no karma formation in the usual sense of the terms, and thus no suffering later.*) (*i.e. All usual conceptualization are necessarily based on the assumption of the inherent existence of something or another, so all conceptualization is flawed. But that is not the case for a Buddha who uses conceptualization, because he is not making this implicit assumption while using language.*)

In response, Sariputra asks:

"Since the Lord has described all objective support as isolated (vivikta) [without an inherent relation to a subject], how can an act of will arise only with objective support, and not without"? (Perfection, 1973: 216). [see [S18](#)] (*i.e. About the inseparability of subject, object, action.*)

Subhuti replies,

An act of will is raised only with an objective support, and not without, in the sense that one treats an actually non-existent objective support as a sign, as an objective support, in fact also the act of will is isolated, and also the sign. And so are karma-formations which are conditioned on ignorance, and so all the links of conditioned co-production up to decay and death conditioned by birth. Even so, objective supports are isolated. The act of will is isolated from the sign [which seem to cause it] and it arises only in reference to the conventional expressions current in the world (Perfection, 1973: 216). [see [S19](#)] (*i.e. The emptiness of the subject, object and action; their conceptual interdependence, inseparability, non-duality: not two, not one. The whole 12 links of dependent origination are empty of inherent existence. Not existent, but still not completely non-existent either. They exist conventionally.*)

The realization of the **ultimate reality-limit**, then, is an illumined awareness of the empty nature of all existing things whereby a bodhisattva, in an empty mode of thought-construction, establishes an isolated objective support for his or her friendliness. This way of perceiving the world, including oneself, can be described for communication purposes as a spiritual process whereby the wholesome roots are matured and thereby transformed into perfect enlightenment. (*i.e. Here he goes again grasping at this ultimate reality-limit and thus totally missing the whole point.*)

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Another partial translation: Mother of the Buddhas by Lex Hixon

<http://www.lexhixon.org/simplesite/bookfrms/motherbudfrm.html> **Mother of the Buddhas: Meditation on the Prajnaparamita Sutra**

by Lex Hixon

Paperback: 266 pages ; Dimensions (in inches): 0.60 x 8.98 x 6.03

Publisher: Theosophical Publishing House; (May 1993)

ISBN: 0835606899 – [Source](#)



Unlike scholarly translations, this “contemplative expansion” of **forty passages** from the Prajnaparamita Sutra in 8,000 Lines -- the basic scripture of all schools of Mahayana Buddhism

-- yields a text of devotional beauty that is poetic and uplifting. Through dramatic conversations between the Buddha and his disciples Shariputra, Subhuti, and Ananda, the Bodhisattva path to enlightenment is revealed. This spiritually inspiring book features a foreword by renowned American Buddhist scholar Dr. Robert A. F. Thurman on the historical background of the radical Mahayana teachings on the nature of Reality.

[FOREWORD](#) by Professor Robert A. F. Thurman (see bellow)

PART I - INTRODUCTION TO PRAJNAPARAMITA

- Mahayana: The Gentle Revolution
- The Universe According to Mother Prajnaparamita

PART II - FORTY SELECTIONS FROM THE PRAJNAPARAMITA SUTRA IN 8,000 Lines

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| 1. Mahayana Is Immeasurability | 21. Mirror Image of Pure Presence |
| 2. Where the Bodhisattva Stands | 22. Who Attains Enlightenment? |
| 3. Unthinkable and Unfindable | 23. How to Recognize the Bodhisattva |
| 4. Absolutely Nothing to Understand | 24. Thought Flashes |
| 5. True Infinitude | 25. Victory Over Fear |
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| 8. Six Transcendent Perfections | 28. Interpretation of Dreams |
| 9. Miraculous Gems | 29. Mara the Tempter |
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| 11. Mystic Hymn to the Wisdom Mother | 31. Awareness Full of Friendliness |
| 12. From Where Do They Incarnate? | 32. Your Prayerful Request Is Granted |
| 13. Dangers of Negativity | 33. When Lord Buddha Smiles |
| 14. Unthinkable Depth of Purity | 34. Great Disciple Receives Transmission |
| 15. Behold the Perfection of Wisdom | 35. Palace of Tathagata Akshobya |
| 16. Intrepid Practitioners of Prajnaparamita | 36. Inexhaustible Abundance |
| 17. Mother of the Buddhas | 37. Astonishing Lion's Roar |
| 18. What Buddha Mind Knows | 38. Sublime Saga of Sadaprarudita |
| 19. Pure Gratitude, Infinite Thankfulness | 39. Tathagatas Neither Come Nor Go |
| 20. Universal Principle of Inconceivability | 40. Mysterious Doors of Omniperception |

PART III - PRACTICE

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| • Introduction | • Contemplation on Dharma |
| • Heart Sutra | • Refuge Prayer and Bodhisattva Vow |
| • Twenty-Seven Verses on Mind Training | • Cultivating Universal Love and Sympathetic joy |
| • Tilopa's Song to Naropa | • Prayer to the Guru-Lama |

- Closing Prayer

Excerpts from a talk, reading, and conversations at ZCLA, Saturday, May 1, 1993.

