The Perfect Enlightenment Sutra

圓覺經

Translated from the Chinese of Buddhatrata by Ven. Guo–go Bhikshu

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Contents

Contents.................................................................................................................. 3

Introduction ........................................................................................................... 5
Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī............................................................... 6
Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.............................................. 10
Bodhisattva of Universal Vision...................................... 13
Bodhisattva Vajragarbha ............................................. 20
Bodhisattva Maitreya......................................................... 25
Bodhisattva of Pure Wisdom ......................................... 30
Bodhisattva at Ease in Majestic Virtue ......................... 35
Bodhisattva Of Sound Discernment .............................. 39
Bodhisattva Cleansed of All Karmic Obstructions .......... 45
Bodhisattva of Universal Enlightenment ...................... 51
Bodhisattva Of Complete Enlightenment ....................... 56
Bodhisattva Foremost in Virtue and Goodness ............. 61

Translator’s Introduction......................................................... 65

Content Overview................................................................. 65
Convocation............................................................................. 69
Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva 文殊師利.............................................. 71
Samantabhadra Bodhisattva 普賢菩薩............................... 76
Universal Vision Bodhisattva 普眼菩薩............................ 81
Vajragarbha Bodhisattva 金剛藏菩薩............................ 92
Introduction

Thus have I heard. At one time the Bhagavan entered the Samadhi of the Great Illuminating Storehouse of Spiritual Penetration.¹ This is the samadhi in which all Tathāgatas brightly and majestically abide. It is the ground of the pure enlightenment of all sentient beings.

[The Bhagavan’s] body and mind were in the state of quiescent–extinction,² where past, present, and future are intrinsically equal and identical,³ and his completeness filled all ten directions, and was in accord with everything without duality. From within this condition of non-duality, he caused various Pure Lands to appear.

[The Bhagavan] was accompanied by one hundred thousand great bodhisattvas and mahasattvas. Chief among them were Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, Bodhisattva of Universal Vision, Bodhisattva Vajragarbha, Bodhisattva Maitreya, Bodhisattva of Pure Wisdom, Bodhisattva at Ease in Majestic Virtue, Bodhisattva of Sound Discernment, Bodhisattva Cleansed of All Karmic Obstructions, Bodhisattva of Universal Enlightenment, Bodhisattva of Complete Enlightenment, and Bodhisattva Foremost in Virtue and Goodness. Together with their retinues they all entered samadhi, abiding in the Tathāgata’s Dharma assembly of impartial equality.
Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī

Thereupon Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times to the right, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O World Honored One of great compassion! Please expound to the multitudes that have come to this assembly the Tathāgata’s Dharma practice of the original–arising purity of the causal ground. Please also expound to us how bodhisattvas may initiate this state of pure mind within the Mahayana and leave all illness. [Pray teach us] so that sentient beings in the future Decline of the Dharma Age who aspire to the Mahayana will not fall into erroneous views.” Having said these words, he prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.

At that time the World Honored One said to Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, for the benefit of the multitude of bodhisattvas you have asked about the Tathāgata’s Dharma practice of the causal ground. For the benefit of all sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age who aspire to Mahayana, you asked how they can attain correct abiding and not fall into erroneous views. Listen attentively now. I shall explain it to you.”

Hearing this, Bodhisattva Manjusti was filled with joy and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, the Supreme Dharma King possesses the method of the great dharani6 called Complete Enlightenment,7 out of which emanates pure true suchness, bodhi, and nirvana, as well as the paramitas to teach bodhisattvas. The original–arising [purity] of the causal
ground of the Tathāgatas relies on the complete illumination of [intrinsic] enlightenment, which is pure [in essence] and permanently free from ignorance. Only then do the [Tathāgatas] accomplish the Buddha Path.

“What is ignorance? Virtuous man, since beginningless time, all sentient beings have had all sorts of delusions, like a disoriented person who has lost his sense of direction. They mistake the four great elements as the attributes of their bodies, and the conditioned impressions of the six sense objects as the attributes of their minds. They are like a man with an illness of the eyes who sees an [illusory] flower in the sky, or a second moon.

“Virtuous man, there is in reality no flower in the sky, yet the sick man mistakenly clings to it. Because of his mistaken clinging, he is not only deluded about the intrinsic nature of the empty space, but also confused about the arising of the flower. Because of this false existence [to which he clings], he remains in the turning wheel of birth and death. Hence this is called ignorance.

“Virtuous man, this ignorance has no real substance. It is like a person in a dream. Though the person exists in the dream, when [the dreamer] awakens, there is nothing that can be grasped. Like an [illusory] flower in the sky that vanishes into empty space, one cannot say that there is a fixed place from which it vanishes. Why? Because there is no place from which it arises! Amidst the un-arisen, all sentient beings deludedly perceive birth and extinction. Hence this is called the turning wheel of birth and death.

“Virtuous man, one who practices Complete Enlightenment of the causal ground of the Tathāgata realizes that [birth and extinction] are like an illusory flower in the sky. Thus there is no continuance of birth and death and no body or mind that is subject to birth and death. This nonexistence of [birth and death and body and mind] is so not as a consequence of contrived effort. It is so by its intrinsic nature.
“The awareness [of their nonexistence] is like empty space. That which is aware of the empty space is like the appearance of the illusory flower. However, one cannot say that the nature of this awareness is nonexistent. Eliminating both existence and nonexistence is in accordance with pure enlightenment.

“Why is it so? Because the nature of empty space is ever unmoving, likewise, there is neither arising nor perishing within the Tathāgatagarbha. It is free from conceptual knowledge and views. Like the nature of dharmadhatu, which is ultimate, wholly complete, and pervades all ten directions, such is the Dharma practice [of the Tathāgata] of the causal ground.

“Because of this [intrinsic completeness], bodhisattvas within the Mahayana may give rise to pure bodhi–mind. If sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age practice accordingly, they will not fall into erroneous views.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to clarify his meaning, proclaimed these gathas:

Mañjuśrī, you should know
that all those who have thus come
and thus gone,
from their original–arising causal ground,
use wisdom to enlighten
and penetrate ignorance.
Realizing that ignorance is like
a flower in the sky,
they are thus liberated from the continuing
cycle of birth and death.
Like a person seen in a dream who
cannot be found when the dreamer awakens,
awareness is like empty space.
It is impartial and equal, and ever unmoving.
When enlightenment pervades all ten directions,
the Buddha Path is accomplished.
There is no place where illusions vanish,
and there is no attainment
in accomplishing the Buddha Path,
for the intrinsic nature is already wholly complete.
By this, bodhisattvas
can give rise to the bodhi–mind.
Sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age
through this practice will avoid erroneous views.
Then Bodhisattva Samantabhadra rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times to the right, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O World Honored One of great compassion! For the multitude of bodhisattvas in the assembly, as well as for all sentient beings who cultivate Mahayana in the Decline of the Dharma Age, please explain how they should practice, having heard about this pure realm of Complete Enlightenment.

“World Honored One, if these sentient beings come to understand illusion, then body and mind are also illusory. How can they then use illusion to remedy illusion? If all illusory characteristics were exhausted and extinguished, then there would be no mind. Who is it that practices? Why, then, do you say that practice is illusory?

“If sentient beings originally had no need to practice, then they would remain confined to illusory projections amidst birth and death and never discern the state [in which all is seen to be] like an illusion. How could they be liberated from illusory conceptualization? For the sake of all sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, please explain the expedient method of gradual cultivation of practice in order that sentient beings may permanently leave the state of illusion.” Having said these words, he prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.

At that time the World Honored One said to Bodhisattva Samantabhadra: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, for the benefit of the multitude of bodhisattvas and
sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, you have asked about the expedient, gradual stages of the bodhisattva’s practice of the samadhi in which all is seen to be like an illusion, and which frees sentient beings from illusion. Listen attentively now. I shall explain it to you.”

Hearing this, Bodhisattva Samantabhadra was filled with joy and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, all illusory projections of sentient beings arise from the wondrous mind of the Tathāgata’s Complete Enlightenment, just like flowers in the sky which come into existence from out of the sky. When the illusory flower vanishes, the nature of the sky is not marred. Likewise, the illusory mind of sentient beings relies on illusory [cultivation] for its extinction. When all illusions are extinguished, the enlightened mind remains unmoved. Speaking of enlightenment in contrast to illusion is itself an illusion. To say that enlightenment exists is to not have left illusion yet. [However], to say that enlightenment does not exist is also no different. Therefore, the extinction of illusion is called the unmoving [mind of enlightenment].

“Virtuous man, all bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the, ”Decline of the Dharma Age should separate [themselves] from all illusory projections and deluded realms. [However], when one clings firmly to the mind that separates [from all illusory projections and deluded realms], this mind [should also be taken as] an illusion, and one should separate oneself from it. Because this separation is an illusion, it should also be separated. One should then be free from even this ‘separating from the illusion of separation!’ When there remains nothing to be separated from, all illusions are eliminated. It is like rubbing two pieces of wood together to obtain fire. When the fire ignites and the wood completely burns, the ashes fly away and the smoke vanishes. Using illusion to remedy illusion is just like this. Yet even though illusions are exhausted, one does not enter annihilation.

“Virtuous man, to know illusion is to depart from it;
there is no [need to] contrive expedient means! To depart from illusion is to be enlightened; there are no gradual steps! All bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age who practice accordingly will permanently leave illusions behind.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to clarify his meaning, proclaimed these gathas:

Samantabhadra, understand
that the infinite misleading unawareness
of all sentient beings
is based upon the Tathāgata’s
attainment of Complete Enlightenment.
Like a phantom appearing in empty space,
its appearance depends upon the open space.
When the phantom disappears,
the empty space returns to its original unmoving state.
Delusion is dependent
upon enlightenment for its arising.
With the extinction of illusion,
enlightenment is entirely perfect,
for the enlightened mind is ever steadfast.
All bodhisattvas and sentient beings
in the decline of the Dharma Age
must forever leave delusions far, far away
until they are all finally extinguished.
It is like creating a fire with wood,
when the wood is burned away,
the fire is also extinguished.
Enlightenment contains no gradual steps;
which also applies to expedient means.
Bodhisattva of Universal Vision

Then the Bodhisattva of Universal Vision rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times to the right, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O World Honored One of great compassion! For the sake of the multitude of bodhisattvas in this assembly and all sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, please expound on the gradual stages of the bodhisattva’s practice. How should one contemplate? What should one abide in and uphold? What expedient methods should one devise to guide unenlightened sentient beings, to universally enable them to reach enlightenment?

“World Honored One, if these sentient beings do not have the correct expedient methods and contemplation, they will be confused when they hear you expound this samadhi [in which all is seen to be an illusion] and will be unable to awaken to Complete Enlightenment. Would you be compassionate enough to expound the provisional expedient methods for our benefit and for sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age?” Having said these words, he prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.

At that time the World Honored One said to the Bodhisattva of Universal Vision: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, for the benefit of the multitude of bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, you have asked the Tathāgata about the gradual stages of cultivation, what contemplation one should abide in and uphold, as well as the various expedient methods one should
use. Listen attentively now. I shall explain them to you.”

Hearing this, the Bodhisattva of Universal Vision was filled with joy and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, newly initiated bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age seeking the Tathāgata’s pure mind of Complete Enlightenment should hold the right thought of separating from myriad illusions. First, they should rely on the *samatha* practice of the Tathāgatas and strictly observe the precepts. They should reside peacefully among an assembly of practitioners and sit in meditation in a quiet room.

“They should always be mindful that the body is a union of the four elements. Things such as hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, marrow, and brain all belong to the element of earth. Spittle, mucus, pus, blood, saliva, sweat, phlegm, tears, semen, urine, and excrement all belong to the element of water. Warmth belongs to the element of fire. Motion belongs to the element of wind. When the four elements are separated from one another, where is this illusory body? Thus one knows that the physical body ultimately has no substance and owes its appearance to the union [of the four elements]. In reality it is not different from an illusory projection.

“Due to the provisional union of the four conditions [of vision, hearing, perception, and awareness], the illusory six sense faculties come to exist. The inward and outward combination of the six sense faculties and the four elements [of earth, water, fire, and wind] give rise to the illusory existence of conditioned energy. [In this process], there ‘seems to be’ something which is cognizant. This is provisionally called ‘mind.’

“Virtuous man, this illusory mind cannot exist without the six sense objects [of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, thought]. When the four elements disperse, the six sense objects cannot be found. Once the elements and the sense objects disperse and are extinguished, ultimately there is no
cognizant mind to be seen.

“Virtuous man, when the illusory bodies of sentient beings become extinguished, the illusory minds also become extinguished. When the illusory minds become extinguished, the illusory sense objects also become extinguished. When the illusory sense objects become extinguished, the illusory extinguishing also becomes extinguished. When the illusory extinguishing becomes extinguished, that which is not illusory is not extinguished. It is like polishing a mirror. When the defilements are wiped off, brightness appears.

“Virtuous man, you should know that both body and mind are illusory defilements. When these appearances of defilement are permanently extinguished, purity will pervade all ten directions.

“Virtuous man, for instance, the pure mani jewel reflects the five colors as they appear before it, yet the ignorant see the mani as actually possessing the five colors. Virtuous man, although the pure nature of Complete Enlightenment likewise manifests as body and mind, [people] respond in accordance with their capacities, yet the ignorant speak of the pure Complete Enlightenment as having intrinsic characteristics of body and mind. For this reason, they are unable to depart from illusion. Therefore, I say that body and mind are illusory defilements. It is in terms of separating from illusory defilements that bodhisattvas are defined. When defilements are thoroughly removed, their corresponding [cognition] is [completely] eliminated. Since there is nothing corresponding to defilement, there is also no ‘one’ there to designate.

“Virtuous man, if bodhisattvas as well as sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age realize the awakening of the extinction of illusory appearances, at that time unlimited purity and infinite emptiness will be revealed and manifested in their enlightenment. Because the enlightenment is complete and illuminating, it reveals the mind in its purity. Because the mind is pure, objects of vision
are pure. Because vision is pure, the eye faculty is pure. Because that faculty is pure, the visual consciousness is pure. Because the consciousness is pure, hearing is pure. Because hearing is pure, the faculty of hearing is pure. Because that faculty is pure, the consciousness is pure. Because the consciousness is pure, perception is pure. The same holds true for the nose, tongue, body, and mind.

“Virtuous man, because the sense faculties are pure, the objects of sight are pure. Because the objects of sight are pure, the objects of sound are pure. The same holds in the cases of smell, taste, touch, and thought.

“Virtuous man, because the six sense objects are pure, the earth element is pure. Because the earth element is pure, the water element is pure. The same holds for the elements of fire and wind.

“Virtuous man, because the four elements are pure, the twelve entrances, the eighteen realms, and the twenty–five existences are pure. Because these are pure, the ten powers, the four kinds of fearlessness, the four unhindered wisdoms, the eighteen exclusive attributes of the Buddha, and the thirty–seven aids to enlightenment are all pure. The same holds for the purity of everything all the way up to the eighty–four thousand dharani doors.

“Virtuous man, because the nature of Absolute Reality is pure, one’s body is pure. Because one’s body is pure, a multitude of bodies are pure. Because a multitude of bodies are pure, likewise sentient beings in all ten directions are completely enlightened and pure.

“Virtuous man, because one world is pure, a multitude of worlds are pure. Because a multitude of worlds are pure, all things completely exhausting empty space in the past, present, and future are impartially equal, pure, and unmoving.

“Virtuous man, since empty space is equal, identical, and unmoving as such, you should know that the nature of enlightenment is also equal, identical, and unmoving. Since the four elements are unmoving, you should know that the
nature of enlightenment is also equal, identical, and unmoving. Since [everything] up to the eighty-four thousand dharani doors are equal, identical, and unmoving, you should know that the nature of enlightenment is also equal, identical, and unmoving.

“Virtuous man, as the nature of enlightenment is pervasive and full, pure, and unmoving, being perfect and boundless; you should know that the six sense faculties also fully pervade the dharmadhatu. Because the sense faculties are pervasive and full, you should know that the six sense objects also fully pervade the dharmadhatu. Because the sense objects are pervasive and full, you should know that the four elements also fully pervade the dharmadhatu. So it is with everything up to all the dharani doors, which also fully pervade the dharmadhatu.

“Virtuous man, because the nature of wondrous enlightenment pervades everything fully, the nature of the sense faculties and the sense objects is indestructible and clear. Because the sense faculties and the sense objects are indestructible, [everything] up to all the dharani doors is indestructible and clear. It is like hundreds of thousands of lamps illuminating a room: their illumination pervades fully and is indestructible and clear.

“Virtuous man, since his enlightenment is fully accomplished, you should know that a bodhisattva neither is bound by dharmas nor seeks to be free from dharmas. He neither detests birth and death nor clings to nirvana; neither reveres those who uphold the precepts nor condemns those who violate them; neither esteems experienced practitioners nor slights beginners. Why? Because all [sentient beings] are enlightened. It is like clear vision that is completely aware of what is in front: when this clarity is perfect, it has no likes or dislikes. Why? Because the essence of this clarity is non-dual and itself has no likes or dislikes.

“Virtuous man, these bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age who have gained
accomplishments through cultivating the mind have neither cultivated nor accomplished anything. Complete Enlightenment is universally illuminating in quiescent–extinction without duality. Hundreds of thousands of millions of asamkyas of Buddha worlds, as innumerable as the grains of sand of the Ganges, are like flowers in the sky, randomly arising and perishing. They are neither identical to nor separate [from the nature of Complete Enlightenment]. Since there is no bondage or liberation, one begins to realize that sentient beings have intrinsically accomplished Buddhahood, and that birth and death and nirvana are like yesterday’s dream.

“Virtuous man, because birth and death and nirvana are like yesterday’s dream, you should know that they neither arise nor perish, neither come nor go. That which is actualized is neither gained nor lost, neither grasped nor discarded. One who truly actualizes [enlightenment] does not contrive, stop, and allow things to be as they are, nor annihilate [vexations]. In the midst of the actualization, there is neither a subject nor an object. Ultimately there is neither actualization nor one who actualizes! The nature of all dharmas is equal and indestructible.

“Virtuous man, bodhisattvas should thus practice, thus [progress through] these gradual stages, thus contemplate, thus abide in and uphold, thus use expedient methods, and thus become enlightened. In seeking this Dharma, they will not be confused and perplexed.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to clarify his meaning, proclaimed these gathas:

Universal Vision, you should know that the minds and bodies of all sentient beings are illusory. The body is the union of the four elements. The nature of mind is reducible to the [six] sensory objects.
When the four elements are separated from one another, who is the unifier?
If one practices gradual cultivation like this, all will be pure.
[The nature of Complete Enlightenment] is unmovin9 and pervades the dharmadhatu.
There is no contrivance, stopping, allowing things to be as they are, annihilation, nor is there one who actualizes [enlightenment].
All Buddha worlds are like flowers in the sky.
Past, present and future are all impartially equal.
Ultimately there is no coming or going.
The newly initiated bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, in their quest to enter the Buddha Path, should thus cultivate themselves.
Then Bodhisattva Vajragarbha rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times to the right, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O World Honored One of great compassion! You have wonderfully expounded to bodhisattvas the great dharani of the Tathāgata’s pure Complete Enlightenment, the Dharma practice of the causal ground, and the expedient methods of gradual cultivation, so that sentient beings may unveil their obstructions. Because of your compassionate teaching, all in the assembly have cleared away illusory illnesses [of the eye] and their wisdom—eyes have become pure.

“World Honored One, if sentient beings have intrinsically accomplished Buddhahood, how can there be so much ignorance? If all sentient beings originally have ignorance, why does the Tathāgata say that they have intrinsically accomplished Buddhahood? If sentient beings in all ten directions intrinsically accomplished the Buddha Path and afterward gave rise to ignorance, then when will the Tathāgata give rise to vexations again? Please do not forsake your unrestricted great compassion, but disclose the secret treasury for the benefit of the multitude of bodhisattvas, so that when all the sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age who hear of this Dharma door to the ultimate meaning of this sutra will permanently sever doubts and regrets.” Having said these words, he prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.

At that time the World Honored One said to
Bodhisattva Vajragarbha: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, for the benefit of the multitude of bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, you have asked the Tathāgata about the very secret and profound ultimate expedient methods, which are the highest teaching for bodhisattvas and the ultimate truth in the Mahayana. These methods are capable of causing practicing and beginning bodhisattvas in all ten directions and all sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age to obtain [the stage of] resolute faith and permanently sever doubts and regrets. Listen attentively now. I shall explain it to you.”

Hearing this, Bodhisattva Vajragarbha was filled with joy and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, all worlds begin and end, are born and perish, have a before and after, exist and do not exist, coalesce and disperse, arise and cease. Thoughts follow one another in succession, going and coming in a ceaseless circle. With all sorts of grasping and rejecting, these [changing processes] are all cyclic existences. If one were to discern Complete Enlightenment while still in cyclic existence, then this nature of Complete Enlightenment would have the same [nature] as the turning flow [of cyclic existence]! If one wished to be free from cyclic existence, then there would be no place where [Complete Enlightenment] could exist. For instance, when one moves one’s eyes, still water appears to have waves; when one fixes one’s gaze, a circling flame appears to be a wheel of fire. The fact that moving clouds make it seem as if the moon were moving and a sailing boat makes one feel as if the shore were moving also exhibits the same principle.

“Virtuous man, while the motion is going on, it is impossible for those things to be still. How much more would this be so if one were to discern the Complete Enlightenment of the Buddha with the defiled mind of birth and death, which has never been pure; how could it not [appear to] be in motion? For this reason, you gave rise to these three doubts.
“Virtuous man, for example, because of an illusory illness [of the eye], a flower is falsely seen in an empty sky. When the illusory illness [of the eye] is eliminated, one does not say: ‘Now that this illness is eliminated, when will other illnesses arise?’ Why? Because the illness and the flower are not in opposition. Likewise, when the flower vanishes into the empty sky, one does not say: ‘When will flowers appear in the sky again?’ Why? Because the sky originally has no flowers! There is no such thing as appearing and vanishing. Birth and death and nirvana are like the appearing and vanishing [flowers in the sky], while the perfect illumination of wondrous enlightenment is free from flowers or illnesses.

“Virtuous man, you should know that the empty sky does not temporarily exist and then temporarily not exist. How much more so in the case of the Tathāgata who is in accordance with Complete Enlightenment, which is comparable to the equal intrinsic nature of empty space.

“Virtuous man, it is like smelting gold or ore. The gold does not exist because of the smelting. As it has become [perfect] gold, it will not become ore again. Even after an inexhaustible period of time, the nature of the gold will not deteriorate. Therefore, one should not say that gold is not intrinsically perfect in itself. Likewise, the same holds true with Tathāgata’s Complete Enlightenment.

“Virtuous Man, the wondrous and completely enlightened mind of all Tathāgatas is originally without bodhi or nirvana; it has nothing to do with accomplishing Buddhahood or not accomplishing Buddhahood, illusory cyclic existence or noncyclical existence.

“Virtuous man, even the sravakas, who have perfected the state where [the karmic activities of] body, mind, and speech are entirely severed, are still unable to enter the nirvana that is personally experienced and manifested [by the Tathāgata]. How can one possibly use one’s conceptual mind to measure the realm of the Tathāgata’s Complete
Enlightenment? It is comparable to using the light of a firefly to scorch Mount Sumeru; one would never be able to burn it! He who attempts to enter the Tathāgata’s ocean of great quiescent–extinction by using the cyclic mind and giving rise to cyclic views will never succeed. Therefore, I say that all bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age should first sever the root of beginningless cyclic existence.

“Virtuous man, contrived conceptualizations come from the existence of a mind, which is a conditioned [conglomeration of] the six sense objects. The conditioned impressions of deluded thoughts are not the true essence of mind; rather, they are like flowers in the sky. The discernment of the realm of Buddhahood with such conceptualization is comparable to the production of empty fruit by the empty flower. One merely revolves in this entanglement of deluded thoughts and gains no result.

“Virtuous man, deluded groundless thinking, and cunning views cannot accomplish the expedient methods of Complete Enlightenment. Discriminations such as these are not correct.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to clarify his meaning, proclaimed these gathas:

Vajragarbha, you should know
that the quiescent and extinct
nature of the Tathāgata
never had a beginning or end.
To conceptualize this with the cyclic mind
results in rotations in cyclic [existence].
One will then remain in cyclic existence
unable to enter the ocean of the Buddha.
Like smelting gold ore,
the gold does not exist
as the result of smelting.
Though it regains the original golden [quality],
it is perfected only after [the process of] smelting. Once it becomes true gold, it cannot become ore again. Birth and death and nirvana, ordinary beings and all Buddhas, are but appearances of flowers in the sky. Conceptualizations are illusory projections. How much more so are such questions asked with an illusory mind? If one can put an end to this [illusory] mind, Complete Enlightenment can be sought.
Then Bodhisattva Maitreya rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times to the right, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O World Honored One of great compassion! You have opened wide the secret treasure for bodhisattvas and have caused the great assembly to deeply awaken from cyclic existence and distinguish between the erroneous and the correct. Your teaching is capable of bestowing the Fearless Eye of the Path to sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, causing them to give rise to resolute faith in the great nirvana, and never again to flow within the realm of the turning wheel [of samsara] or hold cyclic views.

“World Honored One, if bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age desire to sail on the Tathāgata’s ocean of great quiescent–extinction, how should they sever the roots of cyclic existence? In the various cyclic existences, how many types of capacities are there? What are the different kinds of cultivation of Buddha’s bodhi? When [bodhisattvas] enter the world of passions, how many expedient methods should they devise to deliver sentient beings? Pray do not forsake your great compassion in saving the world, but cause all practicing bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age to cleanse their wisdom–eyes and illumine their mirror like minds. May they be completely awakened to the Tathāgata’s unsurpassed knowledge and vision.” Having said these words, he prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.
At that time the World Honored One said to Bodhisattva Maitreya: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, for the benefit of the multitude of bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, you have asked the Tathāgata about the most profound, secret, subtle, and wondrous truth so that bodhisattvas’ wisdom–eyes may become pure, so that all sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age may permanently sever themselves from cyclic existence, so that their minds may awaken to Absolute Reality, and so that they may possess the patient endurance of the unborn [wisdom]. Listen attentively now. I shall explain it to you.”

Hearing this, Bodhisattva Maitreya was filled with joy and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, all sentient beings [experience illusory] cyclic existence due to all kinds of affection, love, craving, and desire\(^1\) since beginningless time. The different types of births in the world – be they from egg, womb, humidity, or by transformation – are created by sexual desire.\(^2\) You should know that attached love is the root of cyclic existence. Because there are all sorts of desirable [objects] that enhance and augment the activity\(^3\) of attached love, birth and death proceed in unending succession.

“Desire arises because of attached love. The existence of life comes from desire. Sentient beings’ love of their lives [in turn] relies on desire as a base. Therefore, love and desire are the cause, love of life is the consequence. Because the objects of desire [vary], like and dislike arise. If the object goes against one’s grasping mind, one gives rise to hatred and jealousy and commits evil karmic deeds. As a result, one is reborn in hell or as a hungry ghost.

“Realizing that desire is detestable, if one desires to leave behind karmic paths and abandons evil and delights in doing good, one is reborn in the realms of gods or humans. If, further, one knows that attachment is detestable, and thus abandons attachment and delights in renunciation, one still
stirs up the root of attachment. This results in increased worldly meritorious fruit, which, being samsaric, does not lead to accomplishing the holy path. Therefore, if sentient beings wish to be liberated from birth and death and to avoid cyclic existence, they should first sever craving and desire, and eliminate their attached love.

“Virtuous man, the transformation and manifestation of bodhisattvas [in various forms] in the world are not based on attachment. Out of their compassion, they cause sentient beings to abandon attachment by provisionally taking on all kinds of craving and desire so they can enter birth and death. If sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age can abandon desire, eliminate love and hatred, permanently sever cyclic existence, and diligently pursue the Tathāgata’s state of Complete Enlightenment with a pure mind, they will attain awakening.

“Virtuous man, due to the inherent desire in all sentient beings, ignorance flourishes and increases. Thus [sentient beings] manifest five distinct natures. According to the two obstructions, their hindrances may appear to be deep or shallow. What are the two obstructions? The first is the obstruction of principle, which hinders right views. The second is the obstruction of phenomena, which perpetuates birth and death.

“What are the five distinct natures? Virtuous man, sentient beings who have not eliminated and extinguished these two obstructions are called ‘those who have not attained Buddhahood.’ Sentient beings who have permanently abandoned craving and desire and have eliminated the obstruction of phenomena, but not the obstruction of principle, can only be enlightened as srackas or pratyekabuddhas. They are unable to manifest and abide in the realm of bodhisattvas.

“Virtuous man, if sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age desire to sail on the Tathāgata’s great ocean of Complete Enlightenment, they should first vow to practice
with diligence and sever the two obstructions. When these two obstructions have been subdued, they will be able to awaken to the realm of bodhisattvas. If the obstructions of principle and phenomena are permanently severed, they will enter into the subtle and wondrous Complete Enlightenment of Tathāgatas and consummate bodhi and great nirvana.

“Virtuous man, all sentient beings [intrinsically] actualize Complete Enlightenment. If they meet a good teacher and can rely on his Dharma practice of the causal ground, [their karmic roots for attainments] will be either gradual or sudden. However, if they come across the Tathāgata’s unsurpassable bodhi and engage in the correct path of practice, they will attain Buddhahood whether they are of great or small [karmic] roots. If sentient beings, though they seek a good teacher, meet one with erroneous views, they will not gain correct awakening. These people are called ones of outer path nature. This fault is due to the teacher and not to sentient beings.

“The above are the five distinct natures of sentient beings.

“Virtuous man, with great compassionate expedient methods, a bodhisattva enters the world to ex and and mature [the mind] of the sHe manifests in various forms, amidst favorable or adverse situations so that he may work together with sentient beings in order to guide them to Buddhahood. In so doing, he relies entirely on the power of his pure vows made since beginningless time.

“If sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age can arouse the supreme thought of [awakening to] great Complete Enlightenment, they should make the pure great vow of bodhisattvas, declaring: ‘May I, from now on, abide in Buddha’s Complete Enlightenment, and may I, in my search for a good teacher, not meet outer paths and practitioners of the Two Vehicles.’ With their practice based on this vow, they will gradually sever all hindrances. When all hindrances are exhausted, their vows will be
fulfilled. They will then ascend the pure Dharma hall of liberation and actualize the wondrous, august citadel of great Complete Enlightenment.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to clarify his meaning, proclaimed these gathas:

Maitreya, you should know that sentient beings cannot attain great liberation because of their craving and desire, which cause them to fall into the cycle of birth and death. If they can sever like and dislike, along with greed, anger, and delusion, regardless of their difference in nature, they will all accomplish the Buddha Path. The two obstructions will also be permanently severed. After correct awakening is attained by meeting a good teacher, one accords with the bodhisattva vow and abides in the great nirvana. All bodhisattvas in the ten directions, relying on the great compassionate vow, manifest the appearance of entering birth and death. Practitioners now and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, should diligently sever all attached views. Then they will return to great Complete Enlightenment.
Then the Bodhisattva of Pure Wisdom rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times to the right, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O World Honored One of great compassion! You have broadly expounded to us inconceivable things which we have never seen or heard before. Because of your excellent guidance, our bodies and minds are now at ease and we have gained great benefit. For the sake of all practitioners of the Dharma who have come here, please expound again the nature of the Dharma King’s complete and fulfilling enlightenment. What are the differences in actualization and attainment between all sentient beings, bodhisattvas, and the World Honored Tathāgata? [Pray teach us] so that sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, upon hearing this holy teaching, may follow and conform to it, be awakened, and gradually enter [the realm of Buddhahood].” Having said these words, he prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.

At that time the World Honored One said to the Bodhisattva of Pure Wisdom: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, for the benefit of sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, you have asked the Tathāgata about the distinct progressive stages [of practice]. Listen attentively now. I shall explain them to you.”

Hearing this, the Bodhisattva of Pure Wisdom was filled with joy and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, the intrinsic nature of Complete Enlightenment is devoid of distinct natures [as described
before], yet all different natures are endowed with this nature of Complete Enlightenment, which can accord and give rise to various natures.\textsuperscript{26} [Since these two natures are nondual], there is neither attainment nor actualization. In Absolute Reality, there are indeed no bodhisattvas or sentient beings. Why? Because bodhisattvas and sentient beings are illusory projections. When illusory projections are extinguished, there exists no one who attains or actualizes. For example, eyes cannot see themselves. Likewise, this nature is intrinsically impartial and equal, yet there is no ‘one’ who is equal.

“Because sentient beings are confused, they are unable to eliminate and extinguish all illusory projections. Because of the illusory efforts and activities of those who extinguish and those who do not extinguish [vexations],\textsuperscript{27} there manifest distinctions. If one can attain accordance with the Tathāgata’s quiescent–extinction, there is in reality neither quiescent–extinction nor the one who experiences it.

“Virtuous man, all sentient beings since beginningless time have deludedly conceived ‘self’ and that which grasps on to the self; never have they known the succession of arising and perishing thoughts!\textsuperscript{28} Therefore, they give rise to love and hatred and indulge in the five desires.\textsuperscript{29}

“If they meet a good teacher who guides them to awaken to the nature of pure Complete Enlightenment and to recognize these arising and perishing [thoughts], they will understand that it is the very nature of such rising [thoughts] that causes toils and anxieties in their lives.

“If, further, a man permanently severs all toil and anxiety, he will realize the \textit{dharmadhatu} in its purity. However, his undermining of purity may become his obstruction and he will not attain freedom and ease regarding Complete Enlightenment. This is called ‘the ordinary man’s accordance with the nature of enlightenment.’\textsuperscript{30}

“Virtuous man, all bodhisattvas realize that this very understanding is a hindrance. Although they sever themselves from this hindrance of understanding, they still abide in this
realization. The realization of hindrance is yet another hindrance. Therefore they do not have freedom and ease. This is called ‘the bodhisattva before the stage of the first bhumi’s accordance with the nature of enlightenment.’

“Virtuous man, ‘attaining’ illumination and realization is a hindrance. Thus a great bodhisattva is constantly in realization without abidance, where the illumination and the illuminator simultaneously become quiescent and vanish. For instance, if a man beheads himself, there exists no executioner after the head has been severed. It is the same with eliminating various hindrances with a mind of hindrance: when the hindrances have been eliminated, there is no eliminator. The teachings of the sutras are like the finger that points to the moon. When one sees the moon, one realizes that the finger is not the moon. Likewise, the various teachings of all Tathāgatas in instructing bodhisattvas are also like this. This is called ‘the bodhisattva above the stage of the first bhumi’s accordance with the nature of enlightenment.’

“Virtuous man, all hindrances are themselves [the nature of] ultimate enlightenment. Having a [correct] thought or losing it is not different from liberation. Conglomeration and dispersion of dharmas are both called nirvana. Wisdom and stupidity are equally prajna. The Dharma accomplished by bodhisattvas and that by outer path practitioners are both bodhi. Ignorance and true suchness are not different realms. [The threefold discipline of] sila, samadhi and prajna and [the three poisons of] greed, anger and delusion are all pure activities. Sentient beings and the world they live in are of one Dharma–nature. Hells and heavens are all Pure Lands. Regardless of [their distinct] natures, all sentient beings have [intrinsically] accomplished the Buddha Path. All vexations are ultimate liberation. [The Tathāgata’s] ocean of wisdom, which encompasses the whole dharmadhatu, clearly illuminates all phenomena as empty space. This is called ‘the Tathāgata’s accordance with the nature of enlightenment.’

“Virtuous man, all bodhisattvas and sentient beings in
the Decline of the Dharma Age should at no time give rise to deluded thoughts! [Yet], when their deluded minds arise, they should not extinguish them. In the midst of deluded concepts, they should not add discriminations. Amidst non-discrimination, they should not distinguish true reality. If sentient beings, upon hearing this Dharma method, believe in, understand, accept, and uphold it and do not generate alarm and fear, they are ‘in accordance with the nature of enlightenment.’

“Virtuous man, you should know that these sentient beings have made offerings to hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas and great bodhisattvas as innumerable as the grains of sand of the Ganges, and have planted the roots of all merits. I say that such people will accomplish the [Buddha’s] Wisdom of All Aspects.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to clarify his meaning, proclaimed these gathas:

Pure Wisdom, you should know
that the nature of perfect bodhi
is without attainment or actualization.
It is without bodhisattvas or sentient beings.
However, when there is enlightenment and unenlightenment,
there are distinct progressive stages.
Sentient beings are obstructed by understanding.
Bodhisattvas [before the first bhumi]
have not left behind realization.
[Once] they enter the first bhumi
there is permanent quiescent–extinction
with no abidance in any form.
Great enlightenment, being complete,
is called ‘pervasive accordance.’
If sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age
do not give rise to deluded thoughts,
the Buddha says that they are
bodhisattvas in this very lifetime. Having made offerings to countless Buddhas as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges, their merits are perfected. Though expedients are many, all are called in accordance with wisdom.
Then the Bodhisattva at Ease in Majestic Virtue rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times to the right, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O World Honored One of great compassion! For our sake you have extensively clarified the different ways of according with the nature of enlightenment and caused the enlightened minds of the multitude of bodhisattvas to be illuminated. Hearing your perfect voice, we have gained great benefit without cultivation.

“World Honored One, a great city has four gates. People coming from different directions have more than one entrance. Likewise, all bodhisattvas who embellish the Buddha Lands and attain bodhi do so by means of more than one single expedient method. Please, World Honored One, broadly expound to us all the expedient methods and stages as well as how many types of practitioners there are, so that the bodhisattvas in this assembly and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age who aspire to the Mahayana may quickly attain enlightenment, and roam and play in the Tathāgata’s ocean of great quiescent–extinction.” Having said these words, he prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.

At that time the World Honored One said to the Bodhisattva at Ease in Majestic Virtue: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, for the benefit of the multitude of bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, you have asked the Tathāgata about such expedient methods.
Listen attentively now. I shall explain it to you.”

Hearing this, the Bodhisattva at Ease in Majestic Virtue was filled with joy and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, unsurpassable wondrous enlightenment pervades all ten directions. From it arise the Tathāgatas and all dharmas, which are equal and identical to one another and of the same substance. [Likewise], the various methods of cultivation are, in reality, not different [from one another]. Though there are countless expedient methods for becoming attuned to the nature of enlightenment, if one categorizes them according to their different natures, there are three kinds.

“Virtuous man, if, after awakening to pure Complete Enlightenment, bodhisattvas with pure enlightened minds engage in the cultivation of stillness, they will cleanse and settle all thoughts. Becoming aware of the agitation and restlessness of consciousness, they will cause their wisdom of stillness to manifest. Their bodies and minds, [which will be realized as adventitious] guests and dust will be permanently extinguished. Inwardly they will experience lightness and ease in quiescence and stillness. Because of this quiescence and stillness, the minds of all Tathāgatas in all ten directions will be revealed like reflections in a mirror. This expedient is called samatha.

“Virtuous man, if, after awakening to pure Complete Enlightenment, bodhisattvas with pure enlightened minds realize the nature of mind and realize that the six sense faculties and sense objects are illusory projections, they will then generate illusion as a means to eliminate illusion. Causing transformations and manifestations among illusions, they will enlighten illusory sentient beings. By generating illusions, they will experience lightness and ease in great compassion. All bodhisattvas who practice in such a manner will advance gradually. That which contemplates illusion is different from illusion itself. Nevertheless, contemplating
illusion is itself an illusion. When all illusions are permanently left behind, the wondrous cultivation completed by such bodhisattvas may be compared to the sprouting of seeds from soil. This expedient is called samapatti.

“Virtuous man, if, after awakening to pure Complete Enlightenment, bodhisattvas with pure, enlightened minds grasp on to neither illusory projections nor states of stillness, they will understand thoroughly that both body and mind are hindrances. [Awakening from] ignorance, their [minds] will be illuminated. Without depending on all sorts of hindrances, they will permanently transcend the realms of hindrance and nonhindrance and make full use of the world as well as the body and mind. They will manifest in the phenomenal world [without any obstructions], just as the sound of a musical instrument can travel beyond [the body of the instrument]. Vexations and nirvana will not hinder each other. Inwardly, they will experience lightness and ease in quiescent–extinction. They will accord with the realm of quiescent–extinction in wondrous enlightenment, which is beyond the reach of body and mind and the reach of self and others. All sentient beings and all life are only drifting thoughts. This expedient method is called dhyana.

“Virtuous man, these three Dharma methods are intimately in accordance with Complete Enlightenment. Tathāgatas in all ten directions accomplish Buddhahood through these means. The myriad expedient methods used by bodhisattvas in all ten directions, whether similar or different, depend on these three activities. At the perfect actualization of these practices, one accomplishes Complete Enlightenment.

“Virtuous man, if in his practice on the holy path, a person teaches, delivers, and succeeds in guiding hundreds of thousands of millions of people into arhatship and pratyekabuddhahood, he cannot be compared with someone who, upon hearing these Dharma methods of the unhindered Complete Enlightenment, practices accordingly for even an
instant.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to clarify his meaning, proclaimed these gathas:

Majestic Virtue, you should know that the unsurpassable mind of great enlightenment is intrinsically nondual. Even though the various expedients that accord with it are limitless in number, the teachings of the Tathāgata are altogether three in kind. Quiescent and still in *samatha*, [the mind] is like a mirror reflecting myriad images. *Samapatti*, wherein all is seen as an illusion, is like a bud growing gradually. *Dhyāna* is quiescent–extinction, [yet, its functions are] like the sound of a musical instrument. These three wondrous Dharma methods are all in accordance with enlightenment. The Tathāgatas in all ten directions and the great bodhisattvas achieve Buddhahood through them. Perfect actualization of these three is called ultimate nirvana.
Then the Bodhisattva of Sound Discernment rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times to the tight, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O World Honored One of great compassion! Such Dharma methods are rare indeed. World Honored One, how many approaches are there in the bodhisattva’s cultivation of these [three] expedient methods toward the gate of Complete Enlightenment? For the sake of this assembly and the sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, please expediently teach us so that we may be awakened to Absolute Reality.” Having said these words, he prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.

At that time the World Honored One said to the Bodhisattva of Sound Discernment: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, for the benefit of the assembly and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, you have asked the Tathāgata about such practices. Listen attentively now. I shall explain it to you.”

Hearing this, the Bodhisattva of Sound Discernment was filled with joy and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, being pure, the Complete Enlightenment of all Tathāgatas is originally without cultivation and cultivator. All bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, while unenlightened, rely on illusory effort in their cultivation. Thus therere are twenty-five kinds of pure samadhis.
“If bodhisattvas engage only in utter stillness, through the power of stillness, they can permanently sever vexations and accomplish the ultimate. Without arising from their seats, they enter nirvana. These bodhisattvas solely practice samatha.

“If bodhisattvas engage only in contemplating [all things as being like an] illusion, through the power of the Buddhas they can transform and manifest things in the world into all sorts of functions and fulfill all their pure, wondrous practices as bodhisattvas. While maintaining dharani, they do not lose mindfulness in quiescence, nor do they lose wisdom derived from stillness. These bodhisattvas solely practice samapatti.\(^{39}\)

“If bodhisattvas engage only in extinguishing illusions without getting involved in functions, they will singly sever all vexations. When vexations are completely severed they will actualize Absolute Reality. These bodhisattvas solely practice dhyana.

“If bodhisattvas first engage in utter stillness and then, with the wisdom mind begotten by stillness, clearly illuminate all illusions and perform bodhisattva deeds, they practice samatha first, followed by samapatti.

“If bodhisattvas, with the wisdom begotten by stillness, fully actualize the nature of utter stillness and then sever vexations and transcend birth and death permanently, they practice samatha first, followed by dhyana.

“If bodhisattvas, with the wisdom begotten by quiescence and stillness, manifest the power of illusions and create all sorts of transformations and manifestations for the purpose of liberating sentient beings, after which they sever vexations and enter quiescent–extinction, they practice samatha first, followed by samapatti, ending in dhyana.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of utter stillness, sever vexations and then perform the wondrous pure practices of a bodhisattva to liberate sentient beings, they practice samatha first, followed by dhyana and ending in samapatti.
“If bodhisattvas, with the power of utter stillness, sever the vexations in the mind, liberate sentient beings and establish the world, they practice samatha first, followed by both samapatti and dhyana.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of utter stillness as a support, generate transformations and manifestations, and then sever vexations, they practice both samatha and samapatti first, followed by dhyana.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of utter stillness as a support, attain quiescent–extinction, then give rise to functions in manifesting in and transforming the world, they practice both samatha and dhyana first, followed by samapatti.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of transformations and manifestations to accord with all sorts of [sentient beings], then attain utter stillness, they practice samapatti first, followed by samatha.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of transformations and manifestations, create various realms, then attain quiescent–extinction, they practice samapatti first, followed by dhyana.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of transformations and manifestations, first perform Buddha works, then peacefully abide in quiescence and stillness, and then sever vexations, they practice samapatti first, followed by samatha, ending in dhyana.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of transformations and manifestations, perform [bodhisattva] functions without hindrances, then sever vexations and peacefully abide in utter stillness, they practice samapatti first, followed by dhyana, ending in samatha.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of transformations and manifestations, expediently perform [bodhisattva] functions, then accord with utter stillness as well as quiescent–extinction, they practice samapatti first, followed by both samatha and dhyana.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of transformations and
manifestations, give rise to [bodhisattva] functions to engage in utter stillness, then sever vexations, they practice both samapatti and samatha first, followed by dhyana.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of transformations and manifestations as a support, cultivate quiescent–extinction, then abide in the pure, uncontrived stillness, they practice both samapatti and dhyana first, followed by samatha.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of quiescent–extinction, give rise to utter stillness and abide in purity, they practice dhyana first, followed by samatha.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of quiescent–extinction, give rise to [bodhisattva] functions, yet accord with both quiescence and functions in all circumstances, they practice dhyana first, followed by samapatti.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of quiescent–extinction, abide in the contemplation of stillness amidst the distinct nature of all phenomena, then give rise to transformations and manifestations, they practice dhyana first, followed by samapatti, ending in samapatti.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of quiescent–extinction, from the uncontrived intrinsic nature [of all dharmas] give rise to the function of manifesting pure realms, then return to the contemplation of stillness, they practice dhyana first, followed by samapatti, ending in samatha.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of quiescent–extinction, with various purities abide in stillness, yet give rise to transformations and manifestations, they practice dhyana, first, followed by both samatha and samapatti.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of quiescent–extinction as a support, engaging in utter stillness, then give rise to transformations and manifestations, they practice both dhyana and samatha first, followed by samapatti.

“If bodhisattvas, with the power of quiescent–extinction as a support, engaging in performing transformations and manifestations, then give rise to utter stillness and pure luminous wisdom, they practice both dhyana and samapatti,
If bodhisattvas, with the wisdom of Complete Enlightenment, perfectly harmonize all [dualities] and never depart from the nature of enlightenment in relating to the diverse [dharma] natures or phenomena, they are perfect in the threefold practice of according with the intrinsic nature of pure [samadhi].

“Virtuous man, these are called the twenty-five practices of bodhisattvas. All bodhisattvas practice in this way. If bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age wish to rely on these practices, they should uphold practices of purity, quietly contemplate and wholeheartedly repent. At the end of twenty-one days, after placing a numbered tally for each of the twenty-five methods, they should wholeheartedly pray [and seek divination] by picking a tally at random. The number picked will indicate whether the method is gradual or sudden. However, a single thought of doubt or regret will cause them to fail in accomplishment.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to clarify his meaning, proclaimed these gathas:

Sound Discernment, you should know that the unhindered, pure wisdom of all bodhisattvas arises from samadhi: the so-called samatha, samapatti, and dhyana.
The gradual or sudden practice of this threefold Dharma has twenty-five variations.
All Tathāgatas in the ten directions and the practitioners in the past, present, and future achieve bodhi through this Dharma, with the only exceptions being those of sudden enlightenment and those who do not follow the Dharma.
All bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age should ever practice diligently in accordance with these methods. Relying on the Buddha’s power of great compassion, they will before long attain nirvana.
Then the Bodhisattva Cleansed of All Karmic Obstructions rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times to the right, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O World Honored One of great compassion! You have broadly expounded to us such inconceivable things as the practices of all Tathāgatas of the causal ground, and have caused the assembly to gain what they have never had before. Having seen the Buddha’s arduous toil through kalpas as innumerable as the grains of sand of the Ganges, and his efforts in practice unfold as if they were in but an instant of a thought, we bodhisattvas feel deeply fortunate and joyous.

“World Honored One, if the intrinsic nature of this enlightened mind is pure, what caused it to be defiled, making sentient beings deluded, perplexed, and unable to enter it? Pray let the Tathāgata thoroughly expound and reveal to us the nature of dharmas so that this assembly and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age may use [your teaching] as a guiding vision in the future.” Having said these words, he prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.

At that time the World Honored One said to the Bodhisattva Cleansed of All Karmic Obstructions: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, for the benefit of this assembly and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, you have asked the Tathāgata, about such expedient methods. Listen attentively now, I shall explain it to you.”

Hearing this, the Bodhisattva Cleansed of All Karmic Obstructions
Obstructions was filled with joy, and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, since beginningless time all sentient beings have been deludedly conceiving and clinging to the existence of self, person, sentient being, and life. They take these four inverted views as the essence of a real self, thereby giving rise to dual states of like and dislike. [Thus], based on one delusion, they further cling to other delusions. These two delusions rely on each other, giving rise to the illusory paths of karma. Because of illusory karma, sentient beings deludedly perceive the turning flow [of cyclic existence]. Those who detest the turning flow [of cyclic existence] deludedly perceive nirvana, and hence are unable to enter [the realm of] pure enlightenment. It is not enlightenment that thwarts their entering; rather, it is the idea that ‘there is one who can enter.’ Therefore, whether their thoughts are agitated or have ceased, they cannot be other than confused and perplexed.