On a warm, sunny California spring morning, **Mother Prajnaparamita** arrived at Normandie mountain in the guise of Dharma brother Lex Hixon, wearing a handsome gray suit (he was attending a wedding in Palm Springs in the afternoon, he explained). Along with a half-dozen Sufi friends, he slipped quietly into the **zendo**, crowded with practitioners immersed in meditation. Hixon, a **Zen** student of Bernard Tetsugen Glassman, Sensei, of the **Zen Community of New York**, holds citizenship in several sacred worlds – **Soto Zen**, Vajrayana Buddhism, Advaita Vedanta, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and Islamic Sufism. One may very well feel intimidated by such credentials, but as Hixon donned his brown rakusu (the small kesa worn by **Zen students**), with a **Tibetan mala** carefully placed before him, his very presence made everyone feel that he had returned home for a visit.

"It is great to be here again today at this wonderful mountain established by Maezumi Roshi, my revered Dharma grandfather,"

he began. Hixon explained that several years ago at the request of **Tetsugen Sensei**, he was asked to develop a sutra-study curriculum. He selected five major sutras, **the Maha Prajnaparamita** was one.

As fruit of this effort - complemented by his scholarly intellect and spiritual practice of **prajnaparamita**, **Hixon's reinterpretation is a contemplative version of forty selected passages, each carefully and beautifully rendered in a process he himself calls "trans-creation."** That is, not a new translation or literal rendering, but a passionate and reverent expression of the most profound teaching in language readily accessible to us.

Back in the meditation hall, Hixon continued:

"I want to present to you today **Maha Prajnaparamita**, who is called **the Mother of the Buddha**. No Buddha awakens or turns the real Dharma without her. She is doing it through the beautiful forms of the Tathagata and through us, the embryonic Tathagatas who are the bodhisattvas - so in one fell swoop we have all become staunch feminists. Perhaps we are trying to do some **Zen**, and it turns out that we are all mother worshippers. So we take this feminine nature of **prajnaparamita** very seriously. We take this radiant blackness of her womb as the origin of the power of all Buddhas, obviously not in the circumscribed gender sense because the whole teaching takes away these boundaries, takes away the illusion that things are circumscribed or separated or even incomparable. So I thought I might read a passage. What shall I read **for Zen students?**"

Passage 22. Who attains enlightenment? (an excerpt)

[This is equivalent to [this section](#) of chapter XVI]

Subhuti: How can the venerable Lord Buddha assert that complete enlightenment is difficult to realize, even supremely difficult to realize? Prajnaparamita so clearly teaches, according to the principle by which all phenomena without exception are recognized as empty of substantial self-existence, that no structure exists independently that could be said to perform any difficult or supremely difficult realization. All structures are fluid, open and transparent, free from any obstructing or confining substantiality. Even powerful and dangerous structures, such as the selfish passions, which religious teaching advises human being to renounce or even to destroy, are themselves fluid, open and transparent, inherently empty of independent self-existence.

Any particular being who would become illumined by reaching enlightenment - that is, the individual mind stream of any practitioner who would recognize the state of full enlightenment upon arriving there - simply does not exist independently or substantially. In this light, O Lord of Enlightenment, one might just as accurately assert that enlightenment is easy to realize, even supremely easy to realize. There is only universal enlightenment.

Lord Buddha: Most brilliant Subhuti, only in the radical sense that it could never be attained by any separate individual is enlightenment said to be supremely difficult to attain. Neither practitioner nor path nor enlightenment is a self-existing entity which can be isolated, perceived or conceived. The conventional appearance of individual beings - as coherently functioning relations and perspectives, as meaningful perceptual and mental constructions - possesses not an atom of substantial self-existence.

Shariputra: Noble brother Subhuti, enlightenment is difficult to attain only because no thought or act of attaining enlightenment can be said to occur in reality, anymore than open space decides to attain its own openness or reach its own spaciousness. Enlightenment is nothing other than the spontaneous experience of all possible structures as equivalent to open space.

However, if enlightenment could be described as easy to attain, as you suggest, why would so many practitioners, even very advanced ones, lose nerve and allow their intention to attain enlightenment to degenerate? Precisely because so many practitioners do turn away from the radical commitment to universal conscious enlightenment can it be called difficult to realize, even supremely difficult to realize.

Subhuti: Shariputra, can one say that form, perception or any other constituent process of personal awareness loses nerve and turns its back on the commitment to enlightenment?

Shariputra: Obviously one cannot.

Subhuti: Or, Shariputra, could one assert that the practitioner who loses nerve and turns away is some substantial entity apart from the fluid, transparent, insubstantial processes which constitute personal awareness?

Shariputra: Obviously one cannot.

Subhuti: Then is it the suchness, or pure presence, of these constituents which loses nerve and turns away?

Shariputra: Clearly not, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Is that which loses nerve and turns away from its commitment some reality independent from the suchness of the constituent structures of awareness?

Shariputra: Clearly not, Subhuti.

Subhuti: For that matter, Shariputra, could one assert that form or perception or any other constituent of personal awareness experiences full enlightenment?

Shariputra: Certainly not, Subhuti.

Subhuti: And yet is that which experiences enlightenment in some reality independent from personal awareness?

Shariputra: Certainly not, Subhuti.

Subhuti: Could one even say, Shariputra, that **the pure presence of awareness** reaches **enlightenment**? (pp. 133-135)

* * *

"So you see that the teaching is unsurpassable. Why is it unsurpassable?" Hixon gently prods the eager and receptive group.

"This sutra perfectly expresses why that is, perfectly expresses the unsurpassability of the Dharma."

In the womb of **Prajnaparamita** - Theravada, **Mahayana Zen**, Vajrayana, Dzogchen - that is, anything you can think of as being Buddhist, is in this womb. The sutra is the infinite womb and the sutra manifests everything, including everything that is in all the other noble traditions."

It is inspiring to hear the feminine so unhesitatingly expounded, no less by this man. In 1983, when Hixon received the Buddhist precepts, he was given the name "Jikai" or "Ocean of Compassion." Such a name is perhaps, more likely to be given to women, but in this instance, it was selected for Hixon by Abbess Aoyama Shundo, who happened to be visiting from Japan at the time of his precepts ceremony at **the Zen Community of New York**. Now, ten years later, he writes of the feminine nature of **Prajnaparamita**.

"This mother," he writes, "matrix, guide, power and bliss of all Buddhas and their embryonic forms, the bodhisattvas; is not simply tender and nurturing in some stereotypical sense of the feminine. Mother Prajnaparamita expresses her mystic motherhood equally and perhaps more centrally as the uncompromising discipline of **transcendent insight. A union of inexhaustible tenderness and diamond clarity that is like open space radiates from this Suntra**, as the strong feminine voice of Prajnaparamita, heard directly by all the fully Awakened Ones, the humble Lords of **Enlightenment**." (p. 17)

Hixon invites his friend Gail to read "so that you can hear it in a woman's voice, which is the way **Prajnaparamita** should be heard."

Passage 11. Mystic hymn to the wisdom mother (an excerpt)

[This is equivalent to [this section](#) of chapter VII]

Shariputra: This perfection of Wisdom O radiant Lord, is none other than **the total awakenss**, which is **omniscience**.

Lord Buddha: [missing phrase from the lord]

[**Shariputra:**] The Perfection of Wisdom shines forth as a sublime light, O Buddha nature. I sing this spontaneous hymn of light to praise **Mother Prajnaparamita**. She is worthy of infinite praise. She is utterly unstained because nothing in this insubstantial world can possibly stain her. She is an ever-loving fountain of incomparable light, and from every conscious being on every plane, she removes the faintest trace of illusory darkness. She leads livings being into her clear light from the blindness and obscurity caused by moral and spiritual impurity as well as by partial or distorted views of Reality. **In her alone can we find true refuge**. Sublime and excellent are her revelations through all persons of wisdom. She inspires and guides us to seek the safety and certainty of the bright wings of enlightenment. She pours forth her nectar of healing light to those who have made themselves appear blind. She provides the illumination through which all fear and despair can be utterly renounced

She is not marked by fundamental characteristics. This absence of characteristics is her transcendent, mystic motherhood, the radiant blackness of her womb. She is the universal benefactress who presents, as a sublime offering to truth, the limitless jewel of all Buddha qualities, the miraculous gem that generates the ten inconceivable powers of a Buddha to elevate living beings into consciousness of their innate Buddha nature. **She can never be defeated in any way, on any level**. She lovingly protects vulnerable conscious beings who cannot protect themselves, gradually generating in them unshakable fearlessness and diamond confidence. She is the perfect antidote to the poisonous view which affirms the cycle of birth and death to be a substantial reality. She is the clear knowledge of the open and transparent mode of being shared by all relative structures and events. Her transcendent knowing never wavers. **She is the Perfect Wisdom who gives birthless birth to all Buddhas**. And through these sublimely Awakened Ones, it is **Mother Prajnaparamita** alone who turns the wheel of true teaching.