“Why is this? Because the original–arising ignorance has been [falsely perceived as] one’s own master since beginningless time, therefore all sentient beings are unable to give rise to the wisdom–eye. The nature of their bodies and minds is nothing but ignorance. [This ignorance which does not eliminate itself may be illustrated] by the example of the man who does not take his own life. Therefore, you should know that people get along with those who like them and resent those who contradict them. Because like and dislike nurture ignorance, sentient beings always fail in their pursuit of the Path.

“Virtuous man, what is the sign\textsuperscript{44} of the self? It is that which is experienced in the minds of sentient beings. Virtuous man, for instance, when a man’s body is well coordinated and healthy, he forgets about its existence. However, when his four limbs are sluggish and his body unhealthy and unregulated, then with the slightest treatment of acupuncture and moxa he will become aware of the existence of the self
again. Therefore, the self manifests when experience is felt. Virtuous man, even if this man’s mind experienced the realm of the Tathāgata and clearly perceived pure nirvana, it would be but the phenomenon of the self.

“Virtuous man, what is sign of the person? It is that which is experienced in the minds of sentient beings. Virtuous man, he who awakens to the self no longer identifies with the self. This awakening, which is beyond all experience, is the mark of the person. Virtuous man, both what is awakened to and the awakening are not the self. Thus, even if this man’s mind were perfectly awakened to nirvana, it would be but the self [because] as long as there is even the slightest trace of awakening or striving in the mind to realize the principle, it would be the sign of the person.

“Virtuous man, what is the sign of sentient beings? It is the experience which is beyond self-awakening and it is that which is awakened to in the minds of sentient beings. Virtuous man, if for example a man says, ‘I am a sentient being,’ we know that what he speaks of as ‘sentient being’ refers neither to himself nor another person. Why is he not referring to his self? Since this self is sentient being, it is not limited to his self. Since this self is sentient being, therefore it is not another person’s self. Virtuous man, the experiences and awakenings of sentient beings are all [traces of] the self and the person. In the awakening beyond the traces of the self and person, if one retained the awareness of having realized something, it would be called the sign of sentient beings.

“Virtuous man, what is the sign of life? It is the mind of sentient beings that illuminates purity, in which they are aware of what they have realized. Karmic [consciousness] and wisdom cannot perceive themselves. This is comparable to the root of life. Virtuous man, when the mind is able to illuminate and perceive enlightenment, it is but a defilement, because both perceiver and perceived are not apart from defilement. After ice melts in hot water, there is no ice to be aware of its melting. The perception of the existence of the
self enlightening itself is also like this.

“Virtuous man, if sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age do not understand these four characteristics [of the self], even after cultivating the Path diligently for many kalpas, [it is still] called practicing with attachments and they will not be able to accomplish the fruition of sainthood. Therefore, this is called [cultivating] the True Dharma in the Decline of the Dharma Age. Why? Because they mistake the various aspects of the self for nirvana, and regard their experiences and awakenings as accomplishments. This is comparable to a man who mistakes a thief for his own son. His wealth and treasure will never increase. Why? Because if one grasps onto the self, one will also grasp onto nirvana. For him, the root of grasping onto the self is [merely] suppressed and [seemingly] there is the appearance of nirvana. If there is one who hates the self, one will also have hatred for birth and death. Not knowing that grasping is the real [source of] birth and death, hatred for birth and death is [also] not liberation.

“How does one recognize the Dharma of nonliberation? Virtuous man, if sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, while cultivating bodhi, have partial actualization [of Complete Enlightenment] and think they are already pure, then they have not exhausted the root of the trace of the self. If someone praises his Dharma, it gives rise to joy in his mind and he wants to liberate the praiser. If someone criticizes his achievement, that gives rise to hatred in his mind. Thus one can tell that his attachment to the phenomenon of the self is strong and firm. [This self] is hidden in the storehouse consciousness. It wanders in the sense faculties and has never ceased to exist.

“Virtuous man, these practitioners, because they do not eliminate the phenomenon of the self, cannot enter [the realm of] pure enlightenment. Virtuous man, if one actualizes the emptiness of the self, there will be no one there who can slander the self. When there is a self who expounds the Dharma, the self has not been severed. The same holds true
for sentient beings and life.

“Virtuous man, sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age speak of illness [in their practice] as the Dharma. They are pitiable people. Though diligent in their practice, they only increase their illness and are consequently unable to enter the [realm of] pure enlightenment.

“Virtuous man, because sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age are not clear about these four signs [of the self] when they take the Tathāgata’s understanding and conduct to be their own practice, they will never reach accomplishment. Some claim that they have had actualizations though they have not; some claim that they have had realizations though they have not. When they see others more advanced than themselves, they become jealous. Because these people have not severed their grasping onto the self, they are unable to enter the [realm of] pure enlightenment.

“Virtuous man, sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age who wish to accomplish the Path should not seek awakening through increasing their knowledge by listening [to the Dharma]. This will only further strengthen their view of the self. Instead, they should strive to diligently subdue their vexations! They should generate great courage to attain what they have not attained and sever what they have not severed. In all circumstances, they should not give rise to craving, hatred, attached love, arrogance, flattery, crookedness, envy, and jealousy. Then, the affection and grasping between the self and the others will be extinguished. [When they can do this], the Buddha says that they will gradually reach accomplishment. Furthermore, they should seek good teachers so that they will not fall into erroneous views. However, if they give rise to hatred and love in their minds while seeking [a good teacher], they will be unable to enter the ocean of pure enlightenment.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to clarify his meaning, proclaimed these gathas:
Cleansed of All Karmic Obstructions, you should know that sentient beings, because of their attachment to and love of self, have been bound in the illusory turning flow [of cyclic existence] since beginningless time. Without severing the four signs [of the self], bodhi will not be attained.

With the mind harboring love and hatred, and thoughts carrying flattery and crookedness, one is full of confusion and perplexity, and cannot enter the citadel of enlightenment.

To return to the realm of enlightenment, desire, anger, and delusion must first be eliminated. When attachment to the dharma [of nirvana] no longer exists in the mind, one can gradually reach accomplishment. This body is originally nonexistent so how can love and hatred arise?

A practitioner should also seek a good teacher so as not to fall into erroneous views. If hatred and love arise in the quest, he will not accomplish [enlightenment].
Then the Bodhisattva of Universal Enlightenment rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times to the right, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O World Honored One of great compassion! You have with no hesitation explained the faults in practice so that this great assembly [of bodhisattvas] has gained what it never had before. Their minds are thoroughly at peace and they have gained a great, secure, and steadfast [teaching as a guiding vision for their practice].”

“World Honored One, sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age will gradually be further away from the days of the Buddha. The sages and saints will seldom appear, while the heretical teachings win increase and flourish. What kind of people, then, should sentient beings seek to follow? What kind of Dharma should they rely on? What line of conduct should they adopt? Of what faults [in practice] should they rid themselves? How should they arouse the [bodhi] mind so that the blind multitude can avoid falling into erroneous views?” Having said these words, he fully prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.

At that time the World Honored One said to the Bodhisattva of Universal Enlightenment: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, you have asked the Tathāgata about such methods of practice which are able to impart to all sentient beings, in the Decline of the Dharma Age, the Fearless Eye of the Path so that they will be able to accomplish the holy path. Listen attentively now. I shall
explain it to you.”

Hearing this, the Bodhisattva of Universal Enlightenment was filled with joy and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age who wish to arouse the great mind should search for a good teacher. Those who wish to practice should look for one who has correct views in all aspects. Such a teacher’s mind does not abide in characteristics. He has no attachment to the realms of sravakas and pratyekabuddhas. Though [expeditely] manifesting worldly afflictions, his mind is always pure. Though displaying misdeeds, he praises the practice of purity and does not lead sentient beings into undisciplined conduct and demeanor. If sentient beings seek out such a teacher, they will accomplish unexcelled perfect enlightenment.\(^5\)

“If sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age meet such a teacher, they should make offerings to him even at the expense of their lives, not to mention their food, wealth, spouse, children, and retinue. Such a teacher always reveals purity in the four modes of conduct.\(^5\) Even if he shows misdeeds and excesses, disciples should not give rise to pride and contempt in their minds. If these disciples do not entertain evil thoughts of their teacher, they will ultimately be able to accomplish correct enlightenment. Their mind-flowers will blossom and illumine all Pure Lands in the ten directions.

“Virtuous man, the wondrous Dharma that is actualized by this good teacher should be free from four kinds of faults. What are these four faults?

“‘The first is the fault of contrivance. If a man says: ‘I exert myself in all kinds of practices based on my intrinsic [pure] mind in order to seek Complete Enlightenment,’ this is a fault, because the nature of Complete Enlightenment is not ‘attained’ by contrivance.

“‘The second is the fault of allowing things to be as they
are. If a man says: ‘I neither wish to sever birth and death nor seek nirvana. There are no conceptions of samsara and nirvana as truly arising or perishing. I allow everything to take its course with the various natures of dharmas in my quest for Complete Enlightenment,’ this is a fault, because the nature of Complete Enlightenment does not come about through accepting things as they are.

“The third is the fault of stopping. If a man says: ‘In my quest for Complete Enlightenment, if I permanently stop my mind from having any thoughts, then I will attain the quiescence and equality of the nature of all [dharmas],’ this is a fault, because the nature of Complete Enlightenment does not conform with the stopping of thoughts.

“The fourth is the fault of annihilation. If a man says: ‘In my quest for Complete Enlightenment, if I permanently annihilate all vexations, then my body and mind, not to mention the illusory realms of sense faculties and dust, will ultimately be emptiness and utter nothingness. Everything will be [in the state of] eternal quiescence,’ this is a fault, because the nature of Complete Enlightenment is not annihilation.

“One who is free from these four faults will know purity. To discern these faults is to have the right discernment. To have other discernments than these is called erroneous discernment.

“Virtuous man, sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age who wish to cultivate themselves should, to the end of their lives, make offerings to virtuous friends and serve good teachers. When a good teacher approaches them, they should sever arrogance and pride. When the teacher leaves them, they should sever hatred and resentment. Be it favorable or adverse condition that [a teacher] brings to them, they should regard it as empty space. They should fully realize that their own bodies and minds are ultimately identical with all sentient beings’, and are the same in essence, without difference. If they practice in this way, they
will enter the [realm of] Complete Enlightenment.

“Virtuous man, when sentient beings in the Dharina Ending Age are unable to accomplish the Path, it is due to the seeds of love and hatred toward themselves and others since beginningless time. Thus they are not liberated. If a man regards his foes as he would his parents, without duality, then all faults will be eliminated. Within all dharmas, self, others, love, and hatred will also be eliminated.

“Virtuous man, sentient beings in their quest for Complete Enlightenment in the Decline of the Dharma Age should give rise to the bodhi–mind, saying: ‘I will lead all sentient beings throughout boundless space into ultimate Complete Enlightenment. In [the realm of] Complete Enlightenment, there is no realizer of enlightenment, and [the signs of] self, others, and all characteristics are left behind.’ Giving rise to such a mind, they will not fall into erroneous views.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to clarify his meaning, proclaimed these gathas:

Universal Enlightenment, you should know that sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age who wish to seek a good teacher should find one with correct views whose mind is far away from the Two Vehicles. The Dharma [he actualizes] should be free from the four faults of contrivance, stopping, allowing things to be as they are, and annihilation. Approached by the teacher, they should not be arrogant and proud. Left by the teacher, they should not be resentful. When witnessing different conditions displayed by the teacher, they should regard them as precious rare occurrences, like a Buddha appearing in the world.
[They should] break not the rules of discipline and demeanor
and keep the precepts forever pure,
lead all sentient beings into
the ultimate Complete Enlightenment,
be free from the signs of the self,
person, sentient beings, and life.
When relying on correct wisdom,
they will transcend erroneous views,
actualize enlightenment, and enter *parinirvana*. 
Then the Bodhisattva of Complete Enlightenment rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times to the right, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O World Honored One of great compassion! You have broadly expounded expedient methods for attaining pure enlightenment so that sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age may receive great benefit. World Honored One, we have already awakened. Yet after the nirvana of the Buddha, how should sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age who are not awakened dwell in retreats to cultivate this pure realm of Complete Enlightenment? Which of the three kinds of pure contemplation are foremost within the [cultivation of] Complete Enlightenment? May the great passionate One bestow great benefit upon this assembly and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age.” Having said these words, he prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.

At that time the World Honored One said to the Bodhisattva of Complete Enlightenment: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, you have asked the Tathāgata about such expedient methods for the sake of bringing great benefit to sentient beings. Listen attentively now. I shall explain them to you.”

Hearing this, the Bodhisattva of Complete Enlightenment was filled with joy and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, whether during the time of the
Buddha’s stay in the world, after his nirvana, or in the declining period of the Dharma, sentient beings with Mahayana nature who have faith in the Buddha’s mysterious mind of great Complete Enlightenment and who wish to cultivate themselves should, if they live in a monastic community with other practitioners and are occupied by various involvements, examine themselves and engage in contemplation as much as circumstances permit in accordance with what I have already taught.

“If they are not occupied by various involvements, they should set up a place for practice and fix a time limit: 120 days for a long period, 100 for a medium period, and 80 for a short period. Then they should dwell peacefully in this pure place. If the Buddha is present, they should hold correct contemplation of him. If the Buddha has entered nirvana, they should install his image, generate right mindfulness, and gaze at him as if he were still living in the world. They should adorn [the sanctuary] with banners and make offerings of flowers and within the first twenty–one days make obeisance to the Buddhas in all ten directions with utmost sincere repentance. Thus they will experience auspicious signs and obtain lightness and ease [of the mind]. After these twenty–one days, their minds should be well collected.

“If the retreat period overlaps with the three–month summer retreat [of sravakas], they should adhere to and abide with the retreat of a pure bodhisattva, instead. Their minds should stay away from the [ways of] sravakas, and they do not have to be involved with the community at large. On the first day of the retreat, they should say this in front of the Buddha: ‘I, bhikshu or bhikshuni, upasaka or upasika so and so, in the bodhisattva vehicle, will cultivate the practice of quiescent–extinction and together enter [with other bodhisattvas] into the pure abode of Absolute Reality. I will take the great Complete Enlightenment as my monastery. My body and mind, will peacefully abide in the Wisdom of Equality.’ The intrinsic nature of nirvana is without bondage.
Without depending on the sravakas, I now respectfully pray that I can abide for three months with the Tathāgatas and great bodhisattvas in all ten directions. For the great cause of cultivating the unsurpassed wondrous enlightenment of a bodhisattva, I will not be with the community at large.’

“Virtuous man, this is called the retreat manifested by the bodhisattva. At the end of the three kinds of periods of retreat, he is free to go unhindered. Virtuous man, if practitioners in the Decline of the Dharma Age go into retreats on the Bodhisattva Path, they should not accept [as authentic] any experience which they have not heard [from the Tathāgata].

“Virtuous man, if sentient beings practice samatha, they should first engage in perfect stillness by not giving rise to conceptualization. Having reached the extreme of stillness, enlightenment will come about. Such stillness [acquired] in the beginning [of practice] pervades a universe from one’s body, as does enlightenment. Virtuous man, when enlightenment pervades a universe, a single thought produced by any living being in this universe can be perceived by these practitioners. When their enlightenment pervades hundreds of thousands of universes, the same condition prevails. They should not accept [as authentic] any experience that they have not heard [from the Tathāgata].

“Virtuous man, if sentient beings practice samapatti, they should first be mindful of the Tathāgatas in all ten directions and the bodhisattvas in all worlds. Relying on various methods, they will diligently cultivate samadhi in gradual steps, bearing hardship. They should make great vows [to save sentient beings] and thus ripen their seeds [of Complete Enlightenment]. They should not accept [as authentic] any experience that they have not heard [from the Tathāgata].

“Virtuous man, if sentient beings practice dhyana, they should begin with methods of counting. [Gradually] they will be clearly aware of the arising, abiding, and ceasing of
each thought, as well as the state before the arising of a thought, the state after the arising of a thought, and the scope and number of these thoughts. Further on, they will be aware of every thought, whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down. By gradually advancing still further, they will be able to discern a drop of rain in hundreds of thousands of worlds as if seeing, with their own eyes, an object used by them. [Again], they should not accept [as authentic] any experience that they have not heard [from the Tathāgata].

“These are the foremost expedient methods in practicing the three contemplation techniques. If sentient beings thoroughly practice and master all three of them with diligence and perseverance, it will be called, ‘Tathāgata appearing in the world.’ In the future Decline of the Dharma Age, if sentient beings with dull capacities who wish to cultivate the Path are unable to gain accomplishment due to their karmic obstructions, they should zealously repent and always remain hopeful. They should first sever their hatred, attachment, envy, jealousy, flattery, and crookedness, and pursue the unsurpassable mind. As to the three kinds of pure contemplation, they should practice one of them. If they fail in one, they should try another. They should steadily strive to attain realization without giving up.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to clarify his meaning, proclaimed these gathas:

Complete Enlightenment, you should know that all sentient beings seeking to tread on the unsurpassed Path should first enter a retreat. They should repent their beginningless karmic obstructions for twenty-one days and then engage in right contemplation. Experiences that they have not heard [from the Tathāgata] should not be accepted [as authentic].
In samatha one practices perfect stillness.  
In samapatti one upholds right mindfulness.  
In dhyana one begins with clear counting.  
These are the three pure contemplations.  
Those who practice them with diligence  
are called “Buddhas appearing in the world.”  
Those with dull capacities who are not accomplished  
should repent zealously of all the misdeeds  
they have created since beginningless time.  
When all obstructions are extinguished,  
the realm of Buddhahood appears.
Then the Bodhisattva Foremost in Virtue and Goodness rose from his seat in the midst of the assembly, prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha, circled the Buddha three times clockwise, knelt down, joined his palms, and said: “O world Honored One of great compassion! You have broadly revealed to us and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age such inconceivable things. World Honored One, what should this Mahayana teaching be named? How should one receive and observe it? When sentient beings practice it, what merit will they gain? How should we protect those who keep and recite this sutra? What will the extent of the benefit be if one spreads this teaching?” Having said these words, he prostrated himself on the ground. He made the same request three times, each time repeating the same procedure.

At that time the World Honored One said to the Bodhisattva Foremost in Virtue and Goodness: “Excellent, excellent! Virtuous man, for the benefit of the multitude of bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age, you have asked the Tathāgata the name and merit of this teaching. Listen attentively now. I shall explain it to you.”

Hearing this, the Bodhisattva Foremost in Virtue and Goodness was filled with joy and listened silently along with the assembly.

“Virtuous man, this sutra is expounded by hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas as innumerable as the grains of sand of the Ganges. It is esteemed by all Tathāgatas in the past, present, and future. It is the refuge of all bodhisattvas in all ten directions. It is the pure eye of the twelve divisions of the Buddhist scriptures.
“This sutra is called the Dharani of Complete Enlightenment of the Mahavaipulya Teaching. It is also called the Sutra of the Ultimate Truth, the Mysterious King Samadhi, the Definitive Realm of the Tathāgata, and the Distinctions within the Intrinsic Nature of the Tathāgatagarbha. You should respectfully receive and observe it.

“Virtuous man, this sutra reveals only the realm of the Tathāgatas and can only be fully expounded by the Buddha, the Tathāgata. If bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Decline of the Dharma Age rely on it in their practice, they will gradually progress and reach Buddhahood.

“Virtuous man, this sutra belongs to the sudden teaching of the Mahayana. From it sentient beings of sudden [enlightenment] capacity will attain awakening. This sutra also embraces practitioners of all other capacities who engage in gradual cultivation; it is like a vast ocean which allows small streams to merge into it. All who drink this water, from gadflies and mosquitoes to asuras, will find fulfillment.

“Virtuous man, if there were a man who, with the purest intentions, gathered enough of the seven treasures to fill a great chilicosm and gave them all as alms, he could not be compared to another man who hears the name of this sutra and understands the meaning of a single passage. Virtuous man, if someone teaches hundreds of sentient beings as innumerable as the grains of sand of the Ganges such that they attain arhatship, his merit cannot be compared to that of an expounder of half a gatha of this sutra.

“Virtuous man, if a man hears the name of this sutra and has faith in it without any doubt, you should know that he has sown the seeds of merit and wisdom not with just one or two Buddhas; indeed he has cultivated roots of goodness and heard the teaching of this sutra from Buddhas as innumerable as the grains of sand of the Ganges. Virtuous man, you should protect all practitioners of this sutra in the Decline of the Dharma Age so that evil demons and heretical practitioners...
will not disturb their bodies and minds and cause them to regress.”

At that time in the assembly, the Fire Head Vajra, the Wrecking Vajra, the Nila Vajra, and other vajra [guardians] numbering eighty thousand, together with their retinues, rose from their seats, prostrated themselves at the feet of the Buddha, circled him three times clockwise, and said in unison: “World Honored One! If in the Decline of the Dharma Age there are sentient beings who practice this definitive Mahayana teaching, we will guard and protect them as we would our own eyes. We will lead our retinues to their place of practice to guard and protect them day and night so that they will not regress. We will see to it that their families will forever be free from all calamities and hindrances, that they will never have any plagues and illnesses, that their wealth and treasures will be ample, and that they will not be in need.”

Then Mahabrahma–devaraia, the king of the twenty-eight heavens, the king of Mount Sumeru, and the [four] Lokapalas rose from their seats, prostrated themselves at the feet of the Buddha, circled him three times to the right and said in unison: “World Honored One! We too will guard and protect those who observe this sutra so that they can live in security and peace without regression.”

Then the powerful king of demons, Kumbhanda, and one hundred thousand other demon kings rose from their seats, prostrated themselves at the feet of the Buddha, circled him three times to the right and said: “World Honored One! We also will guard and protect those who observe this sutra from morning to night so that they will not fall back in their practice. If ghosts and spirits approach within one yojana of their dwelling, we shall pulverize them.”

When the Buddha had preached this scripture, all who were in the assembly, including bodhisattvas, devas, nagas, and others of the eight groups with their retinues, as well as the deva kings and Brahma kings, having heard the teaching
of the Buddha, were filled with great joy. With faith, they respectfully received and practiced this teaching.
Translator’s Introduction

Content Overview

The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment (Ch. Yuanjue jing 圓覺經) is a Buddhist scripture that has its origins within the Chan and Huayan circles of study and practice, probably composed in China around the beginning of the eighth century. The sutra was extremely popular and influential within the meditation–oriented Buddhist schools of East Asia: first in Chinese Chan, where its influence was considerable, and then later in Korean Seon, where it grew in popularity to the extent that it was made part of the official monastic curriculum of the main Korean school, the Jogye. The sutra also had some influence in Japan, although it never received the kind of attention from the Zen schools there that it did in China and Korea.

The popularity of this scripture can be attributed to two main factors. The first is the distinctly East Asian metaphysical dimension of its soteriology, as the sutra contains, in a tightly organized format, focused discussions of the most important theoretical issues concerning the nature of enlightenment that were at the fore of the East Asian Buddhist consciousness at its period of maturation. These are discussed through conceptual frameworks that have their antecedents in East Asian indigenous Buddhist texts such as the Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith and Vajrasamādhi–sūtra, in indigenous schools such as Tiantai and Huayan, as well as in the pre–Buddhist thought–systems of Confucianism and Daoism.

The second is the sutra’s highly practical and concise orientation: much of its content consists of direct instruction on matters of meditation and other related religious issues, such as monastic ritual, confession, the means of selecting a
proper teacher, how to maintain a proper relationship with such a teacher, and so forth. A large portion of the meditation-related explanations are not merely descriptive, but performative, which means that the reading of such passages is in itself a meditative exercise. The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment does not only explain to its reader the philosophy that grounds the “as–illusion samādhi” — it directly leads him/her through an exercise aimed at its attainment in the course of reading.

The term “perfect enlightenment,” as it is taught in this text, refers to an enlightenment that is not limited in scope. It is also not an enlightenment that is attained exclusively from any partial aspect of the Buddhist doctrine, such as the so-called “elementary” teachings or prajñāpāramitā teachings, and so forth. It is an enlightenment that can accept and explain all the various aspects of the Buddhist doctrine. This is why the full, formal name of the sutra as listed in the East Asian Buddhist canon is the Great Corrective Extensive Perfect Enlightenment Sutra of the Complete Doctrine.

The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment is arranged in twelve chapters, plus the short convocation. The convocation section describes the scene of the sermon and lists the major participants. The location is a state of deep meditative concentration (samādhi) and the participants are the Buddha and one hundred thousand great bodhisattvas, among whom twelve eminent bodhisattvas act as spokesmen. Each one of the twelve gets up one by one and asks the Buddha a set of questions about doctrine, practice and enlightenment. The structure of the sutra is such that the most “essential” and suddenistic discussions occur in the earlier chapters and the more “functional” and gradualistic dialogues occur later. This kind of structure reflects a motif associated with the doctrine of the Huayan school, which affirms that the Buddha delivered the abstruse Huayan jing as his first sermon, in an effort to directly awaken those whose “roots of virtue” were
well–matured. The terminology that such commentators as Zongmi (780–842) and Gihwa (1376–1433) use to describe these advanced practitioners is that they possess the capacity for the teaching of “sudden enlightenment” —a direct awakening to the non–duality of reality, which necessarily precludes gradualistic, “goal–oriented” practice. In the first two chapters (the chapters of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra), the Buddha holds very strictly to the sudden position, denying the possibility of enlightenment through gradual practice. In the third chapter he begins to allow for a bit of a gradual view, and the next several chapters become mixtures of the two. The final few chapters offer a fully gradualistic perspective.