Lord Buddha: Precisely so, beloved Shariputra. (pp. 95-96)

* * *

"Isn't it wonderful," Hixon asks, "to be in such company, to be in the presence of a teisho by the Buddha?" This is a book to be read, not just by oneself, but out loud, to each other and with each other. You can be Lord Buddha, or the tender Shariputra, or the diamond-sworded Subhuti, and in doing so, experience the "**Inter-illumination**" (to use a favorite phrase of Hixon's) of the teachings. "Inter-illumination," he says, "brings out more clearly what interdependence is. Add the mirrors to the nodes of Indra's Net, and you have inter-illumination. The conversation between enlightened beings is an intense form of inter-illumination. " And this, truly, is the basis of our conversations with each other. **Maha Prajnaparamita**.

Passage 40. Mysterious doors of omniperception

[This is equivalent to [this section](#) of chapter XXX]

Lord Buddha: Directly encountering and assimilating this effortless presentation and perfect demonstration of **Prajnaparamita**, Sadaprarudita responds with the bodhisattva's omniperception, which does not base itself upon any structure nor which, even in the slightest degree, reflects any structure. The intense quest of this noble human being now blossoms into universal enlightenment, manifesting as various mystic doors. The following are some of the vast, mysterious doors which swing open wide at the mere touch of the bodhisattva's spontaneous, baseless and relationless omniperception.

1. There is the **door** which opens as the clear vista of the essenceless essence, the true nature of all possible structures of manifestation.
2. There is the **door** of liberation from any partial or perspectival perception of this true nature.
3. And there is the **door** which enters directly into the authentic knowing of this true nature.
4. There is the **door** to the indivisible expanse of all structures in their interdependent, transparent and harmonious functioning.
5. And the **door** for clearly witnessing the intrinsically unchanging and indivisible expanse of all dynamically functioning structures.
6. And the **door** which opens as the primal illumination that alone permits any perception or cognition in the first place.
7. There is the **door** of omniperception which removes obscurity and opacity of every kind from all structures in all their detail.
8. And the **door** which, when opening, explodes and obliterates any false perception or cognition of material or metaphysical structures as independently self-existing entities.
9. There is the **door** which, simply by opening, causes all phenomena, beings and events to tremble and to lose the false sense of their own separate, individual groundedness.
10. And the **door** which opens into the total absence of the apprehension of any structure as substantially self-existing.
11. There is the mystic **door** of omniperception which opens into intense fragrances and colors, revealing the expanse of relative structures, or manifestations, as an infinite profusion of **flowers**.
12. There is the mystic **door** which opens into the sublimely awakened human body, experienced as the culmination and consummation of all possible manifestation.
13. There is the **door** of truth, by passing through which the persistent **illusion** of substantial self-existence is forever abandoned.
14. The **door** to experiencing appearing structures as **mirror** images - crystal clear and coherent, yet without the slightest independent substance.
15. The **door** to experiencing appearing structures as pure resonance, without any intrinsic location or boundary.
16. The **door** of total purity, upon passing through which no **dirt**, stain or pollution of any kind is perceived.
17. The **door** of total joy, by passing through which the selfless and sympathetic rejoicing among countless conscious beings is ceaselessly experienced.
18. And the **door** of comprehending and speaking the **languages** of all living beings as the supreme mastery of liberative art.
19. There is the **door** to the wise balance and ease which is free from any sense of doctrinal rigidity.
20. The **door** to complete immersion in the deep unthinkability and inexpressibility of Buddha nature.
21. The **door** of complete awakening into the essential expanse, which is without partitions or frontiers.
22. The **door** to open which is like receiving the full ceremonial visit of a glorious world **emperor**.
23. And the **door** of the illumined analysis of the language of all structures into interdependent words and letters with no independent self-existence.