According to the major Korean commentator on the sūtra, Gihwa, the first three chapters are aimed at those of superior capacity, the next seven for those of middling capacity and the final two for those of inferior capacity. However, this method of categorization does not necessarily mean that the later chapters become gradually easier to read and understand. In fact some of the most difficult discussions come in the later chapters. Most notable in this regard is the discussion of the “four traces” of Self, Person, Sentient Being and Life in Chapter Nine. Since the distinction between each of these four is extremely subtle, and the wording of the text itself is not that clear, this turns out to be one of the most difficult chapters to digest.

Version Notes

The original Chinese text of the sutra is found in the Taisho canon at vol. 17, no 842. However, for this translation we have used the version of that text that was amended by Gihwa in the course of his commentary on it. Gihwa discovered a number of places where he believed the text was out of joint, and offered clear corrections for these in his commentary. Having, in my study of the text, come to believe that Gihwa was on the mark, I have translated according to
his suggested amendments. The Chinese source text provided is also re-edited according to Gihwa’s amendments.

The translation of this amended version is basically equivalent to that contained in the appendix to my 1999 translation of the sutra under the title The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment: Korean Buddhism’s Guide to Meditation (SUNY Press). The translation in the main body of that book includes Gihwa’s full commentary, along with my own explanatory notes, and is recommended for anyone who wants to undertake more serious study of the sutra. I have made some small changes and corrections here, and expect to make more of these in the future when I have the chance to go through the sutra again more fully.
Convocation

經序文：

如是我聞。一時婆我婆入於神通大光明藏三昧正受。

一切如來光嚴住持。是諸衆生清淨覺地。身心寂滅平等本際。圓滿十方不二隨順。於不二境、現諸淨土。與大菩薩摩訶薩十萬人俱。其名曰文殊師利菩薩、普賢菩薩、普眼菩薩、金剛藏菩薩、清淨慧菩薩、威德自在菩薩、辨音菩薩、淨諸業障菩薩、普覺菩薩、圓覺菩薩、賢善首菩薩、而為上首。與諸眷屬、皆入三昧、同住如來平等法會。

Thus I have heard. One time, the Bhagavan entered the supramundane great radiant bright repository, in the exactly attained samādhi, where all tathāgatas abide in radiant splendor. This is the ground of pure enlightenment of sentient beings, the equal original reality where body and mind are completely erased.

He completely filled the ten directions with the accordance with non–duality, and in this non–dual state manifested all pure lands.

He was with one hundred thousand great bodhisattva–mahasattvas. Those who served as leaders of the assembly were named Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, Universal Vision Bodhisattva, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, Maitreya Bodhisattva, Pure Wisdom Bodhisattva, Power and Virtue Unhindered Bodhisattva, Voice of Discernment Bodhisattva, Purifier of All Karmic Hindrances Bodhisattva, Universal Enlightenment
Bodhisattva, Perfect Enlightenment Bodhisattva and Most Excellent of Worthies Bodhisattva. With their retinues, all entered into the same samādhi as the Tathāgata at this assembly of the equal dharma.
Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva 文殊師利

於是文殊師利菩薩在大衆中即從座起。頂禮佛足右繞三匝。長跪叉手而白佛言：大悲世尊願爲此會諸來法衆，説於如來本起因地法行。及説菩薩於大乘中發清淨心遠離諸病，能使未來末世求大乘者不墮邪見。作是語已、五體投地。如是三請終而復始。

爾時世尊告文殊師利菩薩言：善哉、善哉。善男子、汝等乃能爲諸菩薩諮詢如來因地法行。令諸菩薩於大乘中發清淨心。乃令末世一切衆生求大乘者得正住持不墮邪見。汝等諦聽、當爲汝說。時文殊師利菩薩奉教歡喜、及諸大衆默然而聽。

Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva then arose from his seat in the great assembly. He bowed his head to the Buddha’s feet and circumambulated him three times to the right.

He then knelt down with his hands clasped and addressed the Buddha, saying: “Greatly Compassionate World Honored One. Please, for all members of this assembly who have come for your dharma, teach us about the reality—[dharma] practice of the Tathāgata’s originally arisen pure causal stage. Also, please teach the bodhisattvas to arise pure mind in the great vehicle and become distantly removed from all dis-eases, such that they can cause the future sentient beings of the degenerate age who seek the great vehicle not to fall into mistaken views.” Having said this, he prostrated to the ground. He asked this question three times in succession.
Then the World Honored One, speaking to Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva said: “Excellent! Excellent! Good Son, you have skillfully asked on behalf of the bodhisattvas about the reality–practice of the causal stage of the Tathāgata, and have caused all the bodhisattvas to arouse the pure mind in the great vehicle. You have also caused all sentient beings of the degenerate age who seek the great vehicle to gain correct abiding such that they do not fall into erroneous views. Now listen well, and I shall explain for you.” Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva received the teaching with reverence and joy; all those in the great assembly became silent and listened.

善男子、無上
法王有大陀羅尼門。名為圓覺。
流出一切清淨、真如、菩提、涅槃及波羅蜜、教授
菩薩。一切如來本起因地皆依圓照清淨覺相、
永斷無明方成佛道。云何無明。
善
男子、一切衆生從無始來種種顛倒。猶如迷人四方易處、
妄認四大爲自身相。六
塵緣彰爲自心相。譬彼病目見空中華、
及第二月。善男子、空實無華、病者妄執。
由妄執故、非唯惑此虛空自性。亦復迷彼實華生
處。由此妄有輪轉生死。故名無明。

“Good sons, the unsurpassed King of the dharma possesses the great dhāraṇī–entrance. It is called ‘Perfect Enlightenment.’ From it is manifested all purity, suchness, bodhi, nirvana and the paramitas which teach bodhisattvas. All tathāgatas in their originally–arisen causal stage rely on the perfect illumination of the attributes of pure enlightenment to permanently sever ignorance and directly accomplish the Buddha–Way.”
What is ignorance? Good sons, all sentient beings fall into various inverted views without beginning. Just like a disoriented person who confuses the four directions, they mistakenly take the Four Elements as the attributes of their bodies and the conditioned shadows of the Six Objects as the attributes of their mind. It is just like when our eyes are diseased and we see flowers in the sky, or a second moon. Good sons, the sky actually has no flowers—they are the false attachment of the diseased person. And because of this false attachment, not only are we confused about the self-nature of the sky; we are also mixed up about the place where real flowers come from. From this there is the falsely existent transmigration through life and death. Therefore it is called “ignorance.”

善男子，此無明者
非實無體。如夢中人。夢時非無、及至於醒了無所得。如衆空華滅於虚空、不可說言有定滅處。何以故？無生處故。一切衆生於無生中妄見生滅。是故說名輪轉生死。
善男子、如來因地修圓覺者知是空華即無輪轉、亦無身心受彼生死。非作故無。本性無故。彼知覺者猶如虚空。知虚空者即空華相。亦不可說無知覺性。有無俱遣。
是則名為淨覺隨順。何以故？虚空性故；常不動故；如來藏中無起滅故、無知見故。如法界性、究竟圓滿・十方故。是則名為因地法行。菩薩因此於大乗中發清淨心。
末世衆生依此修行、不墮邪見。爾時世尊欲重宣此義而說偈言。
“Good sons, this ‘ignorance’ actually lacks substance. It is like a man who is dreaming. At the time of the dream, there is no non–existence. But when he awakens he finds that there is nothing for him to hold on to. Similarly, when the sky–flowers disappear from the sky, you cannot say that there is a definite point of their disappearance. Why? Because there is no point from which they arose. All sentient beings falsely perceive arising and ceasing within the unarisen. Therefore they say that there is ‘transmigration through life–and–death.’”

“Good sons, in the practice of Perfect Enlightenment of the causal stage of the Tathāgata one understands these ‘sky–flowers,’ thus there is no transmigration, nor body/mind to undergo life–and–death. But they are not caused to be non–existent. It is because they lack original nature. Now, this [prior] awareness is in itself void, like empty space. Yet since this awareness that perceives it to be like empty space is none other than the appearance of sky–flowers, you also cannot say that there is no nature of awareness. Existence and non–existence both being dispelled is called ‘according with pure enlightenment.’”

“Why? Because its nature is completely empty; because it is eternally changeless; because there is neither arising nor ceasing within the matrix of the Tathāgata, and because there are no fixed points of view. Like the nature of the reality–realm it is totally complete and perfect, pervading the ten directions. Therefore it is called the ‘reality–practice of the causal stage.’ Bodhisattvas, relying upon it arouse their pure mind within the Mahayana. Sentient beings of the degenerate age who practice relying on this will not fall into erroneous views.”

Then, the World Honored One, wanting to restate the gist of this, spoke a verse. He said:
文殊汝當知 一切諸如來
從於本因地 皆以智慧覺
了達於無明 知彼如空華
即能免流轉 又如夢中人
醒時不可説 覺者如虚空
平等不動轉 覺・十方界
即得成佛道 衆幻滅無處
成道亦無得 本性圓滿故
菩薩於此中 能發菩提心
末世諸衆生 修此免邪見

Mañjuśrī, you should know
All Tathāgatas
From their originally arisen causal stage
Penetrate ignorance
With enlightened wisdom.
Knowing it to be like sky–flowers
They are able to escape transmigration.
It is like the man in the dream
Who has nothing to grasp upon awakening.
Awareness is like space
Equal, changeless.
Enlightenment pervading the worlds
of the ten directions
Is none other than the attainment of the Buddha–way.
All illusions cease at no–place
And in accomplishing the Way
there is nothing attained.
That’s because the original nature is complete, perfect.
In it, bodhisattvas
Are able to produce bodhicitta
All sentient beings of the degenerate age
Practicing this, will avoid erroneous views.
於是普賢菩薩在大衆中即從座起。頂禮佛足右繞三匝。長跪叉手而白佛言：
大悲世尊。願為此會諸菩薩衆及爲末世一切衆生修大乘者：開示修行方便漸次，聞此圓覺清淨境。界云何修行？
世尊、若彼衆生知如幻者、身心亦幻、云何以幻還修於幻？若諸幻性一切盡滅則無有心。誰爲修行？云何復説修行如幻？
若諸衆生本不修行於生死中常居幻化。曾不了知如幻境界令妄想心、云何解脫？
作是語已、五體投地。如是三請、終而復始。

Then Samantabhadra Bodhisattva rose from his seat in the great assembly. He bowed to the Buddha’s feet and circumambulated him three times to the right. He knelt down with his hands clasped, and said to the Buddha: “Greatly Compassionate World Honored One. I would like to ask for all the bodhisattvas at this assembly and for the sentient beings of the degenerate age who are practicing Mahayana: Please reveal the expedient stages of practice and let them hear of this pure realm of perfect enlightenment. How should we practice?”

World Honored One, if these sentient beings know about “illusion,” and that body and mind are also illusion, how can they remedy illusion using illusion? If all illusory natures are completely annihilated, then there is no mind. Who is going to carry out the practice? Moreover, based on this, how can you teach the practice of “illusion?” If all sentient beings originally do not practice, then they will
remain forever trapped within the illusion of life and death. Not having penetrated the realm of the illusory, how will they liberate the mind that is trapped in false conceptualization?

“I implore you on behalf of all the bodhisattvas at this assembly, as well as for all sentient beings of the degenerate age, to teach the gradual practice of expedient means: what kind of expedient means of gradual practice should we introduce to cause sentient beings to be eternally free from all illusions?” Having said this, he prostrated fully to the ground. He asked this question three times in succession.

爾時世尊告普賢菩薩言: 善哉、善哉。汝等乃能為諸菩薩及末世衆生諮問如來修習菩薩如幻三昧方便漸次、令諸衆生得離諸幻。汝今諦聽、當為汝説。時普賢菩薩奉教歡喜、及諸大衆默然而聽。

Then the World Honored One, speaking to Samantabhadra Bodhisattva said: “Excellent, excellent! Good son, you have well asked the Tathāgata on behalf of the bodhisattvas and the sentient beings of the degenerate age about the expedient stages of the practice of the bodhisattva’s ‘as–illusion–samādhi.’ This practice enables all the sentient beings to gain freedom from illusion. Now listen well, and I shall explain it for you.” Samantabhadra received this teaching with great joy and reverence; all in the great assembly became silent and listened.

善男子、一切衆生種種幻化皆生如來圓覺妙心、猶如空華從空而有。幻華雖滅、空性不壞。衆生幻心還依幻滅、諸幻盡滅、覺心不動。依幻説
善男子，一切菩薩及末世衆生應當遠離一切幻化虛妄境界。
由堅執持遠離心故，心如幻者亦復遠離。遠離為幻亦復遠離。遠離離幻亦復遠離。得無所離即除諸幻。比如鑽火兩木相因。火出木盡灰飛煙滅。以幻修幻亦復如是。諸幻雖盡不入斷滅。

“Good sons, all bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age should separate from all illusory and false realms. By firmly abiding in separation from thought, you also separate from the thought of ‘illusion.’ You also separate from the illusion of ‘separation.’ You also separate from this separation from this illusion of separation. You will reach ‘nothing to be separated from,’ which is the removal of all illusion. It is like making a fire with two sticks. The fire blazes and the wood is consumed; the ashes fly away and the
smoke vanishes. Using illusion to remedy illusion is exactly like this. Yet even though all illusions are extinguished, you do not enter into nothingness.”

善男子、知幻即離、不作方便。離幻即覺亦無漸次。一切菩薩及末世衆生依此修行如是乃能永離諸幻。爾時世尊、欲重宣此義而説偈言。
　善賢汝當知 一切諸衆生
　無始幻無明 皆從諸如來
　圓 覺心建立 猶如虛空華
　依空而有相 空華若復滅
　虚空本不動 幻從 諸覺生
　幻滅覺圓滿 覺心不動故
　若彼諸菩薩 及末世衆生
　常應遠離幻 諸幻悉皆離
　如木中生火 木盡火還滅
　覺則無漸次 方 便亦如是

“Good sons, when you know illusion, you will immediately be free, without devising expedient means. Freedom from illusion is in itself enlightenment, and there are no stages. All Bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age who practice like this will be permanently free from all illusion.”

Then the World Honored One, wanting to restate the gist of this, spoke a verse. He said:

Samantabhadra, you should know
The beginningless illusory ignorance
Of all sentient beings
Is all created from
The perfectly enlightened mind of all the Tathāgatas.
It is just like the sky–flowers
Which have their appearance in relation to the sky;
Though the sky–flowers vanish
The sky has never changed.
Illusion is born from enlightenment;
In the cessation of illusion
enlightenment remains perfectly complete.
This is because the enlightened mind is changeless.
If these bodhisattvas
And sentient beings of the degenerate age
Always appropriately separate from illusion,
They will completely free themselves from it.
Like the flame that springs from wood:
The wood is consumed
and the flame again disappears.
If you are enlightened,
then there are no stages of practice
Nor is there such a thing as expedient means.
Universal Vision Bodhisattva 普眼菩薩

於是普眼菩薩在大衆中、
即從座起。頂禮佛足右繞三匝。長
跪叉手而白佛言:
大悲世尊。願為此會諸菩薩衆及為末世一切衆生
、演説菩薩修行 漸次。云何思惟？ 云何住持？
衆生未悟、作何方便普令開悟？世尊、若彼衆生
無正方便及正思惟、聞佛如來說此三昧、心生迷
悶、不能悟入。願興慈悲為我等輩 及末世衆生、
假説方便。作是語已、
五體投地。如是三請終而復始。

Then the bodhisattva Universal Vision arose from his seat in the great assembly. He bowed to the Buddha’s feet and circumambulated him three times to the right. He knelt down with his hands clasped and addressed the Buddha, saying: “Greatly Compassionate World Honored One. I beg of you on behalf of the bodhisattvas of this assembly and the sentient beings of the degenerate age, to expound on the bodhisattvas’ stages and practice. How should they think? How should they abide? For sentient beings who have not yet awakened, what kinds of expedient means should be devised to cause them all to awaken?”

“World Honored One, if these sentient beings lack the correct expedients and correct thought, then when they hear you explain this samādhi, confusion will arise in their minds and they will be unable to awaken and enter. Please arouse your compassion for us and for the sentient beings of the degenerate age, and provisionally explain these expedient methods.” Having said this, he prostrated himself to the ground. He made this request three times in succession.
爾時世尊、告普眼菩薩言：善哉、善哉。善男子、汝等乃能為諸菩薩及末世衆生問於如來修行漸次、思惟、住持、乃至假説種種方便。汝今諦聽、當爲汝說。時普眼菩薩奉教歡喜、及諸大衆默然而聽。

善男子、彼新學菩薩及末世衆生欲求如來淨圓覺心、應當正念遠離諸幻、先依如來奢摩他行。堅持禁戒安處徒衆、宴坐靜室恒作是念：我今此身四大和合。所謂髪毛爪齒皮肉筋骨髄腦垢色皆歸於地。唾涕膿血涕液涎沫淡涙精氣大小便利、皆歸於水。煖氣歸火、動轉歸風。四大各離、今者妄身當在何處？則知此身畢竟無體。和合爲相、實同幻化。四緣假合、妄有六根。六根四大中外合成、妄有緣氣。於中積聚、似有緣相假名爲心。善男子、此虛妄心若無六塵則不能
善男子，彼之衆生幻身滅故，幻心亦滅。幻心滅故，幻塵亦

“Good sons, these newly awakened bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age who yearn for the pure enlightened mind of the Tathāgata must correct their thoughts and rid themselves of all illusions, first relying on the Tathāgata’s practice of śamatha. Firmly established in moral discipline and living in harmony with like-minded students, then practicing silent sitting in a quiet room, they should uninterruptedly be mindful of the following:”

“This present body is a synthesis of the Four Elements. Hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, bones, marrow, brains and pigment all return to Earth. Saliva, mucus, pus, blood, sputum, scum, phlegm, tears, semen, urine and feces all return to Water. Heat returns to Fire, and movement returns to Wind. When the Four Elements have been separated, where can the false body exist? Now you know that this body ultimately has no substance. As a synthesis it appears, but in reality it is like an illusion conjured by a magician.”

“When these four factors temporarily combine, the Six Faculties falsely appear; through the internal and external matching of the Six Faculties and Four Elements, there is the deluded apprehension of conditioned energy. Within this conglomeration, there seem to be marks of this conditioned energy, which is provisionally called ‘mind.’ Good sons, if this false mind does not have its Six Objects, it cannot exist. If the Four Elements are separated, there are no objects to be experienced. At this point, the cognized objects each disperse and vanish, and ultimately there is no dependently arisen mind to be seen.”

善男子，彼之衆生幻身滅故，幻心亦滅。幻心滅故，幻塵亦
滅。幻塵滅故、幻滅亦滅。幻滅滅故、非幻不滅。
比如磨鏡、垢盡明現。善男子、
當知身心皆為幻垢。垢相永滅十方清淨。善男子、
比如清淨摩尼寶珠、映於五色隨
方各現。諸愚癡者見彼摩尼實有五色。善男子、
圓覺淨性現於身心、隨類各應。彼
愚癡者説淨圓覺實有如是身心自相、亦復如是。
由此不能遠於幻化。是故我説身心
幻垢。對離幻垢説名菩薩。
垢盡對除、即無對垢
及說名者。

“Good sons, since the illusory body of this sentient
being vanishes, the illusory mind also vanishes. Since the
illusory mind vanishes, illusory objects also vanish. Since
illusory objects vanish, illusory vanishing also vanishes.
Since illusory vanishing vanishes, non- illusion does not
vanish. It is like polishing a mirror: when the filth is gone its
brightness naturally appears. Good sons, you should
understand both body and mind to be illusory filth. When the
defiled aspects are permanently extinguished, the entire
universe becomes pure.”

“Good sons, it is like a pure mani–pearl which reflects
as all kinds of colors, depending upon its surroundings. The
foolish see that pearl as really having these colors. Good sons,
the pure nature of Perfect Enlightenment is disclosed in
bodies and minds, according to each individual type. When
these ignorant fellows say that pure Perfect Enlightenment
really has body and mind, it is the same sort of error. It is
only because these people are unable to free themselves from
illusory appearances that I call body and mind ‘illusory filth.’
The one who opposes and removes illusory filth is named
‘bodhisattva.’ When filth is gone, its opposition is removed;
then there is no opposition, no filth, nor anything to be named.”

善男子、此菩薩及末世衆生證得諸幻、滅影像故、爾時便得無方清淨。善男子、無邊虚空覺所顯發。覺圓明故顯心清淨。心清淨故、見塵清淨。見清淨故、眼根清淨。根清淨故、眼識清淨。識清淨故、聞塵清淨。聞清淨故、耳根清淨。根清淨故、耳識清淨。識清淨故、覺塵清淨。如是乃至鼻舌身意亦復如是。善男子、根清淨故、色塵清淨。色清淨故、聲塵清淨。聲清淨故、香塵清淨。香味觸法亦復如是。

“Good sons, because these bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age fully witness all illusion and dispel all images, they immediately experience limitless purity.”

“Good sons, enlightenment reveals limitless space. Since enlightenment is perfectly clear, the manifest mind is pure. Since the mind is pure, the objects of vision are pure. Since vision is pure, the eye faculty is pure. Since the eye faculty is pure, the visual consciousness is pure. Since this consciousness is pure, hearing is pure. Since hearing is pure, the ear faculty is pure. Since the faculty is pure, the auditory consciousness is pure. Since the consciousness is pure, all perception is pure, and so it is true for smell, taste, touch and conceptualization as well.”

“Good sons, since the eye faculty is pure, the color spectrum is pure. Since color is pure, the field of sound is also pure. The same is true of the fields of smell, taste, touch and thought.”
善男子、六塵清淨故、地大清淨。地清淨故、水
大清淨。火
大風大亦復如是。善男子、四大清淨故、十二處
、十八界、二十五有清淨。彼清淨
故、十力、四無所畏、四無礙智、佛十八不共法
、三十七助道品清淨。如是乃至八
萬四千陀羅尼門一切清淨。善男子、一切實相性
清淨故、一身清淨。一身清淨故、
多身清淨。多身清淨故、如是乃至十方衆生圓覺
清淨。善男子、一世界清淨故、多
世清淨。多世清淨故、如是乃至盡於虚空、圓裹
三世、一切平等清淨不動。

“Good sons, since the six objects are pure, the Earth
element is pure. Since Earth is pure, Water is pure, and so are
Fire and Wind. Good sons, since the Four Elements are pure,
the Twelve Loci, the Eighteen Realms and the Twenty–Five
Kinds of Existence are pure. Since these are pure, the Ten
Powers, the Four Kinds of Fearlessness, the Four Types of
Unobstructed Wisdom, the Buddha’s Eighteen Distinctive
Characteristics, and the Thirty–seven Aids to Enlightenment
are pure, and so on up to the Eighty–four thousand dhāraṇī–
entrances, everything is pure.”

“Good sons, since all true marks are pure in their
nature, one body is pure. Since one body is pure, many bodies
are pure. Since many bodies are pure the same is true of all
sentient beings in the ten directions, who are perfectly
enlightened and pure. Good sons, since one world is pure,
many worlds are pure. Since many worlds are pure, we can
see that throughout all of space, completely including the
three times, all things are equal, pure and changeless.”
善男子，虚空如是平等不動，當知覺性平等不動。四大不動
故，當知覺性平等不動。如是乃至八萬四千陀羅尼門平等不動。當知覺性平等不動。
善男子，覺性・滿清淨不動圓無際故、當知六根・滿法界。根・滿故、當知六塵・滿法界。塵・滿故、當知四大・滿法界。如是乃至陀羅尼門・滿法界。善男子、由彼妙覺性・滿故、根性塵性無壞無雜。根塵無壞故、如是乃至陀羅尼門無壞無雜。如百千燈光照一室。其光・滿無壞無雜。

“Good sons, since space is equal and changeless, you should know that the nature of enlightenment is equal and changeless. Since the Four Elements are changeless, you should know that the nature of enlightenment is equal and changeless. The same holds true all the way up through the 84,000 dhāraṇī–entrances which are equal and changeless. Therefore you should know that the nature of enlightenment is equal and changeless.”

“Good sons, the unchanging purity of the nature of enlightenment completely pervades—it includes everything without restriction. Therefore you should know that the six faculties completely pervade the realm of reality. Since the faculties completely pervade, you should know that the six sensory fields completely pervade the realm of reality. Since the sensory fields completely pervade, you should know that the Four Elements completely pervade the realm of reality. It is the same way with all things, including the dhāraṇī–entrances, which completely pervade the realm of reality.”

“Good sons, since this marvelous nature of enlightenment completely pervades, there is neither conflict
nor confusion between the natures of the faculties and their objects. Since the faculties and objects have no conflict, it is like this through all of existence, including in the dhāraṇī-entrances, which have neither conflict nor confusion. It is like one hundred thousand lamps shining in one room. Their light completely pervades without conflict or confusion.”

善男子、覺成就故、當知菩薩不與法縛、不求法脫。不厭生死、不愛涅槃。不敬持戒、不憎毁禁。不重久習、不輕初學。何以故？
一切覺故。
譬如眼光曉了前境。其光圓滿得無憎愛。
何以故？光體無二、無憎愛故。

“Good sons, since their enlightenment is fully perfected, you should know that bodhisattvas are not attached to the dharma, and do not seek liberation from the dharma. They do not hate samsāra and do not love nirvana. They do not venerate one for keeping the precepts, nor despise the person who breaks them. They are not in awe of the adept practitioner and do not look down on the beginner. Why? Because they are all enlightened. It is like vision seeing an object. The vision completely pervades without experiencing like or dislike. Why? Vision, in essence has no duality, therefore there is neither like nor dislike.”

善男子、此菩薩及末世衆生修習此心得成就者、與此無修亦
無成就。圓覺普照寂滅無二。與中百千滿億阿僧祇不可說恒河沙諸佛世界猶如空華、
亂起亂滅。不即不離無縛無脫。始知衆生本來成佛、生死涅槃猶如昨夢。善男子、
善男子、彼諸菩薩如是修行、如是漸次、如是思惟、如是住持、如是方便、如是開悟。求如是法、亦不迷悶。爾時世尊、欲重宣此義而說偈言。普眼汝當知 一切諸衆生
身心皆如幻 身相屬四大
身性歸六塵 四大體各離
誰為和合者 如是漸修行
一切悉清淨 不動 • 法界
無作不任 滅 亦無能證者
一切佛世界 猶如虚空華
三世悉平等 畢竟無來去
初發心菩薩 及末世眾生
欲求入佛道 應如是修習

“Good sons, these bodhisattvas use this kind practice, gradually advance like this, think in this way, abide in this way, and awaken others using these kinds of expedient means. If you seek this kind of dharma, you will not again be vexed.”

Then the World Honored One, wanting to restate the gist of this, spoke a verse. He said:
Universal Vision, you should know
The bodies and minds of all sentient beings
Are only illusion.
The body is composed of the Four Elements;
The mind depends upon the Six Objects.
When the Four Elements disperse,
Who will be there as a synthesis?
In this kind of gradient practice
All is completely pure,
Unchanging, pervading the realm of reality.
Without contrivance, stopping,
naturalism or annihilation
And also without any subjective “releaser,”
All Buddha–worlds are
Just like sky–flowers.
The three times are all the same
Ultimately without coming or going.
Bodhisattvas who have recently arisen their minds
And sentient beings of the degenerate age
Who want to enter the Buddha Way
Should practice like this.
Vajragarbha Bodhisattva 金剛藏菩薩

於是金剛藏菩薩在大衆中、
即從座起。頂禮佛足右繞三匝、
長跪叉手而白佛言：
大悲世尊。善為一切諸菩薩衆宣揚如來圓覺清淨
大陀羅尼因地
法行漸次方便。與諸衆生開發蒙昧、在會法衆承
佛慈誨、幻翳朗然、慧目清淨。世
尊、若諸衆生本來成佛、何故復有一切無明？
若諸無明衆生本有、何因緣故如來
復說本來成佛？
十方異生本成佛道、後起無明、何時復生一切煩
惱？惟願不捨無
遮大慈、為諸菩薩及末世衆生開秘密藏。令諸菩
薩得決定心、及令末世一切衆生得
聞如是修多羅教了義法門永斷疑悔。作是語已、
五體投地。如是三請終而復始。

Then the bodhisattva Vajragarbha rose from his seat in
the great assembly and bowed his head to the Buddha’s feet.
He circumambulated him three times to the right, and then he
knelt down with his hands clasped and said to the Buddha:
“Greatly Compassionate World Honored One, you have
lectured superbly for all these bodhisattvas about the purity of
Perfect Enlightenment, the great dhāraṇī, the dharma practice
of the causal stage and gradient practices according to
provisional explanations. You have cleared away the sentient
beings’ clouds of darkness; all those at this dharma assembly,
having received your compassionate instruction, have
clarified their optical illusions and purified their wisdom eye.”

“World Honored One; if all sentient beings are originally perfect buddhas, then how can they also possess ignorance? If sentient beings are originally ignorant, how can you say that they have always been perfect buddhas? If all the worldlings in the ten directions are originally perfectly enlightened, but later give rise to ignorance, at what point do all these tathāgatas regenerate these afflictions? My only request is that you not discard your limitless great compassion and that you reveal the concealed treasure to the bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age. This will cause bodhisattvas to gain unshakable faith, and allow all sentient beings of the degenerate age to gain access to this teaching which is a sutra instruction of the complete doctrine, such that they can permanently sever doubt and regret.”

Having said this, he prostrated himself to the ground. He asked this question three times in succession.

爾時世尊告金剛藏菩薩言：善哉、善哉。
善男子、汝等乃能爲諸菩薩及末世衆生問於如來甚深秘密究竟方便。是諸菩薩最上教誨了義大乘、能使十方修學菩薩及末世一切衆生得決定心、永斷疑悔。汝今諦聽、當爲汝說。
時金剛藏菩薩奉教歡喜、及諸大衆默然而聽。

“Then the World Honored One, speaking to the bodhisattva Vajragarbha said: Excellent, excellent! Good son, you have asked well for the bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age about the Tathāgata’s extremely deep and recondite final expedient means. This is the highest teaching given by the bodhisattvas, the fully revealed doctrine
of the Great Vehicle, which is able to cause the enlightening bodhisattvas of the ten directions, as well as the sentient beings of the degenerate age to gain unshakable faith and permanently sever doubt and regret. Now listen well, and I shall explain this for you.” Vajragarbha Bodhisattva received this instruction with reverence and great joy and those in the great assembly became silent and listened.

善男子，一切世界始終生滅、前後有無、聚散起止循還往復
念念相續種種取捨皆是輪廻。未出輪廻而辨圓覺、彼圓覺性即同流轉。若免輪廻無有是處。譬如動目能搖湛水。亦如定眼由廻轉火。雲駛月運、舟行岸移、亦復如是。善男子、諸旋未息。彼物先住尚不可得。何況輪轉生死垢心、曾未清淨、觀佛圓覺而不旋復？是故汝等便生三惑。

“Good sons, all worlds begin and end, are born and die, have prior and after, exist and do not exist, gather and scatter, arise and cease. This circular motion of going and returning without a moment’s lapse, variously being grasped and released, is all cyclic existence. The nature of a Perfect Enlightenment that is discerned without having left cyclic existence is simply transmigratory. If you think you can escape cyclic existence in this way, you are completely off the mark.”

“It is comparable to the way in which shaking the eyes can make still water appear to move, or the way that a transfixed gaze can enable the appearance of a fire-wheel. In the same way, clouds flying past the moon make it seem to move, and when you are in a moving boat, the shore appears to move. Good sons, all these things are in motion without
cease, and even though the objects are already stationary, you
can’t get a fix on them. How can you possibly expect to get a
glimpse of the Buddha’s Perfect Enlightenment with the
cyclical, samsaric, stained mind which has never been clear?
Because of this, you are prone to give rise to these three
mental disturbances.”

善男子、譬如幻翳妄見空華。幻翳若除、不可説言: 此翳已滅、何時更起一切諸翳？何以故？
翳華二法非相對故。亦如空華滅於空時、不可説言: 虛空何時更起空華？何以故？
空本無華、非起滅故。生死涅槃同於起滅。
妙覺圓照離於華翳。

“Good sons, it is like an illusory eye disease falsely
engendering a vision of sky–flowers. If the illusory eye
disease is removed, you cannot ask: ‘now that this eye–
disease is cleared away, when will other eye–diseases
reappear?’ Why? Because these two things—flowers and
eye–disease, are not interdependent. It is also like when the
sky–flowers vanish from the sky. You can’t ask, ‘when will
the sky re–arise sky–flowers?’ Why? Since the sky originally
has no flowers, they do not arise and cease. Saṃsāra and
nirvana are the same as arising and ceasing; marvelous
enlightenment illuminates perfectly, and is free from flowers
or eye disease.”

善男子、當知虚空非是暫有、亦非暫無。況復如
來隨順圓覺、
而為虛空平等本性？善男子、如銷金鑛。金非銷
有。既已成金、不重為鑛。經無窮
善男子，一切如來妙圓覺心本無菩提及於涅槃，亦無成佛及不成佛，無妄輪廻及非輪廻。善男子，但諸聲聞所圓境界、身心語言皆悉斷滅。終不能至彼之親證所現涅槃。何況能以有思惟心、測度如來圓覺境界？如取螢火燒須彌山，終不能著。以輪廻心、生輪廻見、入於如來大寂滅海，終不能至。是故我説一切菩薩及末世衆生先斷無始輪廻根本。

“Good sons, the marvelous perfectly enlightened mind of the tathāgatas originally has neither bodhi nor nirvana; it has neither accomplishment of Buddhahood nor non–accomplishment of Buddhahood; no false cyclic existence and no non–cyclic existence.”
“Good sons, in the state is the consummation of the direct disciple path, there is complete severance of the karmic activities of word, thought and action.”

“Yet they are still incapable of attaining their own actualized and manifest nirvana. How can you possibly expect to fathom the Tathāgata’s state of Perfect Enlightenment using discursive thought? It is like trying to burn Mt. Sumeru with the fire from a firefly—it is impossible!”

“Using the cyclic mind, you produce cyclic views and you will never be able to enter the Tathāgata’s ocean of perfect tranquillity. Therefore, I say that all bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age should first sever the beginningless root of cyclic existence.”

善男子、有作思惟從有心起。皆是六塵妄想緣氣非實心體。已如空華。用此思惟辨於佛境猶如空華復結空果。展轉妄想無有是處。善男子、虛妄浮心多諸巧見不能成就圓覺方便。如是分別非爲正問。爾時世尊、欲重宣此義而説偈言。

金剛藏當知 如來寂滅性
未曾有終始 若以輪廻心
思惟即旋復 但至輪廻際
不能入佛海 譬如銷金鑛
金非銷故有 雖復本來金
終以銷成就 一成真金體
不復重爲鑛 生死與涅槃
凡夫及諸佛 同爲空華相
思惟猶幻化 何況結虛妄
若能了此心 然後求圓覺
“Good sons, habituated discursive thought arises from the conditioned mind. The six data–fields, false conceptualization and conditioned energies are not the true essence of mind—indeed, they are like sky–flowers. But using discursive thought to discern the Buddha–state is like the sky–flowers further producing ‘sky–fruits.’ Circular false thoughts are useless here.”

“Good sons, false, floating thoughts and numerous clever views are incapable of perfecting the expedient means of Perfect Enlightenment. Using this kind of discrimination, you cannot even formulate a proper question.”

Then the World Honored One, desiring to restate the gist of this, spoke a verse, saying:

Vajragarbha, you should know
The Tathāgata’s perfectly tranquil nature
Has never had a beginning or end.
If you use the cyclic mind
Discursive thought just revolves,
At most, reaching the limits of cyclic existence,
And you are unable to enter the Buddha–sea.
It is like smelting gold ore:
The gold does not exist because of smelting,
Yet crude gold, from smelting
Once subsequently perfected,
Never returns to the state of ore.
Saṃsāra and nirvana,
Worldlings and Buddhas
Like sky–flowers, are appearances.
Discursive thought is just an illusory phenomenon:
How can it penetrate falsity?
Only after you fully know this mind
Can you seek Perfect Enlightenment.
Then the bodhisattva Maitreya arose from his seat in the great assembly and bowed his head to the Buddha's feet. He circumambulated him three times to the right, and then knelt down with his hands clasped. He addressed the Buddha, saying: “Greatly Compassionate World Honored One, you have opened wide the secret treasure for the bodhisattvas and have made all in the great assembly deeply awaken to transmigration and distinguish between the correct and mistaken. You have been able to impart the Fearless Eye of the Way and unshakable faith in Great Nirvana to the sentient beings of the degenerate age; they will not again chase after cyclic existence or give rise to cyclic views.”

“World Honored One; if the bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age aspire to float on the Tathāgata’s
great tranquil ocean, how should they sever the root of cyclic existence? In the various kinds of cyclic existence, how many types of beings are there? How many differences are there in types of practice of the Buddha’s bodhi? When we reenter the dirty and difficult world, what kinds of teaching devices should we establish to save all sentient beings? I implore you not to relax in your world—saving great compassion—that you clarify the Wisdom Eye of all practicing bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age, illuminate their mind-mirror, and completely awaken the Tathāgata’s unsurpassed insight.” After saying this, he prostrated fully to the ground. He asked this question three times in succession.

爾時世尊 告彌勒菩薩言: 善哉、善哉。善男子、汝等乃能為諸菩薩及末世衆生請問如來深奧秘密微妙之義、令諸菩薩潔清慧目、及令一切末世衆生永斷輪廻。心悟實相具無生忍。汝今諦聽、當為汝説。時彌勒菩薩奉教歡喜、及諸大衆黙然而聽。

Then the World Honored One, addressing the Bodhisattva Maitreya, said: “Excellent, excellent! Good son, you have questioned well on behalf of the bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age about the Tathāgata’s mysterious, secret, subtle doctrine. You have enabled the Bodhisattvas to purify their Wisdom Eye, and allowed all sentient beings of the degenerate age to permanently sever themselves from cyclic existence. Their minds will awaken to their true characteristic and they will possess the equipoise that comes with the awareness of the non–arising characteristic of existence. Now listen well, and I shall explain this for you.” Maitreya received this instruction with
joy and great reverence. All those in the great assembly Became silent and listened.

善男子、一切衆生、從無始際、由有種種恩愛貪欲、故有輪廻。若諸世界一切種性、卵生、胎生、濕生、化生、皆因淫欲而正性命、當知輪廻愛爲根本。由有諸欲助發愛性、是故能令生死相續。欲因愛生、命因欲有。衆生愛命還依欲本。愛欲爲因愛命爲果。由於欲境起諸違順。境背愛心而生憎嫉、造種種業。是故復生地獄餓鬼。知欲可厭、愛厭業道、捨惡樂善復現天人。還知諸愛可厭惡故、棄愛樂捨。還滋愛本、便現有爲增上善果。皆輪廻故不成聖道。是故衆生欲脫生死免諸輪廻、先斷貪欲及除愛渴。

“Good sons, all sentient beings transmigrate because of their possession, from beginningless time, of affection, attached love, craving and desire.”

“Since all the different types of beings—those born from eggs, those born from wombs, those born from moisture and those born by transformation all receive their birth and life from sexual desire, you should realize that cyclic existence has attached love as its basis. This tendency to be gripped by attached love is abetted by the existence of all desires, therefore it is able to empower the continuity of saṃsāra. Desire arises depending upon attached love; life force exists depending upon desire. Furthermore, the attached love and life of sentient beings have desire as their root. Attached love and desire are causes, attached love and life are results.”
“It is in reference to the objects of desire that you arise all likes and dislikes. When the object is contrary to the attached mind, you arise aversion and jealousy and go around creating all sorts of karma. It is because of this that you are reborn as a hell-being or a hungry ghost. But then, knowing that desire should be abandoned and attaching to the path of abandonment of karmic activity, you cast off evil and enjoy goodness; hence, you are reborn as a god or man. Again, knowing that you should dislike all forms of attachment, you let go of attachment and enjoy detachment. This greatly nourishes the root of attachment and you automatically produce conditionally enhanced positive states. But since all of this is cyclic existence, you still do not attain to the sagely Way. Therefore, sentient beings who desire to be free from birth and death and want to escape cyclic existence, first have to sever desire and rid themselves of attached love.”

善男子、菩薩變化示現世間、非愛為本。但以慈悲令彼舍愛假諸貪欲而入生死。若諸末世一切衆生能捨諸欲及除憎愛、永斷輪廻。勤救如來圓覺境界於清淨心、便得開悟。善男子、一切衆生由本貪欲發揮無明、顯出五性差別不等。依二種障而現深淺。云何二障？一者理障、礙正知見。二者事障、續諸生死。云何五性？善男子、若此二障未得斷滅、名未成佛。若諸衆生永捨貪欲、先除事障、未斷理障、但能悟入聲聞緣覺、未能顯住菩薩境界。
“Good sons, when bodhisattvas appear in the world to teach, it is not based on attachment. It is only their compassionate intention to have the sentient beings discard attachment that they provisionally take on all kinds of desire and enter birth–and–death.”

“If all sentient beings of the degenerate age can cast off their desires and remove love and hate, they will permanently end their cyclic existence. Seeking the perfectly enlightened state of the Tathāgata in their pure minds, they will directly attain awakening.”

“Good sons, sentient beings, because of their base of desire, generate ignorance and manifest the distinctions and inequalities of the Five Natures. Because of the Two Hindrances there is manifestation of deep and shallow. What are the Two Hindrances? The first is the noumenal hindrance which obstructs correct awareness; the second is the phenomenal hindrance which enables the continuation of samsāra.”

“What are the ‘Five Natures?’ Good sons, if sentient beings have not yet been able to destroy the Two Hindrances, this is called ‘non–consummation of one’s Buddhahood.’ If sentient beings permanently discard desire, first removing the phenomenal hindrance, but not yet severing the noumenal hindrance, they are able to awaken in the way of direct disciples and solitary realizers but are not able to manifest and dwell in the state of the bodhisattva.”

善男子、若諸末世一切衆生欲汎如來大圓覺海、先當發願勤
斷二障。二障已伏即能悟入菩薩境界。若事理障
已永斷滅、即入如來微妙圓覺、滿
足菩提及大涅槃。善男子、一切衆生皆證圓覺。
逢善知識、依彼所作因地法行。時
事修習便有頓漸。若遇如來無上菩提正修行路、
根無大小。皆成佛果。若諸衆生雖求善友遇邪見者。未得正悟。是則名為外道種性。邪師過謬非衆生咎。是名衆生五性差別。

“Good sons, if all sentient beings of the degenerate age desire to float on the great ocean of the Tathāgata’s Perfect Enlightenment, they should first arouse the determination to do away with the Two Hindrances. Once the Two Hindrances are subdued, one can awaken and enter the state of the bodhisattva; after permanently destroying the noumenal and phenomenal hindrances, one is able to enter the sublime Perfect Enlightenment of the Tathāgata, and able to fully accomplish bodhi and great nirvana.”

“Good sons, all sentient beings without exception actualize Perfect Enlightenment.”

“When you meet a Genuine Teacher, rely on the reality–practice of the causal stage that he sets up for you. When you follow this practice, both sudden and gradual will be contained. If you come upon the correct path of practice of the unsurpassed bodhi of the Tathāgatas, then there are no ‘superior’ or ‘inferior’ abilities of people: all accomplish Buddhahood. If, while seeking a Genuine Teacher, sentient beings meet one with mistaken views, they will not gain the correct awakening. Although this is called the ‘heterodox nature,’ the mistake is the fault of the teacher, and not that of the sentient beings. This is the ‘distinction of the five natures’ of sentient beings.”

善男子、菩薩唯以大悲方便入諸世間、開發未悟、乃至示現種種形相、逆順境界。與其同事化令成佛。皆依無始清淨願力。若諸末世一切衆生於大圓覺起增上心當發菩薩清淨大願。應作是言:
願我今者住佛圓覺求善知識、莫值外道及與二乘。依願修行漸斷諸障。障盡、願滿、便登解脫清淨法殿、證大圓覺妙莊嚴域。爾時世尊、欲重宣此義而説偈言。

彌勒汝當知 一切諸衆生
不得大解脱 皆由貪欲故
墮落於生死 若能斷憎愛
及與貪瞋癡 不因差別性
皆得成佛道 二障永銷滅
求師得正悟 隨順菩薩願
依止大涅槃 十方諸菩薩
皆以大悲願 示現入生死
現在修行者 及末世衆生
勤斷諸愛見 便歸大圓覺

“Good sons, it is only through their Greatly Compassionate expedient means that bodhisattvas enter the secular world, awakening the unenlightened, manifesting various forms and shapes, functioning in agreeable and disagreeable circumstances. It is only relying on the beginningless pure power of their vow to save all beings that they physically work together with these people and cause them to accomplish Buddhahood. Any sentient being of the degenerate age who would arouse the mind intensified toward great Perfect Enlightenment, must arouse the pure great determination of the bodhisattvas. He should say ‘I hereby vow to dwell in the Perfect Enlightenment of the Buddha, to seek Genuine Teachers and not to plant roots with heterodox paths or practitioners of the Two Vehicles.’ Practicing based on this vow, you sever the hindrances one by one. When the hindrances are gone, the vow is fulfilled. You will automatically ascend to the Pure Dharma Palace of
Liberation, and actualize the marvelously adorned realm of Great Perfect Enlightenment.”

Then the World Honored One, wanting to restate the gist of this, spoke a verse; he said:

Maitreya, you should know
That the non–attainment of great liberation
By all sentient beings
Is only due to desire;
Therefore they are drawn into birth and death.
If you can separate yourself from like and dislike,
As well as desire, hatred and ignorance
You will all perfect the Buddha’s way
And permanently destroy the Two Hindrances,
Without needing any “distinctions in nature.”
Seek a teacher who has the correct awakening
Practice the vow to arouse the bodhi–mind
Rely on Great Nirvana.
The bodhisattvas in the ten directions
All appear in the world of samsāra
Relying on the Greatly Compassionate vow.
Present practitioners
As well as sentient beings of the degenerate age
Should strive to eliminate all attached views
And directly return to Great Perfect Enlightenment.
Pure Wisdom Bodhisattva 清淨慧菩薩

於是清淨慧菩薩在大衆中，即從座起。頂禮佛足右繞三匝。長跪叉手而白佛言：
大悲世尊。為我等輩廣説如是不思議事、本所不見本所不聞。
我等今者蒙佛善誘、身心泰然、得大饒益。願為諸來一切法衆重宣法王圓滿覺性。
一切衆生及諸菩薩、如來世尊、所證所得云何差別？令末世衆生聞此聖教、隨順開悟漸次能入。作是語已、五體投地。如是三請終而復始。

Then the bodhisattva Pure Wisdom rose from his seat in the great assembly. He bowed his head to the Buddha’s feet, and circumambulated him three times to the right. He then knelt down with his hands clasped and addressed the Buddha saying: “Greatly Compassionate World Honored One; you have magnanimously explained for all of our group this inconceivable matter which was originally not seen and originally not heard. We who are presently here and have received your superb instruction have gained composure of body and mind, and received great benefit. I would like to request this: would you re–explain the nature of the Perfect Fulfilling Enlightenment of the King of the Dharma for those who have come for your teaching? What differences are there between that which is grasped and actualized by sentient beings, bodhisattvas and World Honored Tathāgatas? Please let sentient beings of the degenerate age hear this sagely teaching that they may conform to it, awaken through it and gradually become capable of entering.” Having said this, he
prostrated fully to the ground. He asked in this way three times in succession.

爾時世尊告清淨慧菩薩言：善哉、善哉。善男子、汝等乃能為末世衆生請問如來漸次差別。汝今諦聽、當爲汝說。時清淨慧菩薩奉教歡喜及諸大衆默然而聽。

Then the World Honored One, addressing the bodhisattva Pure Wisdom, said: “Excellent, excellent! Good son, you have asked well for the bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age about the Tathāgata’s distinctions in level. Now listen well, and I shall explain these for you.” The bodhisattva Pure Wisdom received this instruction with reverence and great joy. All the members of the great assembly became silent and listened.

善男子、圓覺自性非性、性有循諸性起。無取無證。於實相中、實無菩薩及諸衆生。何以故？菩薩衆生皆是幻化、幻化滅故無取證者。譬如眼根不自見眼、性自平等無平等者。衆生迷倒、未能除滅一切幻化。於滅未滅、妄功用中便顯差別。若得如來寂滅隨順、實無寂滅及寂滅者。

“Good sons, although the self–nature of Perfect Enlightenment is not a nature (like the previously described five natures of the Chapter of Maitreya), nonetheless, a nature exists which is concomitant with the arising of all natures. But there is neither acquisition nor actualization of it. From the point of view of reality, there are actually neither
bodhisattvas nor sentient beings. Why? Bodhisattvas and sentient beings are nothing but illusory appearances, and since illusory appearances are erased, there is neither ‘acquirer’ nor ‘actualizer.’ It is like the eye not being able to see itself: in the nature’s own equality, there is nothing that is ‘equal.’ Sentient beings are thoroughly confused and are unable to rid themselves of all illusory appearances. Since they have not extinguished [the mark of] cessation, in illusory activity they automatically make discriminations. If they attain accordance with the cessation of the Tathāgata, there is really neither cessation nor person who brings cessation about.”