24. To the oninipercption of the bodhisattva, there manifests as well the **door** that opens into all-penetrating insight.
25. And the **door** which opens beyond all notions of regions, dimensions, levels or spheres.
26. Then the **door** swings open to limitlessness itself and to the total absence of even the slightest obstacle or obstruction.
27. There is the **door** of awakening through which one gazes with awe into the limitless expanse of all structures of relativity as into the starry night sky.
28. And the **door** which opens -- like a flash of lightning.
29. There is the **door** into the intimate private chamber of a glorious world emperor.
30. And the mystic **door** whose very nature is that of a world emperor, free from any possible challenge or rivalry.
31. There is the **door** of **supreme victory**.
32. And the **door** after passing through which one cannot look away from truth, even for an instant.
33. There is the **door** which leads to flawless concentration on the true nature of What Is.
34. And the **door** which is composed simply from intense concentration on this true nature.
35. There is the mystic **door** of awakening which opens into the sweetest sense of solace and tender consolation.
36. And the **door** which opens with the magnificent sound of the lion's roar of a fully enlightened Buddha.
37. There is the **door** which opens to the essential expanse where no circumscribed worlds exist and into which no circumscribed beings could ever be born or reborn.
38. And the **door** to the undefiled, unprofaned, unsullied expanse which is like an array of lotus blossoms or like a single infinite blossom.
39. There is the **door** to the enlightened mood in which hesitation and vacillation of every kind disappears into universal love, generosity and compassion.
40. And the **door** to the contemplative mood which is attracted only to the quality of supreme excellence.
41. There is the **door** to the enlightened mood of sublime elevation, never burdened by any notion of substantially self-existing structures.
42. And the **door** to the spontaneous flowering of all miraculous modes of superknowledge and superaction.
43. There is the **door** which opens by instantaneously piercing through all possible structures, or ontologically transparent manifestations, with the pure light of insight.
44. There is the **door** which, as it opens, places the final seal on the cessation of the notion that structures evolve, devolve or intrinsically transform in any possible manner.
45. There is the **door** opening into the ocean of wisdom, in which all structures are submerged, losing their false appearance as solid, separate, independently evolving self-existences.
46. To the oninipercption of the bodhisattva swings open the **door** to the clear witnessing, without the slightest distortion or coloration, of every single phenomenon, being or event which may appear.
47. Then the **door** swings open which leads beyond the tangled, dangerous jungle of partial perceptions and the selfish actions they generate.
48. Then the **door** which leads beyond the very notion of darkness or obsuration.
49. Then the **door** to the emancipation from every limited signal, sign, definition, doctrine or description.
50. There is the **door** to the awakened mood in which even the slightest trace of laziness or reliance on limits has disappeared.
51. And the **door** which, simply by opening, shines brilliant light upon the deepest spiritual teaching.
52. The **door** vast and beautiful as the sacred and luminous **Mount Meru**.
53. The **door** whose attraction is absolutely irresistible.
54. And the **door** which, simply by opening, routes the armies of negativity, in whatever subtle or obvious forms they may appear.

55. There is the door to the exquisite enlightened mood that experiences not even the slightest inclination to possess treasures in the world of material form, nor to acquire spiritual wealth in the realm of sublime form, nor even to attain any exalted station in the formless realm.
56. There is the mystic door of oniniperception which leads into the brilliance of infinite rays of light.
57. And the door which opens onto the ever-expanding vista of all the Awakened Ones.
58. And, finally, there is the door which opens as the very seeing and knowing of the Awakened Ones themselves.

Foreword of the book, by Robert A. F. Thurman

THE Great 25,000 Verse Prajnaparamita Sutra, (*i.e. not the 8000 lines used for this book*) one of the longer versions of the main text that Lex Hixon has put before us as Mother of the Buddhas, begins with an extraordinary event. **The Buddha performs a miracle** that creates a cosmic setting for the teaching of transcendent wisdom, or **Prajnaparamita**. It is essential to quote it at sufficient length to transmit a flash of this visionary happening.

Thus I once heard. The Lord dwelt on the Vulture Peak at Rajagriha with a large gathering. He sat down cross-legged on His lion throne, and entered the "King Samadhi," the samadhi which contains, encompasses, combines all samadhis. His whole body became radiant. The thousand-spoked wheels on the soles of his feet shone forth sixty hundred thousand trillions of billions of light rays, as did every other part of his superhuman body. These light rays illumined and lit up our vast billion-world universe, lighting up worlds in the East, South, West, North, Southeast, Southwest, Northwest, Northeast, Zenith and Nadir. And all the beings lit up and illuminated by these dazzling light rays became focused upon the unexcelled, true and perfect enlightenment.

Thereupon on that occasion the Lord put out his tongue. With it he covered this entire billion-world universe, and it shone forth many hundreds of thousands of billions of trillions of light rays. Each one of these light rays turned into thousand-petaled golden lotuses, made of the finest jewel substance. On these lotuses were Buddha-emanations giving teachings, this very teaching of the truth of the six transcendent Perfections. And the beings who heard these true teachings became all the more focused on unexcelled, true, perfect enlightenment.

Thereupon the Lord, seated there on His lion throne, entered the samadhi "Lion Play." With His miraculous power, He shook this vast billion-world universe in six ways. It became soft and pliable and all beings came to be at ease. The hells, the underworlds, and the animal realms were abolished and became empty, and all places of horrible rebirth disappeared. And all beings deceasing from these states, with joy and jubilation, were reborn among men, and also among the six kinds of gods of the desire realms throughout this billion-world universe, beings born blind saw forms, the deaf heard sounds, the insane regained their consciousness, the distracted became concentrated, the hungry were fed, the thirsty were satisfied, the sick were healed, and the cripples were made whole.

The passage continues with a vision of the Buddha's Body of Glory, given to the beings in all the worlds of the universes. They were enraptured with such beauty, all of them beholding the others beholding the Buddha in his glory, and yet each one feeling as if the Buddha were present just before him or her, as if he were there solely to give the blessing and the teaching to him or her personally.