善男子、一切衆生從無始來由妄想我及愛我者、曾不知念念生滅、故起憎愛、耽著五欲。若遇善友教令開悟淨圓覺性。發明起滅即知此心性自勞慮。若復有人勞慮永斷得法界淨、即彼淨解為自障礙。故於圓覺而不自在。此名凡夫隨順覺性。

“Good sons, all sentient beings have, because of a deludedly conceived ‘self’ and attachment to that self, beginninglessly never known moment–to–moment arising and cessation for themselves; therefore they arise likes and dislikes, and become addicted to the objects in the five sense fields. If they meet a Genuine Teacher, he will awaken them to the essence of pure Perfect Enlightenment. Discovering arising and cessation, they will directly know that this mind’s very nature is that of anxiety. There may be a person who permanently severs that anxiety and experiences the purity of the realm of reality, but who allows his understanding of purity in turn to become a hindrance. This person is tending
towards Perfect Enlightenment but is not perfectly free. He is called a ‘worldling who is according with the nature of enlightenment.’ “

善男子、一切菩薩見解爲礙。
雖斷解礙、猶住見覺。覺礙爲礙而不自在。此名菩薩未入地者隨順覺性。善男子、有照有覺俱名障礙、是故菩薩常覺不住。照與照者同時寂滅。譬如有人自斷其首。首已斷故無能斷者。則以礙心自滅諸礙。礙已斷滅無滅礙者。此名菩薩已入地者隨順覺性。善男子、一切障礙即究竟覺。得念失念無非解脫。成法破法皆名涅槃。智慧愚癡痛爲般若。菩薩外道所成就法同是菩提。無明眞如無異境界。諸戒定慧及淫怒癡俱是梵行。衆生國土同一法性。地獄天宮皆爲淨土。友性無性齊成佛道。一切煩惱畢竟解脱。法界海慧照了諸相猶如虚空。此名如來隨順覺性。

“Good sons, all bodhisattvas see their understanding as an obstruction. But even if they eliminate the ‘understanding–obstruction’ they still abide in a view of enlightenment. This ‘enlightenment–obstruction’ becomes a hindrance and they are not perfectly free. They are called bodhisattvas who have not yet entered the bodhisattva grounds who are according with the nature of enlightenment.”

“Good sons, since the possession of illumination and enlightenment are termed together as “hindrance” and ‘obstruction,’ the bodhisattva is always enlightened without abiding. Illumination and illuminator simultaneously vanish.
It is like the case of a person who cuts off his own head—when the head is cut off, there is no longer any ‘cutter.’ Hence the use of the obstructing mind to eliminate all obstructions: when obstructions have been eliminated, there is no one to eliminate obstructions. These are called ‘bodhisattvas who have entered the bodhisattva grounds who are according with the nature of enlightenment.’

“Good sons, all hindrances are none other than ultimate enlightenment. Whether you attain mindfulness or lose mindfulness, there is no non-liberation. Establishing the Dharma and refuting the Dharma are both called nirvana; wisdom and folly are equally prajna; the method that is perfected by bodhisattvas and false teachers is the same bodhi; ignorance and suchness are not different realms; morality, concentration and wisdom, as well as desire, hatred and ignorance are all divine practices; sentient beings and lands share the same dharma nature; hell and heaven are both the Pure Land; those having Buddha–nature and those not having it equally accomplish the Buddha’s enlightenment. All defilements are ultimately liberation. The reality–realms’s ocean–like wisdom completely illumines all marks to be just like empty space. This is called ‘the Tathāgata’s accordance with the nature of enlightenment.’

善男子、但諸菩薩及末世衆生居一切時、不起妄念。於諸妄心、亦不息滅。住妄想境、不加了知。於無了知、不辨眞實。彼諸衆生聞是法門、信解受持不生驚畏、是則名為隨順覺性。善男子、汝等當知如是衆生已曾供養百千萬億恒河沙諸佛及大菩薩、植衆德本。佛説是人名為成就一切種智。爾時世尊、欲重宣此義而說偈言。

清淨慧當知 圓滿菩提性
無取亦無證 無菩薩衆生
覺於未覺時 漸次有差別
衆生為解礙 菩薩未離覺
入地永寂滅 不住一切相
大覺悉圓滿 名為・隨順
末世諸衆生 心不生虛妄
佛説如是人 現世即菩薩
供養恒沙佛 功徳已圓滿
雖有多方便 皆名隨順智

“Good sons, if all bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age would merely do this: at all times, not arise false thoughts; in false states of mind, not strive for cessation; when abiding in false objects, not try to impose a complete understanding; while lacking complete understanding, not try to analyze true reality. If these sentient beings, hearing this teaching, believe, understand, assimilate and remember it without being shocked or frightened by it, they are said to be ‘according with the nature of enlightenment.’ “

“Good sons, you should all be aware that these sentient beings have already made offerings to myriads of Buddhas a quintillion times as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges river, and have cultivated their roots of virtue with as many great bodhisattvas. I call these people ‘fully developed in omniscience.’ “

Then the World Honored One, wanting to restate the gist of this, composed a verse. He said:

Pure Wisdom, you should know
The nature of perfect bodhi
Has no acquisition, no actualization
Neither bodhisattva nor sentient being.
Yet between the times of enlightenment and non–enlightenment
There are differences in level.
Sentient beings are obstructed by their understanding; Bodhisattvas are not free from enlightenment.
Entering the bodhisattva stages they are forever tranquil
And do not abide in any mark.
Great enlightenment fully includes everything
And is called “pervasively according.”
Sentient beings of the degenerate age
Whose minds do not arise falsity
I call
“Appearing in the world as bodhisattvas.”
They have made offerings to countless buddhas
And are already replete with virtuous merit.
Even though there are many expedient teaching methods
As a sum, they are called
“the wisdom that reaches everything.”
Power and Virtue Unhindered Bodhisattva

威德自在菩薩

於是威德自在菩薩在大衆中、即從座起。頂禮佛足、右繞三匝。長跪叉手而白佛言：
大悲世尊。廣為我等分別如是隨順覺性、令諸菩薩覺心光明、承佛圓音、不因修習而得善利。世尊、譬如大城外有四門。隨方來者非止一路。一切菩薩莊嚴佛國及成菩提非一方便。惟願世尊廣為我等宣說一切方便漸次。并修行人總有幾種？了此會菩薩及末世衆生求大乘者速得開悟、遊戯如來大寂滅海。作是語已、五體投地。如是三請終而復始。

Then the bodhisattva Power and Virtue Unhindered arose from his seat in the great assembly. He bowed to the feet of the Buddha and circumambulated him three times to the right. He then knelt down with his hands clasped and addressed the Buddha saying: “Greatly Compassionate World Honored One, you have analyzed for us at length this accordance with the enlightened nature, causing the enlightened minds of the bodhisattvas to effloresce and receive the Buddha’s Perfect Voice, and causing them to receive excellent benefit which is not caused by religious practice. World Honored One, it is like a great city which has four gates on its exterior—those who come from various directions are not limited to one path. Similarly, all bodhisattvas who adorn Buddha–lands and who perfect enlightened wisdom are not limited to a single expedient
method. World Honored One, my only wish is that you explain in detail for us the gradations of all the expedient methods. In general, how many kinds of religious practitioners are there? Please allow the bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age who are seeking the great vehicle to quickly attain awakening and to sport about in the Tathāgata’s great ocean of cessation—extinction.” Saying this, he prostrated to the ground. He asked this question three times in succession.

爾時世尊 告威徳自在菩薩言: 善哉、善哉。善男子、汝等 乃能為諸菩薩及末世衆生問於如來如是方便。汝今諦聽、當爲汝説。時威徳自在菩薩奉教歡喜、及諸大衆黙然而聽。善男子、無上妙覺・諸十方。出生如來與一切法同體平等。於諸修行實無有二。方便隨順其數無量。圓攝諸歸、循性差別當有三種。

Then the World Honored One, addressing the bodhisattva Power and Virtue Unhindered, said:

“Excellent, excellent! Good son, you have questioned well for the bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age about these expedient methods of the Tathāgata. Listen well now, and I shall explain them for you.” The bodhisattva Power and Virtue Unhindered received this teaching with awe and joy; all those in the great crowd became silent and listened.

“Good sons, unsurpassed marvelous enlightenment pervades all the ten directions. It gives birth to all tathāgatas, who share the same equal essence with all dharmas. Thus, as far as the various practices are concerned, there is in reality, no duality. Nonetheless, the expedient methods which
conform to Perfect Enlightenment are numberless. Among these, there are three general types which all practitioners rely on, according to the difference in their inclination.”

善男子、若諸菩薩悟淨圓覺，以淨覺心取靜為行。由澄諸念
覺識煩動，靜慧發生。身心客塵從此永滅，便能
內發寂靜輕安。由寂靜故，十方世界諸如來心於中顯現，如鏡中像。此方便者名奢摩他。

“Good sons, some bodhisattvas awaken pure Perfect Enlightenment, and using the mind of pure enlightenment take quiescence as their practice. Then, by settling all thoughts they become aware of the agitated motion of the consciousness, and thus produce quiescent wisdom. From this, the mind, the body and external objects are permanently extinguished and they directly generate quiescent pliancy from within themselves. Because of this cessation and quiescence, the minds of all the tathāgatas in all the worlds in the ten directions are made manifest, just like the images in a mirror. This expedient method is called śamatha.”

善男子、若諸菩薩悟淨圓覺，以淨覺心，知覺心性及與根塵
皆因幻化。即起諸幻以除幻者，變化諸幻而開幻衆，由起幻故便能內發大悲輕安。
一切菩薩從此起行漸次增進，彼觀幻者非同幻故，非同幻觀，皆是幻故幻相永離。
是諸菩薩所圓妙行如土長苗。此方便者名三摩鉢提。
“Good sons, some bodhisattvas awaken pure Perfect Enlightenment, then using the pure enlightened mind, they completely realize that the nature of mind as well as the faculties and objects are all based on illusory transformations. Then here they produce various illusions in order to remove illusion. Creating (transforming) all illusions, they enlighten the illusory multitude. From the production of illusion they are able to arouse great compassionate pliancy within. All bodhisattvas who follow this ‘arising practice’ gradually advance. Since the ‘meditation on illusion’ is not the same as illusion, it is also not the same as ‘illusory observation.’ Since both are [recognized as] illusory, illusory marks are permanently removed. This marvelous practice that is perfected by bodhisattvas is like a shoot growing out of the ground. This expedient method is called samapatti.”

善男子、若諸菩薩悟淨圓覺、以淨覺心不取幻化及諸靜相、了知身心皆為礙。無知覺明不依諸礙、永得超過礙無礙境、受用世界及與身心、相在塵域。如器中鍠、聲出于外。煩惱涅槃不相留礙。便能內發寂滅輕安。妙覺隨順寂滅境界自他身心所不能及。衆生壽命皆為浮相。此方便者名為禪那。

“Good sons, some bodhisattvas awaken pure Perfect Enlightenment, and using the pure enlightened mind, do not attach to illusory transformation or the marks of quiescence, and fully realize body and mind both to be obstructions. Without awareness of the illumination of enlightenment (of śamatha) and without depending on all sorts of obstructions (the illusions analyzed in samapatti), they eternally transcend
realms of obstruction and non-obstruction, receiving and using the world as well as body and mind, whose marks abide in the objective realm. It is comparable to the ringing sound in a bell which penetrates to the outside. Affliction and nirvana not hindering each other, they are directly enabled to produce the pliancy of cessation–extinction from within. Accordance with marvelous enlightenment and the realm of cessation and extinction is something that self and other, body and mind are unable to reach. Sentient beings and life are all just floating concepts. This expedient method is called dhyāna.”

善男子。此三法門皆是圓覺親近隨順。十方如來因此成佛。十方菩薩種種方便一切同異皆依如是三種事業。若得圓證即成圓覺。善男子。假使有人修於聖道教化成就百千萬億阿羅漢辟支佛果。不如有人聞此圓覺無礙法門。一剎那頃隨順修習。爾時世尊欲重宣此義而説偈言。

威德汝當知 無上大覺心
本際無二相 隨於諸方便
其數即無量 如來總開示
便有三種類 寂靜奢摩他
如鏡照諸像 如幻三摩提
如苗漸增長 禪那唯寂滅
如彼器中鍠 三種妙法門
皆是覺隨順 十方諸如來
及諸大菩薩 因此得成道
三事圓證故 名究竟涅槃

“Good sons, these three practices are all close accordance with Perfect Enlightenment; the tathāgatas in the ten directions achieve Buddhahood depending upon these, and all the various and sundry expedient methods of the
bodhisattvas of the ten directions, with all their similarities and differences are without exception derived from these three activities. If you perfectly actualize these, that is the same as perfectly actualizing enlightenment.”

“Good sons, if there were a person who cultivated the sagely path and elevated a quadrillion people to the stage of arhat and solitary realizer, he would not be equal to the person who heard this unobstructed teaching of Perfect Enlightenment and practiced it for only an instant.”

Then the World Honored One, desiring to reiterate the gist of this, spoke a verse. He said:

Power–Virtue, you should know
Even though the unsurpassed mind
of great enlightenment
Originally has not even two marks.
The expedient methods for according with it
Are numberless.
When I explain them according to general type,
There are three kinds:
Stable śamatha
Is like a mirror reflecting all images;
As–illusion samādhi
Is like a shoot growing out of the ground;
Dhyāna is only cessation–extinction
Like the sound in the bell.
These three kinds of marvelous dharma–practices
Are all accordance with enlightenment.
The tathāgatas in the ten directions
As well as all the great bodhisattvas
Are able to attain the Dao based on these.
The full actualization of these three activities
Is called “absolute nirvana.”
Then the bodhisattva Voice of Discernment rose from his seat in the great assembly, and bowed to the Buddha’s feet. He bowed to the feet of the Buddha and circumambulated him three times to the right. He then knelt down with his hands clasped and addressed the Buddha saying: “Greatly Compassionate World Honored One, this teaching is quite wondrous! World Honored One, for all the bodhisattvas engaged in the teaching and practice of Perfect Enlightenment, how many different kinds of these expedient methods are there? I beseech you to use expedient methods to teach those at this great assembly and sentient beings of the degenerate age, and cause them to awaken to the marks of reality.” Saying this, he prostrated to the ground. He asked this question three times in succession.

爾時世尊、告辨音菩薩言: 善哉、善哉。善男子、汝等乃能為諸大衆及末世衆生問於如來如是修習。汝今諦聽、當為汝說。時辨音菩薩奉教歡喜、及諸大衆默然而聽。善男子、一切如來圓覺清淨本無修習及修習者。一切菩薩
及末世衆生依於未覺幻力修習。爾時便有二十五種清淨定輪。

Then the World Honored One, addressing the bodhisattva Voice of Discernment, said: “Excellent, excellent! Good son; you have questioned well for the bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age about the various practices of the Tathāgata. Now listen well, and I shall explain for you.” The bodhisattva Voice of Discernment received this teaching with reverence and joy. All those in the great crowd became silent and listened.

“Good sons, the purity of the Perfect Enlightenment of all tathāgatas originally has neither practice nor practitioner. When they practice, all bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age depend upon the power of unenlightened illusion. At that time (the time of practice dependent upon illusion) there are twenty-five kinds of pure meditation applications.”

若諸菩薩唯取極靜、由靜力故永斷煩惱究竟成就、不起于座
便入涅槃。此菩薩者名單修奢摩他。若諸菩薩唯觀如幻、以佛力故變化世界種種作用、備行菩薩清淨妙行、於陀羅尼不失寂念及諸靜慧。此菩薩者名單修三摩鉢提。
若諸菩薩唯滅諸幻不取作用獨斷煩惱、煩惱斷滅便證實相。此菩薩者名單修禪那。

“Some bodhisattvas exclusively grasp ultimate quiescence, and through the power of quiescence permanently sever affliction absolutely and perfectly, and directly enter
nirvana without rising from their seats. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of śamatha only.”

“Some bodhisattvas exclusively contemplate all–as–illusion, and by means of Buddha–power transform the world and carry out various activities, thoroughly putting into operation all the marvelous pure bodhisattva practices. In all continuous concentrations they do not fail in cessation of thought and quiescent wisdom. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of samapatti only.”

“Some bodhisattvas exclusively extinguish all illusions, and without activity in the world individually sever affliction. Affliction completely severed, they directly actualize the marks of reality. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of dhyāna only.”

若諸菩薩先取至靜、以靜慧心照諸幻者、便於中起菩薩行。
此菩薩者名先修奢摩他後修三摩鉢提。若諸菩薩
以靜慧故證至靜性、便斷煩惱永出
生死。此菩薩者名先修奢摩他後修禪那。
若諸菩薩以寂靜慧復現幻力種種變化度
諸衆生、後斷煩惱而入寂滅。此菩薩者名先修奢摩他中修三摩鉢提後修禪那。若諸
菩薩以至靜力斷煩惱已、後起菩薩清淨妙行度諸
衆生。此菩薩者名先修奢摩他中修
禪那後修三摩鉢提。若諸菩薩以至靜力心斷煩惱
、復度衆生建立境界。此菩薩者名
先修奢摩他齊修三摩鉢提禪那。若諸菩薩以至靜
力資發變化後斷煩惱。此菩薩者名
齊修奢摩他三摩鉢提後修禪那。若諸菩薩以至靜
力用資寂滅後起作用變化世界。此
菩薩者名齊修奢摩他禪那後修三摩鉢提。

“Some bodhisattvas first attain perfect quiescence, and through the mind of quiescent wisdom shed light on all illusions and directly within these illusions arise the bodhisattva practices. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of śamatha first and samapatti next.”

“Some bodhisattvas actualize the perfectly quiescent nature through quiescent wisdom, and then directly sever affliction and permanently escape from birth and death. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of śamatha first and dhyāna next.”

“Some bodhisattvas use cessation–quiescent wisdom to re–manifest illusion–power and establish all kinds of transformations to save sentient beings. Subsequently they sever affliction and enter cessation–extinction. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of śamatha first, samapatti next, and dhyāna last.”

“Some bodhisattvas use the power of perfect quiescence to sever all affliction. They then arise the pure, marvelous practices of the bodhisattvas and save all sentient beings. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of śamatha first, dhyāna next and samapatti last.”

“Some bodhisattvas use the mind empowered by perfect quiescence to sever affliction and then save sentient beings and establish objective realms. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of śamatha first and subsequent simultaneous samapatti and dhyāna.”

“Some bodhisattvas use the power of perfect quiescence to aid in the initiation of transformations, then subsequently sever afflictions. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of simultaneous śamatha and samapatti, followed by the practice of dhyāna.”
“Some bodhisattvas use perfect quiescence to aid in extinction, and subsequently carry out activities to transform the world. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of simultaneous śamatha and dhyāna, who subsequently practice samapatti.”

若諸菩薩以變化力種種隨順而取至靜，此菩薩者名先修三摩鉢提後修奢摩他。

若諸菩薩以變化力種種境界而取寂滅，此菩薩者名先修三摩鉢提後修禪那。

若諸菩薩以變化力而作佛事安住寂靜而斷煩惱，此菩薩者名先修三摩鉢提中修奢摩他後修禪那。

若諸菩薩以變化力無礙作用斷煩惱故安住至靜，此菩薩者名先修三摩鉢提中修禪那後修奢摩他。

若諸菩薩以變化力方便作用至靜寂滅二俱隨順，此菩薩者名齊修三摩鉢提齊修奢摩他禪那。

若諸菩薩以變化力種種起用資於至靜後斷煩惱，此菩薩者名齊修三摩鉢提奢摩他後修禪那。

若諸菩薩以變化力資於寂滅後住清淨無作靜慮，此菩薩者名齊修三摩鉢提禪那後修奢摩他。

“Some bodhisattvas use transformation power to make various kinds of accordance, and thereby attain perfect quiescence. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of samapatti first and śamatha next.”

“Some bodhisattvas use transformation power to create various realms, and thereby attain cessation–extinction. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of samapatti first and dhyāna next.”
“Some bodhisattvas use transformation power to carry out Buddha–works. Then, abiding in cessation–quiescence, they sever affliction. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of samapatti first, śamatha next and dhyāna last.”

“Some bodhisattvas use transformation power’s unhindered function to sever affliction, and are therefore able to abide in perfect quiescence. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of samapatti first, dhyāna next and śamatha last.”

“Some bodhisattvas use transformation power for the activity of expedient teaching and then practice within both perfect quiescence and extinction together. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of samapatti first, followed by simultaneous śamatha and dhyāna.”

“Some bodhisattvas use the various arising functions of transformation power to aid in the attainment of perfect quiescence and subsequently sever affliction. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of simultaneous samapatti and śamatha, followed by dhyāna.”

“Some bodhisattvas use transformation power to aid in extinction, and subsequently abide in pure uncreated quiescence of thought. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of simultaneous samapatti and dhyāna followed by śamatha.”

若諸菩薩以寂滅力而起至靜住於清淨、此菩薩者名先修禪那後修奢摩他。若諸菩薩以寂滅力而起作用於一切境, 寂用隨順、此菩薩者名先修禪那後修三摩鉢提。若諸菩薩以寂滅力種種自性安於靜慮而起變化、此菩薩者名先修禪那中修奢摩他後修三摩鉢提。若諸菩薩以寂滅
力無作自性起於作用清淨境界歸於
靜慮、此菩薩者名先修禪那中修三摩鉢提後修奢
摩他。若諸菩薩以寂滅力種種清淨
而住靜慮起於變化、此菩薩者名先修禪那齊修奢
摩他三摩鉢提。若諸菩薩以寂滅力
資於至靜而起變化、此菩薩者名齊修禪那奢摩他
後修三摩鉢提。若諸菩薩以寂滅力
資於變化而起至靜清明境慧、此菩薩者名齊修禪
那三摩鉢提後修奢摩他。

“Some bodhisattvas use the power of extinction to
arise perfect quiescence and abide in purity. These
bodhisattvas are called practitioners of dhyāna first and
śamatha next.”

“Some bodhisattvas use the power of extinction, yet
enter activity, and this negating function is practiced within
all realms. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of
dhyāna first and samapatti next.”

“Some bodhisattvas use the various self natures of
extinction power, and abiding in mental quiescence, produce
transformations. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of
dhyāna first, śamatha next and samapatti last.”

“Some bodhisattvas use the inactive self–nature of
extinction power to engage in activity, then purify the
objective realm and return to quiescence. These bodhisattvas
are called practitioners of dhyāna first, samapatti next and
śamatha last.”

“Some bodhisattvas use the various purity of
extinction power, then, abiding in mental equipoise, they
produce transformations. These bodhisattvas are called
practitioners of dhyāna first, followed by simultaneous
śamatha and samapatti.”
“Some bodhisattvas use extinction power to aid in the attainment of quiescence, and then give rise to transformations. These bodhisattvas are called practitioners of simultaneous dhyāna and śamatha, followed by samapatti.”

“Some bodhisattvas use extinction power to aid in transformation, producing perfect quiescence which purifies and illuminates the world. These bodhisattvas are called simultaneous practitioners of dhyāna and samapatti, followed by śamatha.”

若諸菩薩以圓覺慧，圓合一切於諸性相無離覺性。此菩薩者名為圓修三種自性清淨隨順。是名菩薩二十五輪。善男子，修多羅教如標月指。若復見月了知所標畢竟非月。一切如來種種言説開示菩薩亦復如是。一切菩薩修行如是。

“Some bodhisattvas, using the wisdom of Perfect Enlightenment, harmoniously combine all of these, and in connection with all natures and characteristics, never separate from the enlightened nature. These bodhisattvas are called ‘practitioners of the three kinds of accordance with the purity of the self–nature.’ “

“Good sons, these are called ‘the twenty–five applications’ of the bodhisattvas. The teachings of the sutras are like the finger pointing to the moon. If you also look at the moon and completely understand, then that which is pointing is ultimately not the moon. All the various words and explanations of the Tathāgata that are used to awaken bodhisattvas are also like this. All bodhisattvas practice like this.”
“If you bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age deign to use these ‘applications,’ you must maintain practices of purity, quiescence and contemplation and sincerely repent. Then passing through three weeks, you settle upon whichever of the twenty-five applications is indicated on your lot. With your whole mind and a repentant spirit, immediately choose one. Depending on what is indicated on the chosen lot, you will immediately know whether you are to practice the sudden or gradual. If there is one moment of doubt you will not be able to accomplish your assigned application.”