The Buddha manifests this extraordinary environment in order to teach the transcendent wisdom, both the Sutra and the Enlightenment it accesses, known as the Mother of all Buddhas. It is important for us to envision this setting to develop a state of inspiration and focus to make most practical use of the teachings of the text.

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The Prajnaparamita is considered the originating text of the Mahayana, the Universal, or Messianic vehicle of Buddhism. Western and Buddhist scholars agree that it began to emerge into prominence in India from about 100 years B.C.E. (Before the Common Era), about 400 years after the Final Nirvana of Shakyamuni Buddha in around 483 B.C.E. Western scholars consider that it was composed by the Indian Buddhists of that era, yet attributed to Shakyamuni Buddha as deriving from his mystical inspiration. Traditional Mahayana Buddhist scholars consider that the Sutra actually records the messianic teachings of the Buddha himself, though these texts were taken away from the human realm by Gods and Dragons and recovered only after four centuries. This temporary hiding of the teaching is believed to have been prophesied by the Buddha himself. He considered that the developing societies of his time in India needed four hundred years of preparation and purification by the monastic education and renunciative ethic he taught more openly, as recorded in the Pali Suttas foundational in the Monastic, or Individual vehicle of Buddhism. **A people still rough and violent might otherwise have misappropriated the messianic intensity of the Transcendent Wisdom and other universalist Sutras, using it to legitimate crusades and other campaigns of conquest.** Only a people with deeds tamed by the ethic of nonviolence, minds focused by the

discipline of meditation and intellects cultivated by the education in critical wisdom could be safely entrusted with the profound liberation of the teaching of voidness and the magnificent energization of the vision of the jewel Buddha verse. Or as Western scholars might prefer to put it, the Indian Buddhists of 100 B.C.E. were tired of monastic restraint and purity and longed for a social gospel of love and compassion, to go along with their burgeoning, universalizing civilization.

There was a young bodhisattva, or messianic hero, Priyadarshana, who dwelt in the city of Vaishali in the Licchavi kingdom during the Buddha's time. He was a student of the great lay sage **Vimalakirti**, and he attained a high level of wisdom during Vimalakirti's famous session on nonduality, as recounted in the Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti Sutra. The Buddha subsequently predicted that this young man would be reborn in South India four hundred years later and would be recognized by the word naga (dragon) in his name. Sure enough, a great master known as **Nagarjuna** emerged in South India in the first century B.C.E., passing away at the ripe old age of six hundred plus in the fifth century C.E. (Western scholars date him in the second century C.E. and attribute Nagarjuna's deeds of other eras to other masters with the same name.) The legend goes that Nagarjuna was approached by nagas (dragons) in human form after one of his lectures at the monastery of Nalanda. They invited him to their undersea kingdom to see some texts they thought would be of great interest to him. He went with them magically under the sea and discovered **a vast treasure trove of the Mahayana Sutras, not only the many versions of the Prajnaparamita but also the Inconceivable Liberation, the Jewel Heap, the Lotus, and the Pure Land Sutras**. Nagarjuna spent fifty earth years studying these texts, and then he brought them back into human society and promulgated them throughout India.

He later wrote under his own authorship the masterwork Wisdom: **The Root Verses of the Central Way**, in which he elaborated a systematic program of critical meditations that lead the practitioner into the understanding and samadhi of emptiness and relativity. He wrote other philosophical, meditational and ethical works over the next centuries, until going away with the nagas a second time, this time to the "Northern Continent," Uttarakuru (maybe what we now call America). There he discovered other treasured teachings and taught the local populations many spiritual and practical things. When he returned to India for the last time, he taught the **Unexcelled Yoga Tantras, especially the Esoteric Communion**, founding the seminal "Noble" tradition of the practice of perfection stage yoga. **His Tantric great adept persona is also essentially included in the semi-esoteric "direct mind transmission" tradition known as Ch'an and Zen in East Asia**. Overall, Nagarjuna is associated with the angelic bodhisattva Manjushri, the archetype of transcendent wisdom, and is considered the pioneer of the wisdom teachings in the human realm.

The original Prajnaparamita is the text called **the Great Mother, the Prajnaparamita of 100,000 Lines**. It purports to record the full audience given by Shakyamuni Buddha on Vulture Peak with the greatest explicitness and completeness, though even it falls short of a full record, which would have run to many hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of lines.

Over the centuries **various abridged versions** have emerged, including

- the very short One Letter Sutra, (the letter A),
- the short Heart Sutra,
- the concise Diamond-cutting Sutra,
- **the 8,000 Line,**
- the 18,000 or 20,000 Line,
- and the 25,000 Line Sutras,
- **from a total of eighteen Sutras.**

These are all considered the same Sutra, differing only in length and detail, never in basic import. Among them, **the 8,000 Line version, on which Lex Hixon's meditations are based**, is very highly regarded in all Mahayana traditions, although traditional Buddhist scholars do not consider it the oldest or "Ur" text, as some modern scholars do.