Then the World Honored One, desiring to reiterate the gist of this, spoke a verse. He said:

Voice of Discernment, you should know,
All bodhisattvas’
Unobstructed pure wisdom
Is without exception, produced from meditation.  
The so-called śamatha  
śamapatti and dhyāna—  
The three methods of sudden and gradual practice,  
Have twenty-five applications.  
There are none among the tathāgatas  
of the ten directions  
And the practitioners of the three worlds  
Who do not rely upon these methods  
In their attainment of perfection of bodhi—  
Except for suddenly enlightened people  
And those who have nothing to do with the dharma.  
All bodhisattvas  
And sentient beings of the degenerate age,  
Should always embrace these applications,  
Following them, endeavoring to practice them.  
Relying on the power  
of the Buddha’s great compassion,  
Before long they will actualize nirvana.
Purifier of all Karmic Hindrances Bodhisattva
淨諸業障菩薩

於是淨諸業障菩薩在大衆中、
即從座起。頂禮佛足右繞三匝、
長跪叉手而白佛言:
大悲世尊。為我等輩廣説如是不思議事、
一切如來因地行相、
令諸大衆得未曾有。覩見調御恆沙劫勤苦境界
一切功用猶如一念。我等菩薩深自
慶慰。世尊、若此覺心本性清淨、因何染汚使諸
衆生迷悶不入?
唯願如來廣為我
等開示法性、令此大衆及末世衆生作將來眼。説
是語已、五體投地。如是三請終而 復始。

Then the bodhisattva Purifier of All Karmic Hindrances arose from his seat in the great assembly. He bowed to the Buddha’s feet, and circumambulated him three times to the right. He then knelt down with his hands clasped and addressed the Buddha, saying: “Greatly Compassionate World Honored One, you have explained at length for all of us this inconceivable matter of the aspects of the practice of the causal stage of all Tathāgatas, enabling all in the great assembly to gain that which they have never had. Having had this chance to see the Tamer, all of their passage through realms of suffering for countless kalpas seems as if it were but an instant of thought. We bodhisattvas have been greatly encouraged.”

World Honored One, if this enlightened mind is originally pure, what kind of defilements cause sentient beings to be suffer in delusion and not enter? My only request is that you thoroughly reveal the nature of phenomena
[dharmas], and cause those in this great assembly and sentient beings of the degenerate age to create the “future eye.” After finishing this speech, he prostrated himself to the ground. He asked this three times in succession.

爾時世尊告淨諸業障菩薩言：善哉、善哉。善男子，汝等乃能為諸大衆及末世衆生諮問如來如是方便。汝今諦聽，當爲汝説。時淨諸業障菩薩奉教歡喜、及諸大衆黙然而聽。

Then the World Honored One, addressing the bodhisattva Purifier of All Karmic Hindrances, said: “Excellent, excellent! Good son, you have asked well for sentient beings of the degenerate age about the skillful methods of the Tathāgata. Listen well, and I shall explain for you.” The bodhisattva Purifier of All Karmic Hindrances reverently and joyfully received this teaching; those in the great assembly became silent and listened.

善男子、一切衆生從無始來、妄想執有我人衆生及與壽命、認四顛倒爲實我體。由此便生憎愛二境。於虛妄體重執虛妄。二妄相依生妄業道。有妄業故妄見流轉。厭流轉者妄見涅槃。由此不能入清淨覺。非覺違拒諸能入者。有諸能入非覺入故。是故動念及與息念皆歸迷悶。何以故？由有無始本起無明爲己主宰、一切衆生生無慧目。身心等性皆是無明。譬如有人不自斷命。是故當知有
善男子、云何我相？謂諸衆生心所證者。善男子、譬如有人
百骸調適忽忘我身。四支弦緩、攝養乖方微加針艾、則知有我。是故證取方現我體。

善男子。我與隨順非隨順者、便生憎怨。為憎愛
心養無明故、相續求道、皆不成就。

“Good sons, from beginningless time all sentient beings deludedly conceive and attach to the existence of ‘self,’ ‘person,’ ‘sentient being’ and ‘lifespan’—they discern these four distortions to be a real self-essence.”

“From this they directly give rise to the two states of like and dislike. In this false essence, they again attach to falsehood. These two delusions interact to produce the path of deluded activity [karma], and since there is deluded karma, they deludedly perceive transmigration. Those who come to dislike saṃsāra deludedly perceive nirvana, and because of this are unable to enter pure enlightenment. It is not that enlightenment rejects those who are capable of entry—rather, it is because those capable of entry do not awaken and enter. Therefore whether one’s thoughts are jumping around or silenced—both conditions ultimately revert to delusion. Why? Because there is beginningless originally arisen ignorance which becomes the subjective ego; thus all sentient beings produce the eye of ignorance. The various natures of body, mind, etc., are nothing but ignorance. Take for example the person who does not want to end his own life. Therefore, you should know there is enjoyment of ‘selfhood’ when things go well. When things don’t go as one likes, then hatred and anger arise. Since this mind of like/dislike nourishes ignorance, those who strive to cultivate the way never attain it.”
善男子、其心乃至證於如來畢竟了知清淨涅槃皆是我相。

“Good sons, what is the ‘trace of self’? It is that which is witnessed by the mind of sentient beings. Good sons, when you are in good health you naturally forget about your body. But when the body becomes sick, and you make an effort correct the infirmity, with the slightest application of moxibustion and acupuncture you are immediately aware of your existence as a self. Thus, it is only in reference to this ‘witnessing’ that you perceive and grasp to an apparent self-essence. Good sons, every kind of witnessing from this level up to the Tathāgata’s perfect perception of pure nirvana, is all the ‘trace of self.’ “

善男子、云何人相？
謂諸衆生心悟證者。善男子、悟有我者不復認我。所悟非我悟亦如是。悟已超過一切證者悉為人相。善男子、其心乃至圓悟涅槃俱是我者備殫證理心存少悟皆名人相。

“Good sons, what is the ‘trace of person?’ It is the cognition by sentient beings of the prior “witnessing.” Good sons, once the self is cognized it is not again recognized in the same way. It is the same in the case where that which is cognized is non-self. This ‘cognition’ which has gone beyond every kind of ‘witnessing,’ is the ‘trace of person.’ Good sons, if, from this level of basic recognition of self up to the perfect recognition of nirvana as self, completely including the witnessing of principle, there remains in the mind even the smallest remainder of cognition, all are called the ‘trace of person.’ “

Page 133
善男子，云何眾生相？謂諸眾生心自證悟所不及者。善男子，譬如有人作如是言：
我是眾生，則知彼人非我非彼。云何非我？
我是眾生，則非是我。云何非彼？
我是眾生則非彼故。善男子，但諸眾生了證了悟皆為我人而我 人相所不及者存有所了名眾生相。

“Good sons, what is the ‘trace of sentient being?’ It is that which is beyond the self—witnessing and cognition of the minds of all sentient beings. Good sons, take for example the person who says “I am a sentient being.” What this person has called ‘sentient being,’ is neither self nor other. Why is it not self? Since self is ‘sentient being,’ it is not self. Why is it not other? Since the self is sentient being, therefore it is not other. Good sons, what sentient beings realize in witnessing and realize in cognition is nothing more than the traces of self and person. That which does not reach the traces of self and sentient being, yet which remains as realized, is the trace of sentient being.”

善男子、云何壽命相？
謂諸衆生心照清淨覺所了者。善男子，
一切業智所不自見猶如命根。如湯銷氷無別有氷知氷銷者、無我覺我亦復如是。善
男子、若心照見一切覺者皆為塵垢。覺所覺者不離塵故名壽命相。

“Good sons, what is the ‘trace of lifespan?’ This refers to that which sentient beings realize through the mind’s illuminating pure awareness. Good Sons, that which is not perceivable by the totality of karmic wisdom is just like the life—faculty. It is like hot water melting ice: there is no
discrimination of the existence of ice or knowledge of the ice’s melting. The non-existence of a self and the awareness of a self are just like this. Good sons, when one sees with the mind’s illumination, all these awarenesses are nothing but defilement. Since that of which the awarenesses are aware is not separate from defilement, it is called the ‘trace of lifespan.’ “

善男子，末世衆生不了四相，雖經多劫勤苦修道，但名有
為。終不能成一切聖果。何以故？認一切我為涅槃故，有證有悟名成就故。譬如有
人認賊為子。其家財寶終不成就。何以故？
有我愛者亦愛涅槃、伏我愛根為涅槃相。有憎我者亦憎生死、不知愛者眞生死故別憎
生死、名不解脱。

“Good sons, sentient beings of the degenerate age do not perceive the Four Traces, and though they may struggle through many kalpas of difficult practice while cultivating the Dao, it is still only conditioned existence. They are ultimately incapable of consummating the fruits of sagehood.”

Why? Since they regard these traces of self to be nirvana, and they regard their witnessing and cognition to be consummation of enlightenment. It is like a man who mistakes a thief for his son. His family’s holdings will always come up short. Why? Because the lover of self also loves nirvana, and takes the suppression of self as the characteristic of nirvana. The hater of self also hates saṃsāra. Not knowing that it is the attached love itself that is actually saṃsāra, he singles out saṃsāra for hatred, calling it “non- liberation.”
善男子，彼末世衆生習菩提者以己微證為自清淨。由未能盡我相根本。若復有人讚歎彼所得者、便生瞋恨。即知我相堅固執持潛伏藏識。遊戯諸根、曾不間斷。善男子、彼修道者不除我相、是故不能入清淨覺。善男子、若知我空無毀我者。有我説法我未斷故、衆生壽命亦復如是。

“How can you know this dharma as ‘non–liberation?’”
Good sons, these sentient beings of the degenerate age who are practicing bodhi regard the ego’s infinitesimal perception as their own purity, and are therefore unable to penetrate to the root of self–trace. If someone praises their [mistaken] dharma, then they will be overjoyed and immediately try to save him. But if someone criticizes their attainments, they will be filled with anger and resentment.”

“Hence, you can know that the trace of self is being firmly held to; it is concealed in the storehouse consciousness and is playing freely throughout the faculties without interruption.”

“Good sons, if these aspirants do not remove the trace of self, they will be unable to enter pure enlightenment. Good sons, if the emptiness of self is known, there can be no ‘eliminator of self.’ If, holding to self, you expound this dharma, it is because you have not yet eliminated self. It is the same with ‘sentient being’ and ‘lifespan.’”

善男子、末世衆生説病爲法。是故名爲可憐愍者。雖勤精進增益諸病、是故不能入清淨覺。善男子、末世衆
善男子、末世衆生希望成道無令求悟惟益多聞増長我見。但
當精勤降伏煩惱起大勇猛。未得令得未斷令斷。貪瞋愛慢諂曲嫉妬對境不生、彼我
恩愛一切寂滅。佛説是人漸次成就。求善知識不墮邪見。是故名為正法末世。若於
所求別生憎愛、則不能入清淨覺海。爾時世尊、
欲重宣此義而説偈言。
淨業如當知 一切諸衆生
皆由執我愛 無始妄流轉
“Good sons, sentient beings of the degenerate age hope for Buddhahood but do not exert themselves to achieve awakening; they merely extend their intellectual knowledge, further enhancing the view of self. What they should do is just endeavor to subdue the afflictions and arouse great courage: attain what they have not attained, sever what they have not severed. Not allowing the greed, anger, love, pride, flattery, perversion, jealousy and envy which are directed at the objective realm to arise, and extinguishing all love and attachment to self and other 悠 call these people ‘gradually consummated.’ Finding a Genuine Teacher, you will not fall into mistaken views. Therefore it is called the ‘true dharma in the degenerate age.’ “

“But if you discriminate, and have a special feeling of desire or dislike regarding the [kind of teacher] you are seeking, you will be unable to enter the ocean of pure enlightenment.”

Then the World Honored One, desiring to reiterate the gist of this, spoke a verse. He said:

Purifier of Karma, you should know
That because of attachment to and love of self
All sentient beings
Deludedly transmigrate without beginning.
Not removing four kinds of traces
They cannot accomplish bodhi.
Since love and hatred arise in the mind
And flattery and perversion remain in all thoughts
There is much delusion and grief;
You are unable to enter the citadel of enlightenment.
If you wish to be able to return
to the enlightened realm,
First leave all desire, hatred and ignorance.
When the dharma of love does not remain in the mind
You can gradually Perfect Enlightenment.
The self originally does not exist:
How can love and hatred arise?
If this person seeks a Genuine Teacher
He will never fall into evil views.
But if “something separate to be sought”
arises in his mind
There will ultimately be
no consummation of enlightenment.
Universal Enlightenment Bodhisattva 普覺菩薩

於是普覺菩薩在大衆中，即從座起。頂禮佛足，右繞三匝。長跪叉手而白佛言：
大悲世尊。快説禪病令諸菩薩得未曾有。心意蕩然獲大安隱。
世尊、末世衆生去佛漸遠賢聖隱伏、邪法増熾。
使諸衆生求何等人？除去何病？
云何發心令彼羣盲不墮邪見？作是語已、五體投地。如是三請終而復始。

Then the bodhisattva Universal Enlightenment arose from his seat in the great assembly. He bowed to the Buddha’s feet and circumambulated three times to the right. He then knelt down with hands clasped and addressed the Buddha, saying: “Greatly Compassionate World–Honored One. You have explained clearly the meditation maladies, allowing the bodhisattvas to attain that which they have not yet experienced.”

“Their consciousnesses have been completely stilled and they have attained great tranquillity. World Honored One, as the sentient being’s departure from the age of the Buddha becomes gradually more distant, the sages and worthies conceal themselves, while the mistaken dharma grows and spreads. What kind of person should we have the sentient beings seek? On what kind of teachings should they rely? What kind of practice should they do? What kind of maladies should they remove, and what kind of resolution should we make, so as to prevent the blind multitude from falling into mistaken views?” Having said this, he prostrated himself to the ground. He asked this question three times in succession.
爾時世尊告普覺菩薩言：善哉、善哉。善男子，汝等乃能諮問如來如是修行、能施末世一切衆生無畏道眼、令彼衆生得成聖道。汝今諦聽、當為汝說。時普覺菩薩奉教歡喜、及諸大衆黙然而聽。善男子，末世衆生將發大心、求善知識。欲修行者，當求一切正知見人、心不住相、不著聲聞緣覺境界、雖現塵勞心恒清淨。示有諸過、讚歎梵行、不令衆生入不律儀。彼善知識四威儀中常現清淨乃至示現種種過患、心無慢。若善男子於彼善友不起惡念、即能究竟成就正覺。心華發明照十方剎。

Then the World Honored One, addressing the bodhisattva Universal Enlightenment, said: “Excellent, excellent! Good Son, you have been able to question the Tathāgata on this kind practice which is able to impart to all sentient beings the fearless Eye of the Way and cause them to attain the sagely Way. Now listen well, and I shall teach you.” The bodhisattva Universal Enlightenment received this teaching with great joy. Those in the great assembly became silent and listened.

Good Sons, sentient beings of the degenerate age must arouse “great mind” and seek Genuine Teachers. Those who want to practice should seek out only someone with correct insight, whose thoughts do not abide in characteristics, who is not attached to the realms of the arhats and solitary realizers,
and whose mind is constantly pure even while manifesting
the world’s afflictions.

“Even while pointing out your various faults, he
praises your practices of purity, and prevents you from
breaking the precepts. If you find this kind of person, you can
attain Unsurpassed Correct Universal True Enlightenment.
Sentient beings of the degenerate age who meet this kind of
person should make offerings to him, not sparing body or life,
even as far as holding on to property, wife, children and
retainers. This Genuine Teacher constantly demonstrates
purity throughout the four postures. Although he points all
kinds of errors and difficulties, his mind lacks pride. Good
Sons, if you do not arouse any negative feelings toward this
Good Friend, you will ultimately be able to accomplish
Correct Enlightenment. Your mind–flower will blossom,
illuminating the worlds of the ten directions.”

善男子、彼善知識諸證妙法應離四病。云何四病
？一者作病。
若復有人作如是言、我於本心作種種行、欲求圓
覺。彼圓覺性非作得故説名為病。
二者任病。若復有人作如是言。我等今者不斷生
死不求涅槃。涅槃生死無起滅念。
任彼一切隨諸法性、欲求圓覺。彼圓覺性非任有
故、説名為病。三者止病。若復有
人作如是言。我今自心永息諸念得一切性寂然平
等、欲求圓覺。彼圓覺性非止合故、
説名為病。四者滅病。若復有人作如是言。我今
永斷一切煩惱、身心畢竟空無所有、
何況根塵虛妄境界一切永寂、欲求圓覺。彼圓覺
性非寂相故、説名為病。離四病者
Good Sons, the subtle dharma that is actualized by this Genuine Teacher should be free from the Four Maladies. What are the Four Maladies? The first is the malady of “contrivance.” Say, for example, there is someone who says “based on my original mind I shall carry out various practices” and wants to achieve Perfect Enlightenment. Since the nature of Perfect Enlightenment is not something which can be attained by contrivance, it is called a “malady.”

The second is the “naturalist” malady. Say, for example there is someone who says “We should presently neither cut off saṃsāra nor seek nirvana. Saṃsāra and nirvana actually lack any conception of arising and ceasing. We should just naturally go along with the various natures of reality” and wants to achieve Perfect Enlightenment. Since the nature of Perfect Enlightenment does not come about through accepting things as they are, this is called a “malady.”

The third is the “stopping” malady. Say, for example, there is someone who says “from my present thought, I shall permanently stop all thoughts and thus apprehend the cessation and equanimity of all natures” and wants to achieve Perfect Enlightenment. Since the nature of Perfect Enlightenment is not met through the stopping of thoughts, it is called a “malady.”

The fourth is the “annihilation” malady. Say, for example, there is someone who says “I will now permanently annihilate all defilements. Body and mind are ultimately empty, lacking anything. How much more should all the false realms of the sense organs and their objects be permanently erased” and seeks Perfect Enlightenment. Since the characteristic of the nature of Perfect Enlightenment is not annihilation, it is called a “malady.”
When you are free from the Four Maladies you will be aware of purity. The making of this observation is called “correct insight.” Any other insight is called “mistaken insight.”

善男子、末世衆生欲修行者應當盡命供養善友事善知識。彼善知識欲來親近應斷慢。若復遠離應斷瞋恨。現逆順境猶如虚空。了知身心究竟平等、與諸衆生同體無異。如此修行方入圓覺。善男子、末世衆生不得成道由有無始自他增愛一切種子、故未解脱。若復有人觀彼怨家如己父母、心無有二即除諸病。於諸法中自他增愛亦復如是。

“Good sons, sentient beings of the degenerate age should exhaust their life energies in making offerings to Good Buddhist Friends and serving Genuine Teachers. If the Genuine Teacher becomes close and familiar with you, you should not be proud. If he is distant, you should not be resentful. The states of unpleasantness and pleasantness are just like the empty sky. Fully realize that body and mind are ultimately equalized and that you share the same essence with all sentient beings without difference. If you practice in this way you will enter Perfect Enlightenment.”

“Good sons, when sentient beings of the degenerate age are unable to accomplish the Way, it is because of the presence of beginningless seeds of self and other, like and dislike. Therefore they are not liberated. If there is someone who looks upon his enemy as the same as his father and mother謡hose mind completely lacks duality, then he will eliminate all maladies. Then within all dharmas, self and
other, like and dislike will also be eliminated in the same way."

善男子、末世衆生欲求圓覺應當發心作如是言。盡於虛妄一切衆生我皆令入究竟圓覺。於圓覺中無取覺者、除彼我人一切諸相。如是發心不墮邪見。爾時世尊、欲重宣此義而說偈言。

普覺如當知 末世諸衆生
欲求善知識 應當求正見
心遠二乘者 不犯非律儀
戒根永清淨 法中除四病
謂作止任滅 親近無慢
遠離無瞋恨 見種種境界
心當生希有 還如佛出世
度一切衆生 究竟入圓覺
無彼我人相 常依止智慧
便得超邪見 證覺般涅槃

“Good Sons, all sentient beings of the degenerate age who want to seek Perfect Enlightenment should make their resolution, saying the following: ‘I vow to cause every sentient being throughout the universe to enter the ultimate Perfect Enlightenment.’ “

“Within that Perfect Enlightenment there is no attachment to ‘enlightenment’ nor are there any of the traces of self, person etc. If you make this kind of resolve, you will not fall into mistaken views.”

Then the World Honored One, wanting to restate the gist of this, delivered a verse, saying:

Universal Enlightenment, you should know
That sentient beings of the degenerate age
Who desire to find a Genuine Teacher
Must look for one with the Right View
Whose mind is far removed from the Two Vehicles
Who does not break the precepts
And whose root of the precepts is constantly pure.
And in regard to the dharma
has removed the Four Maladies,
Which are called contrivance, stopping,
naturalism and annihilation.
If he becomes intimate with you, don’t be proud
And if he is distant, don’t be resentful.
Observing various realms,
your mind will then produce the miraculous.
And if you leave home like the Buddha
You save all sentient beings
So that they ultimately enter Perfect Enlightenment.
Free from the traces such as “self” and “person”
You constantly rest in wisdom
You naturally attain transcendence of mistaken views
Actualizing enlightenment and parinirvana.
Perfect Enlightenment Bodhisattva 圓覺菩薩

於是圓覺菩薩在大衆中、即從座起。頂禮佛足、右繞三匝。長跪叉手而白佛言:
大悲世尊。為我等輩廣説淨覺種種方便、令末世衆生有大增益。
世尊、我等今者已得開悟。若佛滅後末世衆生未得悟者、云何安居, 修此圓覺清淨 境界?
此圓覺中三種淨觀以何為首? 惟願大悲為諸大衆及末世衆生施大饒益。作
是語已、五體投地。如是三請、終而復始。

Then the bodhisattva Perfect Enlightenment arose from his seat in the great assembly, bowed his head to the Buddha’s feet and circumambulated him three times to the right. He knelt down with his hands clasped, and addressed the Buddha, saying: “Greatly Compassionate World Honored One. You have extensively explained pure enlightenment for us, as well as various expedient methods. You have caused the capacities of sentient beings of the degenerate age to be greatly quickened. World Honored One. Those of us present here have already awakened. But what about the case, after your passing away, of the sentient beings of the degenerate age who have not yet been able to awaken? How should they conduct meditation retreats to cultivate this pure realm of Perfect Enlightenment? And in the practice of the three meditations within Perfect Enlightenment, what are the initial steps? I only beg for your great compassion so that you will confer great benefit on the members of this great assembly and the sentient beings of the degenerate age.” After saying this, he prostrated fully to the ground. He asked this question three times in succession.
爾時世尊告圓覺菩薩言：善哉，善哉。善男子，汝等乃能問於如來如是方便，以大饒益，施諸衆生。汝今諦聽，當為汝說。時圓覺菩薩奉教歡喜，及諸大衆黙然而聽。

Then the World Honored One, addressing the bodhisattva Perfect Enlightenment, said: “Excellent! Excellent! Good Son, you have questioned well to the Tathāgata about these kind of expedient means in order to confer great benefit on the sentient beings. Now listen well, and I shall explain for you.” The bodhisattva Perfect Enlightenment received this teaching with great joy. All those in the great assembly became silent and listened.

善男子、一切衆生若佛住世、若佛滅後、若法末時、有諸衆生具大乘性、信佛秘密大圓覺心、欲修行者。若在伽藍安處徒衆有縁事故、隨分思察如我已説。若復無有他事因縁、即建道場當立期限。若立長限、百二十日。中期百日。下期八十日、安置淨居。若佛現在當正思惟。若佛滅後施設形像、生正憶念、還同如來常住之日。懸諸幡華、經三七日、稽首十方諸佛名字、求哀懺悔、過三七日一向攝念、遇善境界得心輕安。若經夏首三月安居、當為清淨菩薩止住、心離聲聞、不假徒衆。至安居日即於佛前作如是言：我比丘比丘尼優婆塞優婆夷
Good Sons, among all sentient beings, whether it is when the Buddha is alive, or after he has passed away, or even during the period of the degeneration of the dharma, there are a number who have the aptitude for Mahayana and who have faith in the Buddha’s mysterious mind of great Perfect Enlightenment, and who want to practice it. If they are living in the temple with many other followers, then they have numerous commitments and so they should just analyze according to the situation, as I have already taught.”

“On the other hand, if they are not bound by commitments then they should erect a site of enlightenment and institute an intensive retreat. A long-term retreat should be one hundred and twenty days. A medium-length retreat should be one hundred days. A short one, eighty days, sitting quietly in a pure environment. If the Buddha is present, then you can directly correct your thoughts. If he has already passed away, then set up an image of him, and letting your mind abide in the mental picture of this image, you can bring about correct mindfulness, just the same as when he was here. After hanging up the banners and flowers, go through a period of three weeks, making obeisance to the names of all the Buddhas in the ten directions repenting and confessing all of your sins. Passing through three weeks with your thoughts focused, you will encounter excellent states of consciousness, and your mind will attain pliancy.”

“If you pass through to the beginning of the retreat, then for three months you will abide in stillness, and carry out
the pure quiet sitting of the bodhisattvas, with your mind free from the designs of the direct disciples and from involvements with other practitioners.”

“When you come to the day of the retreat, in front of the Buddha, say this: “I, bhiksu/bhiksuni/upasaka/upasika so–and–so, would board the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, cultivate their practices of cessation–extinction and enter with them into their abiding in the pure marks of the real. I take great Perfect Enlightenment as my temple, with body and mind dwelling peacefully in the wisdom of the equality of the nature. Since the self–nature of nirvana is not restricted in any way, I now respectfully pray that I may not abide in the views of the direct disciples. And I will abide for three months of quiet retreat with the tathāgatas and great bodhisattvas of the ten directions. Since I will be cultivating the bodhisattva’s great causes and conditions of unsurpassed marvelous enlightenment, I will not be constrained by the limitations of the other practitioners.”

“Good sons, this is called ‘the bodhisattvas’ exemplifying silent retreat.’ After passing through the three terms, you can practice anywhere without obstruction.”