These perfect wisdom texts served as the foundation for a systematic curriculum developed over many centuries in the Mahayana Buddhist monastic universities, among the earliest universities on this planet. This curriculum involved **three phases**.

1. There was first a phase of memorization of the basic **Prajnaparamita** texts, as well as of the systematic updated interpretations that made the text live anew for succeeding generations.
2. The second phase required formal debating practice with masters and other student-practitioners. The ideas of the Perfect Wisdom are not merely dogmas that became effective by being grasped and held with rigid conviction. They are liberating thoughtways that launch the understanding beyond its constricting cultural and even instinctual preconditioning. To serve as such, they must be deeply and critically investigated. They must help one to doubt every familiar supposed known thing, to open ever deeper realms of knowledge. Before one's internal debate of critical inquiry can become intense, it is necessary to debate publicly with others, to learn to move around in the public mind revealed in open discourse.
3. Finally, the third phase requires concentrated meditation, an intensely disciplined focus on the new avenues of understanding opened up by the critical uncovering of freedom from intrinsic realities, intrinsic objectivities and intrinsic identities in self and things, in relatives and absolutes, in bondages and liberations. With the successful completion of this third phase, the scholar-practitioner in this ancient curriculum would graduate, sometimes, as in the case of the immortal Shantideva (seventh century), literally floating out of the monastery to continue his bodhisattva career of working for the liberation of all beings and the transformation of the entire universe.

This ancient curriculum opened the minds of millions of practitioners for a thousand years in India. Around 1000 C.E., it was transferred to the Tibetan monastic universities and six hundred years later to the Mongolian institutions, wherein it has flourished until the present day. The recent destruction of Mongolian and Tibetan civilizations by Russian and Chinese communist invasions has severely restricted the number of practitioners who have access to the curriculum. About fifteen thousand Tibetan monks in monastic universities rebuilt in India and the Himalayan countries are the last practitioners of this transformative spiritual curriculum of **Prajnaparamita** education.

In East Asia, it seems clear that Prajnaparamita served as the basis of the Ch'an and Zen traditions. Some might think this controversial, since Ch'an tends to refer to itself as the "Sutra-less tradition," in contrast with the T'ien T'ai school based on the Lotus Sutra, the Hua Yen school based on the Garland Sutra, and the Pure Land school based on the Land of Bliss Sutra. But **the Prajnaparamita Sutra** refers to itself as **the "teaching that is no teaching,"** its understanding as **the "understanding by way of nonunderstanding,"** its attainment as **"attained by not attaining,"** and so on and on. The bottom line is that perfect wisdom is the direct teaching of the highest enlightenment of all the Buddhas, radical, uncompromising, emphasizing absolute reality over relative reality, the definitive meaning-teaching over all interpretable meaning-teachings. **The Ch'an tradition claims Nagarjuna and Aryadeva, among other illustrious central way masters, as patriarchs of their direct mind-to-mind transmission,** the tradition that "piles up snow in a silver bowl," the transmission of the a truth that has never been spoken." The famous Sixth patriarch of Ch'an in China, Hui Neng, recalled his own perfect wisdom upon a single hearing of the Diamond-cutting version of the **Prajnaparamita**.

So the Sutra is also a natural foundation for the mainstream East Asian enlightenment curriculum of profound study of the puzzling sayings and doings of past masters of perfect wisdom, hair-raising intellectual combat with the spiritual master to deepen doubt and refine critical insight, and prolonged, life-devoted concentrative meditation. **Nowadays Ch'an or Zen has become an important part of American Buddhist discipline. It is time that a live practitioner's version of Prajnaparamita should be available to go along with it.**

All versions of these Perfect Wisdom Sutras are considered holy "matrices" or indices for the attainment of perfect wisdom. They make possible the truly meaningful use of a human lifetime, in devoting it to evolutionary education in perfect wisdom. This transcendent learning can lead one to the security that there will never be another lifetime lost in egocentric delusion and suffering, that there will be no loss of the human exaltation, and that the future continuity will be an infinite expanse of freedom, happiness, love and artful creativity in sharing liberation with numberless associates. The Perfect Wisdom Sutras are thus revered as accomplishing the impossible, expressing the inexpressible, and making trans-verbal enlightened reality accessible to the verbally cultivated mind. **They constantly deconstruct themselves as they go along, proclaiming that their teaching is not a teaching at all, that there is no attainment, no attainer, no understanding, no understander, but, importantly, no non-attainer, nor non-understander either.**

Prajnaparamita thus leaves immense room for creative reinterpretation. Indeed, it demands constant reinterpretation for the sake of new generations. It is a mother overflowing with kindness, opening her arms to all her innumerable children. And she is a very exacting mother, fiercely determined that no harm befall her children from any sort of error or misunderstanding. **It is a serious fault to mistake the "teachingless teaching" for mere meaningless verbiage without coherent logic, as merely rubbing in a message of nihilism ad nauseam.** This error is not condoned by the caring mother, since it injures the spirits of her children and can ruin their many lives. It blocks their evolution by crippling their intelligence. It dulls the razor's edge of wisdom's sword that must cut away confusion and free the practitioner's genius from entrapment in habitual misperceptions.

Most English versions of Prajnaparamita up to now have been marred by such basic preconceptions of nihilism on the part of their translators. Some of them have been great linguistic scholars, well versed in many languages and painstaking in their critical perusal of the various editions in various languages. **The late Edward Conze**, an eminent scholar and translator, is most notable for his erudition and for his heroic efforts of a lifetime in working on the **Prajnaparamita**. It is his work that provided the linguistic basis for Lex Hixon's meditations below. **Yet Conze did not himself practice the yoga of transcending wisdom, and he was somewhat skeptical about its "mystical" message.** Only late in his life did he encounter the great Japanese scholar and meditation master, D. T. Suzuki, who helped him change his attitude to one of greater reverence to the Great Mother of All the Buddhas. But this was too late to transform his whole oeuvre of translation. **He never found the liberating logic of what might superficially appear to be meaningless paradoxes or irreconcilable contradictions.** His translations thus resemble cookbooks full of recipes translated with a dictionary by someone who has no idea what the foods and spices are, who has never cooked or never eaten such a meal. I have assigned his translations to classes of students, decade after decade, with the invariable result that they feel confused, mystified, and shut out of the real message of the text. Once I translate it for them in lectures, they become more appreciative. Mr. Conze's works have value mainly as pioneer studies. **Prajnaparamita** still cries out for a completely revised presentation.

When I read Lex Hixon's Mother of the Buddhas, I was amazed to discover in his eloquent meditations a beginning for the real translation of the **Prajnaparamita**. He has relied on past translations, without systematically consulting Sanskrit or Tibetan texts. He does not pretend to be presenting an exercise in erudition. Hixon does, however, bring an essential scholarly understanding. From his own studies and practice of the perfect wisdom curriculum, he possesses an effective lever of understanding with which to pry away the rock that has been blocking the treasure cave of the text of perfect wisdom. **He has studied and understood the revelatory teaching of voidness-relativity left to us in the writings of the great Tibetan genius, Tsong Khapa Lo Sang Drakpa** (1357-1419). Tsong Khapa reinterpreted and revitalized the perfect wisdom insight so masterfully, he came to be regarded by millions of followers over centuries as a living incarnation of the bodhisattva Manjushri. The essence of his insight was that voidness does not mean nothingness, but rather that all things lack intrinsic reality, intrinsic objectivity, intrinsic identity or intrinsic referentiality. Lacking such static essence or substance does not make them not exist - it makes them thoroughly relative. Once they are so thoroughly relative, there is no limit to their being creatively reshaped by enlightened love. So the via negativa of the **Prajnaparamita** does not annihilate things; it frees them from entrapment in negativity, opening them up to a creative relativity.

This insight enabled Hixon not to fall for **the simplistic misinterpretation of critical wisdom as nihilistic dialectics**. Hixon has approached the text with reverence, as a scholarly intellectual and a spiritual practitioner. He has allowed the Mother of Buddhas herself to speak through him. And she has done so, with eloquence and beauty. In the earlier versions, where the Sutra was thought to be reducing the world to a chaotic rubble, the exemplary story of the passionate bodhisattva **Sadapararudita, "Ever-Weeping,"** seemed completely out of place. The bodhisattva encountered Perfect Wisdom and felt the great relief of freedom from subjective and objective self-habits. His joy and gratitude knew no bounds, and the story relates how he went to great lengths to requite the kindness of his teacher and express his adoration of the Great Mother of All Enlightened Ones. Once we know that his profuse tears of joy and love well up from the wisdom teaching, from his realization that voidness frees all things from being pinned down and frozen into static and inadequate forms by our habitual misconceptions and misperceptions, the ecstatic behavior of the bodhisattva becomes quite natural, though no less astonishing.

Lex Hixon must be a modern incarnation of Sadapararudita, though he usually expresses his ecstatic vision not by weeping but in a cheerful mode. He spends his time revitalizing the classics of world religions, meditating on them to make them alive and relevant to the rest of us, rather than building a stupa or an organization. He shares the same sense of gratitude expressed by the bodhisattva Sadapararudita toward the teachings he has received. And he has a genius for sharing his appreciation with a heartfelt eloquence that makes us look again at what we thought we already knew. I am grateful to him for these inspired meditations on a text that remains foundational in my own intellectual and spiritual architecture. I pray to **Mother Prajnaparamita** that these pages may shine her golden light on countless others, too.

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