善男子、若彼末世修行衆生求菩薩道入三期者、非彼所聞一切境界、終不可取。善男子、若諸菩薩修奢摩他、先取至靜不起思念。靜極便覺。如是初靜、從於一身至一世界覺亦如是。善男子、若覺遍滿一世界者皆悉能知。百萬世界亦復如是。非彼所聞一切境界、終不可取。善男子、若諸衆生修三摩鉢提、先當憶想十方如來十方世界一切菩薩。依種種門
漸次修行勤苦三昧廣發大願自熏成種。非彼諸聞一切境界修不可取。

“Good sons, if, when these practicing sentient beings of the degenerate age who seek the Way of the bodhisattvas enter the three meditation terms, they experience meditational states which are different from those outlined in this sutra, they should not attach to them.”

“Good sons, those sentient beings who will practice śamatha must first grasp perfect quiescence, not arising any cogitation. Quiescence taken to its furthest limit results directly in enlightenment. If you can have this kind of initial quiescence, then proceeding from one body, enlightenment will extend like this throughout a whole world. Good Sons, when enlightenment fully pervades a whole world, if there is one sentient being within that world who arises a single thought, all, without exception will know it. The same is true in the case of a hundred thousand worlds. If it is not one of the meditational states about which you were previously instructed, you should not attach to it.”

“Good sons, those sentient beings who want to practice samapatti should first become mindful of all the tathāgatas of the ten directions and all the bodhisattvas of all the worlds in the ten directions. Depending on their various methods they should grow by degrees though practice, struggling against suffering towards samādhi, broadly manifesting the great vow to save sentient beings, the perfumation of which creates seeds. But if it is not one of the states about which you were previously instructed, you should not attach to it.”
知、漸次增進乃至得知百千世界一滴之雨。猶如目覩所受用物。非彼所聞一切境界終不可取。是名三顴初首方便。

“Good sons, if these sentient beings want to practice dhyāna, they must first utilize the method of breath observance, and in the depths of their mind become fully aware of the arising, abiding and cessation of each thought. They must be clear in their discrimination of the breath count and practice it pervasively during each one of the four postures. There is no limit to how far this mindfulness of the discrimination of breaths can penetrate, as one can gradually advance to the point where he can be aware, within the domain of one hundred thousands worlds, of the falling of a single drop of rain, as if it were an object presented directly to him. But if it is really not one of the states of mind about which you were previously instructed, then afterwards you should not attach to it. These are called the introductory expedients of the three meditations.”

若諸衆生・修三種勤行精進、即名如來出現于世。若後末世鈍根衆生心欲求道不得成就、由昔業障。當勤懺悔常起希望。先斷憎愛嫉妬諂曲、求勝上心。三種淨觀隨學一事、此顴不得復習彼觀。心不放捨漸次求證。
爾時世尊、欲重宣此義而說偈言。

圆覺汝當知 一切諸衆生
欲求无上道 先當結三期
懺悔無始業 經於三七日
然後正思惟 非彼所聞境
畢竟不可取 奢摩他至靜
三摩正憶持 禪那明數門

Page 152
“If sentient beings pervasively practice these three kinds of meditation, and keep working diligently to advance, they will be called ‘tathāgatas appearing in the world.’ “

“If subsequent sentient beings of the degenerate age of dull faculties desire in their hearts to attain the Way, but somehow always fall short of their goal, it is because of karmic hindrances from the past. They must strive for penance and confession and continuously re–arise their hopes. They must first sever love and hatred, jealousy, envy, flattery and calumny and strive for the unsurpassed state of mind. Since the three types of meditation are all the investigation of the same single matter, if one meditation doesn’t work, try again with one of the others. Don’t let your mind dissipate, and gradually strive for actualization.”

Then the World Honored One, wanting to restate the gist of this doctrine, spoke a verse. He said:

Perfect Enlightenment, you should know
That all sentient beings
Who want to seek the unsurpassed
Must, at the outset of the three retreats
Repent of, and admit their beginningless actions
For a period of three weeks;
Thereupon they will have correct thought.
But if they do not experience
the states as they have been taught
They should not grasp them.
In samatha, perfect quiescence;
In samapatti, correct mindfulness;
In dhyāna, clear observance of the breath.
These are called “the three purifying meditations.”
Those who diligently practice
Are called “Buddhas appearing in the world.”
Those of dull faculties who cannot
bring this into effect
Must continuously strive at repentance
Of their beginningless crimes.
When all hindrances are extinguished
The Buddha–state appears before your eyes.
Most Excellent of Worthies Bodhisattva

於是賢善首菩薩在大衆中、即從座起。頂禮佛足、右繞三匝。長跪叉手而白佛言：
大悲世尊。廣為我等及末世衆生開示如是不思議事。世尊、此大衆教名字何等？云何奉持？
衆生修習得何功德？
云何使我護持經人流布此教？至於何地？
作是語已、五體投地。如是三請、終而復始。

Then the bodhisattva Most Excellent of Worthies arose from his seat in the great assembly. He bowed his head to the feet of the Buddha and circumambulated him three times to the right. He then knelt down with his hands clasped and addressed the Buddha, saying: “Greatly Compassionate World Honored One. You have revealed extensively for us and sentient beings of the degenerate age about this inconceivable matter. World Honored One: What names are applied to this Mahayana teaching? How should it be cleaved to and practiced? What kinds of merits will be obtained by sentient beings who practice according to it? How shall those who cleave to and practice it be protected? And to what lands should this teaching be propagated?” Having said this, he prostrated fully to the ground. He repeated this question three times in succession.

爾時世尊告賢善首菩薩言: 善哉、
善哉。善男子、汝等乃能
為諸菩薩及末世衆生問於如來如是經教功德名字
善男子、是經百千萬億恒河沙諸佛所說。三世如來之所守護。
十方菩薩之所歸依。十二部經清淨眼目。是經名大方廣圓覺陀羅尼。亦名修多羅了義。亦名秘密王三昧。亦名如來決定境界。亦名如來藏自性差別。汝等奉持。善男
子、是經唯顯如來境界。唯佛如來能盡宣說。若諸菩薩及末世衆生依此修行漸次增進、
至於佛地。

“Good sons, this scripture is that which is taught by billions upon billions of countless buddhas; it is that which is protected by the tathāgatas of the three times; it is that which is relied upon by the bodhisattvas of the ten directions; it is the pure eye of the twelve divisions of the scriptures. This scripture is called The Great Curative Extensive Perfect Enlightenment Dhāraṇī; it is also called The Sutra of the Fully Revealed Meaning; it is also called The Mysterious Royal Samādhi; it is also called the Tathāgata’s Realm of Full Decisiveness; it is also called The Distinction of the Self–
Nature of the Tathāgatagarbha. You should cleave to it and practice according to it.”

“Good sons, this scripture expresses nothing but the realm of the Tathāgatas, and only the Buddha—Tathāgatas are able to fully explain it. If the bodhisattvas and sentient beings of the degenerate age practice according to this sutra, they will gradually advance to Buddhahood.”

善男子、是經名為頓教大衆、頓機衆生從此開悟。亦攝漸修一切羣品。譬如大海不讓小流。乃至蚊虻及阿修羅飲其水者、皆得充滿。

“Good sons, this scripture is called the Sudden Teaching of the Mahayana, and sentient beings with the capacity for the sudden will awaken through it. But it also embraces the gradual practice of all sentient beings. It is like a great body of water which does not deny the entrance of any small stream; and mosquitoes and horseflies, as well as asuras may drink its water and take their fill.”

“Good sons, say for instance there were a man, who with the purest of motivations, gathered the seven jewels in a quantity sufficient to fill three thousand galaxies, and then gave them all away for charity. This man’s merit would not be equal to that of a man who heard the name of this scripture and understood the meaning of a single passage.”

善男子、假使有人純以七寶積滿三千大千世界以用布施。不如有人聞此經名及一句義。善男子、假使有人教百恒河沙衆生得阿羅漢果。不如有人宣説此經、分別半偈。善男子、若復有人聞此經名信心不惑。當知是人非於一佛二佛種
諸福慧、如是乃至盡恒河沙一切佛所種諸善根、聞此經教。汝善男子、當護末世是修行者、無令惡魔及諸外道惱其身心了生退屈。
爾時世尊、欲重宣此義而説偈言。

賢善首當知是經諸佛說 如來善護持十二部眼目
名為大方廣圓覺陀羅尼 現如來境界 依此修行者
增進至佛地 如海納百川
飲者皆充滿 假使施七寶
積滿三千界 不如聞此經
若化河沙衆 皆得阿羅漢
不如宣半偈 汝等於來世
護是宣持者 無令生退屈

“Good Sons, say for example there was a man who taught sentient beings as many as a hundred times the amount of the grains of sand in the Ganges river such that they all attained the level of arhat. This man’s merit would not be equal so someone who explicated a half of a gatha of this scripture. If there is any person who hears the name of this sutra and believes in it fully without a shadow of a doubt, then you can know that this person has not only sown the seeds of blessings and wisdom with one buddha or two buddhas, but has cultivated his roots of goodness with countless myriads of buddhas, listening to this sutra—teaching.”

“Good sons, you should protect sentient beings of the degenerate age who are practicing this, and not let evil spirits and heretics upset their thoughts or cause them to lose heart.” Then the World Honored One, wanting to restate the gist of this, spoke a verse. He said:
Most Excellent of Worthies, you should know
This scripture is that which all buddhas teach
And that which all tathāgatas well protect
It is the eye of the twelve divisions.
It is called
The Great Curative Extensive
Perfect Enlightenment Dhāraṇī
It is the expression of the realm of the Tathāgata
Those who practice according to it
Gradually advance to Buddhahood.
It is like an ocean which accepts all rivers
And gives all of the thirsty their fill.
If there were a person who donated the seven jewels
Enough to fill three thousand galaxies
It would not be equal to hearing this sutra.
If someone transformed countless beings
Such that they all reached arhatship
It would not be equal to the explication of half a gatha.
You must all, for the later generations
Protect those who give and receive this teaching
And not allow them to backslide.

爾時會中有火首金剛、摧碎金剛、尼藍婆金剛等
八萬金剛並
其眷屬即從座起。頂禮佛足右繞三匝而白佛言:
世尊。若後末世一切衆生有能持此
決定大乘、我當守護如護眼目、乃至道場所修行
處。我等金剛自領徒衆晨夕守護、
令不退轉。其家乃至永無災障疫病銷滅。財寶豐
足常不乏少。爾時大梵王、二十八
天王、并首彌山王、護國天王等即從座起。頂禮
佛足右繞三匝而白佛言: 世尊。我
亦守護是持經者。常令安隱心不退轉。爾時有大力鬼王名吉槃茶與十萬鬼王即從座起。頂禮佛足右繞三匝而白佛言：
我亦守護是持經人朝夕侍衛、令不退屈。其人所居一由旬內若有鬼神侵其境界我等使其碎如微塵。佛說此經已一切菩薩天龍鬼神八部眷屬及所天王梵王等一切大衆、聞佛所說皆大歡喜信受奉行。

Then, from the midst of the great assembly, arose Fiery–haired Vajra–warriors, Pulverizing Vajra–warriors, Blue Vajra–warriors—altogether eighty thousand Vajra–warriors together with their retinues. They got up from their seats, bowed their heads to the feet of the Buddha, and circumambulated him three times to the right. Then they addressed the Buddha, saying “World Honored One, if sentient beings of the degenerate age are able to cleave to this Scripture of Mahayana Decisiveness, we shall protect them, as if protecting our own eyes and we shall protect as well the places where they carry out their practice. We Vajra–warriors shall guide these people, protecting them morning and night, such that they do not retrogress. Their households shall never suffer from calamity; sickness shall be eradicated; their material possessions shall be abundant and they shall never suffer from poverty.”

Then the Great Brahma Kings, the Kings of the Twenty–Eight Heavens, together with the Kings of Mt. Sumeru and the Nation–Protecting Kings, arose from their seats. They bowed their heads to the Buddha’s feet, circumambulated him to the right, and addressed him, saying: “World Honored One, we shall also protect those who cleave to this scripture. We shall bring them tranquillity and not allow them to retrogress.”
Then a Great Mighty Demon King, whose name was Kumbhanda, together with a hundred thousand Demon Kings, arose from his seat. He bowed his head to the Buddha’s feet and circumambulated him three times to the right. He addressed the Buddha, saying: “I shall also protect those who cleave to this scripture by guarding them morning and night and not letting them retrogress. If an evil spirit should dare to approach within the area of ten miles to the place of the practitioner’s abode, I shall smash him to atoms.”

The Buddha having finished his preaching of this scripture, the bodhisattvas, the devas, nagas, raksas and the rest of the eight kinds of spiritual beings along with their retinues, as well as the Heavenly Kings, Brahma Kings and the rest of the great assembly, having heard what the Buddha taught, were all filled with great joy. They believed, embodied and practiced.
Notes

1. I have not found any places where I feel I have mistranslated the text, but there is some terminology that I would probably change on the basis of my deepened studies of Buddhist soteriology in the interim. [back]

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GLOSSARY

AMITABHA SUTRA (A mi tuo jing): The principal scripture on which the Pure Land practice is based. Reciting Buddha Amitabha’s name is one, if not the most accessible and simplest, form of Buddhist practice. Through Amitabha Buddha’s vow, any person who sincerely invokes his name and expresses the wish to be born in the Pure Land will be reborn there.

ANUTTARA–SAMYAK–SAMBODHI (a nou duo luo san miao sanpu ti): Unexcelled perfect enlightenment of the Buddha.

ARHAT (a luo han): “Worthy one.” In Buddhist tradition, the arhat is thought of as having completed the course of Buddhist practice and attained liberation, or nirvana. As such, the arhat is no longer subject to rebirth and death. Arhat is also one of the epithets of the Buddha.

ASAMKYA (a seng qi): Innumerable and infinite.

ASURA (a xiu luo): One type of being in the sixth realm of existence. Asuras are beings who have the merit to travel to the heavenly realms but are inflicted with a mind of jealousy. They are always jealous of heavenly devas or gods and fight with them.

AVALOKITESVARA (Guan shi yin): Perhaps the most important bodhisattva in the East Asian Buddhist tradition; he is the embodiment of compassion who hears and responds to the cries of all living beings. Avalokitesvara can be both male and female, but in China the bodhisattva is usually depicted in the female form.

AVATAMSAKA SUTRA: See Hua–yen Jing.

AVIDYA (wu ming): Lit. “unillumined.” Avidya means fundamental ignorance or darkness. It is usually considered a fundamental or primal condition of sentient beings, which mistakes illusion as reality. Fundamental ignorance brings about desire and thereby is the essential cause binding sentient beings in cyclic existence, where they experience all kinds of suffering. It veils the understanding of the true nature of existence and is the cause of the construct of illusions. The analogy of fundamental ignorance used throughout The Sutra of Complete Enlightenment is the flower in the sky.

BHAGAVAN (Shi zun): Lit. “World Honored One.” One of the ten titles of the Buddha.

BHIKSHU, BHIKSHUNI (bi qiu, bi qiu ni): Fully ordained Buddhist monk and nun, respectively.

BHUMI (di): The bhumis (ground, regions, or stages) are the last ten stages of a bodhisattva’s career on his or her way to full Buddhahood. See Bodhisattva Positions.
BODHI (pu ti): Bodhi can refer to: 1) the principal wisdom that severs all vexations and defilements and realizes nirvana 2) the phenomenal wisdom that realizes the truth of every conditioned phenomenon that can realize omniscience.

BODHI–MIND (pu ti xin): The mind of wisdom. A central idea in Mahayana Buddhism, its meaning varies in different contexts: 1) the altruistic mind of a person who aspires to attain Buddhahood for the sake of helping sentient beings, 2) the genuine actualization of enlightenment, awakening to the true nature of reality and the loftiness of Buddhahood, and 3) selfless action. This last meaning is extremely important, yet often overlooked. In regards to the first definition, arousing the bodhi–mind is the first step in establishing oneself on the Bodhisattva Path.

BODHISATTVA (pu sa): “Enlightened being.” The role model in the Mahayana tradition. The bodhisattva is a being who vows to remain in the world of samsara, postponing his or her own full liberation until all other living beings are delivered.

BODHISATTVA POSITIONS (pu sa wei): Anyone who can give rise to the altruistic mind of enlightenment, although still an ordinary person, becomes a bodhisattva and enters into the family of the Buddhas. In the Chinese Buddhist tradition, specifically the Hua Yen tradition, bodhisattva realizations and attainments are divided into 52 positions: Ten Faiths (shi xin), Ten Abodes (shi zhu), Ten Practices (shi xing), Ten Transferences (shi huei xiang), Ten Grounds (shi di), Ultimate Wisdom (deng jue), and Wondrous Wisdom (miao jue). Practitioners at the level of Ten Faiths are still considered ordinary people (fan fu wei), although there is a division between ordinary people of the “inner circle” (nei fan) and “outer circle” (wai fan). Practitioners of the next thirty positions are considered to have reached sagehood (xian wei). Practitioners at the Ten Grounds and above have reached sainthood (sheng wei). Another division of bodhisattva positions is the Path of Seeing (darsanamarga, jien dao wei), the Path of Practice (bhavanamarga, xiu dao wei), and the Path of Attainment (labhamarga, jiu jing wei). According to the Chinese doctrinal system, when a person perceives self–nature or nature of emptiness (kung xin), the person is said to have entered the Path of Seeing and has entered the domain of the ordinary people of the “inner circle” within the Ten Faiths position. Path of Practice begins at the level of the Ten Abodes and ends at the Ten Transferences. The Path of Attainment begins at the first position of the Ten Grounds. A bodhisattva progresses on this path toward complete, perfect Buddhahood through abandoning gross levels of self–grasping for
subtler and subtler levels of selfgrasping. At the same time, a bodhisattva cultivates merit and benefits living beings until all obstructions to full wisdom of emptiness are realized and omniscience is attained.

BUDDHA (fo): “The awakened one.” The historical Buddha is the religious teacher Gautama Sakyamuni, who founded the religion generally known in the West as “Buddhism.”

BUDDHADHARMA: See Dharma.

BUDDHA–NATURE (fo xing): The nature or potential for Buddhahood; synonym for the nature of emptiness. It is also equivalent to Tathāgatagarbha.

CAUSAL GROUND (yin di): Another term for Buddha–nature. It is called ground because it can give rise to all merit and virtue; it is the potential for Complete Enlightenment. Causal ground can also refer to the initial generating of the bodhi–mind.

CH’AN: Better known in Japanese as “Zen.” Ch’an is one of the main schools of Chinese Buddhism to develop during the Tang dynasty (618–907). The designation derives from the Sanskrit word dhyana, transliterated as chan–na in Chinese. Ch’an can mean meditation but it can also mean the heart of Buddhism – enlightenment.

CYCLIC EXISTENCE: See Samsara.

DHARANI (tuo luo ni, zhong chi): Dharani derives from the root word “dhara,” which means maintaining, holding, control or preserving. The literal Chinese translation of this word is “universal control” or “complete control.” It refers to complete “maintenance” of wisdom and “control” over evil passions and influences. The words “complete” and “universal” also bear the meaning of inclusiveness, because it is the essence of all approaches to the Dharma. Therefore, practicing dharani means practicing all approaches to the Dharma. In this sutra, dharani refers to Complete Enlightenment or Buddha–nature.

DHARMA (fa): Dharma has two basic meanings. Dharma with an upper case “D” means the Buddhist “law” or “teaching.” Dharma with a lower case “d” simply refers to a thing or object, and physical or mental phenomenon.

DHARMAKAYA (fa shen): Dharma Body. One of the three bodies of the Buddha – the ultimate body of reality beyond all forms, attributes, and limits. In the Chinese Buddhist tradition the expression, “to see the Dharma Body” means to realize the nature of emptiness. It is sometimes used as a synonym for Buddha–nature. See entries for Nirmanakaya and Sambhogakaya.

DECLINE OF THE DHARMA AGE (mo fa shi dai): A period of time
when the teaching of the Buddha is weak, and although there may be practitioners, no one is able to gain realization.

DHARMADHATU (fa jie): Dharma realm, the infinite realms or worlds of reality; it can also be regarded as the ground or nature of all things – the Mind from which all proceeds.

DHYANA (chan na): A term designating certain states of meditative absorption cultivated by Buddhist practitioners as a technique for attaining enlightenment. However, in this sutra dhyana is referring to a practice after enlightenment, in which one solely cultivates the nondual quiescent and still nature of mind. See the chapter on Bodhisattva at Ease in Majestic Virtue for further inquiry.

EIGHT CONSCIOUSNESSES (ba shi): A central idea in the Indian Yogacara (Yu qie xing pai) or the Consciousness–only school (vijñapti-matratva, wei shi zong) of Chinese Buddhism, which divides consciousness into eight modes of operation. Together, these eight modes of operation are divided into three categories: 1) vijnana (shi), referring to the first five sense consciousnesses (or the “knowing” that arises from contacts between sense faculties and corresponding sense objects) and the sixth sense consciousness, the faculty of mental discrimination (manovijnana; yi shi), 2) manas (yì), referring to the seventh ego consciousness (mo na shi), and 3) citta (xin), referring to the eighth consciousness, alayavijnana. The first six consciousnesses are named after the sense faculties that serve as their support: 1) eye consciousness, 2) ear consciousness, 3) nose consciousness, 4) tongue consciousness, 5) body consciousness, and 6) mind consciousness. The sixth consciousness, our ordinary mind, is characterized by discrimination and has all dharmas as its object. It utilizes the previous five consciousnesses in order to identify, interpret, and define the world. The seventh consciousness is the source of the delusion of a separate self, belief in a self, self–conceit, and self–love; it takes the eighth consciousness as its support and its object of attachment. It can be said to be the center of these eight consciousnesses. The eighth consciousness (alayavijnana, a lai ye shi) operates as the underlying continuum of the workings of mind and functions as an underlying projective consciousness on which delusion is ultimately based. It is a kind of a “repository” or “storehouse” that contains all experiences as karmically–charged seeds, which, under the proper causes and conditions, ripen as actions of body, speech, and mind, which in turn create new seeds. Therefore, the eighth consciousness is unceasingly conditioned by the previous seven consciousnesses. When one is thoroughly enlightened, these consciousnesses
become the function of wisdom.

EIGHTEEN EXCLUSIVE ATTRIBUTES OF THE BUDDHA (shi ba bu gong fa): Whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, the physical body of the Buddha is always dignified and composed; a Buddha can never make mistakes in speech or speak inappropriately; a Buddha’s mind is always tranquil and luminous; a Buddha’s true form is formless; a Buddha’s mind is always in samadhi, like still water; a Buddha’s mind is clear of all thoughts, like a mirror reflecting images without clinging. The Buddha has an inexhaustible desire to deliver sentient beings, unsurpassable diligence, inextinguishable mindfulness, inextinguishable Wisdom of Equality, unending observing Wisdom of Liberation, unending Mirrorlike Wisdom derived from full liberation, all actions of body, speech, and thought in accordance with wisdom, and the ability to perceive the past, present, and future in accordance with wisdom.

EIGHTEEN REALMS (shi ba jie): These realms refer to the domain of the six sense faculties, sense objects, and sense consciousnesses.

FEARLESS EYE OF THE PATH (wu wei dao yen): Perspicacity. Ability to discern true from false, wholesome from unwholesome, as a result of having realized enlightenment.

FOUR KINDS OF FEARLESSNESS (si wu wei): The Buddha’s ability to bestow fearlessness in the heart/mind of sentient beings: correct wisdom of all Dharmas; exhaustion of all outflows of wisdom, merit, and virtue, as well as extinction of all habitual tendencies; ability to expound remedies to all obstructions and hindrances on the Path; ability to fully explain causes of suffering.

FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS (si shen di): The four basic principles of Buddhism preached by Buddha in his first sermon: 1) that in the ultimate analysis, life is suffering, 2) that the cause of suffering is desire, 3) that there is a state of peace called nirvana, beyond all suffering and poisons of the mind, and 4) that the way that leads to nirvana includes the practice of morality, concentration, and wisdom.

FOUR UNHINDERED WISDOMS (si wu ai zhi): Four eloquent skills in expounding the Dharma by Buddhas and great bodhisattvas: 1) without hindrance in Dharma, the ability to understand the texts and systems of the Dharma, 2) without hindrance in meaning, the ability to understand all subtle meanings of the Dharma, 3) without hindrance in eloquent speech, the ability to eloquently speak in any dialect; and 4) without hindrance in debate, the ability to fully present the Dharma eloquently and appropriately to sentient beings.
HEART SUTRA (Xin Jing): One of the most important sutras of Mahayana Buddhism. It is especially significant in Chinese Ch’an and Japanese Zen schools.

HINAYANA: A designation for the path of individual liberation within Buddhism. A hinayanist would be anyone in any tradition who practices for self-enlightenment or liberation, regardless of whether he or she practices the Northern or Southern traditions of Buddhism.

HUA–T’OU: Lit. the source of words (before they are uttered), a method used in the Ch’an school to arouse the “doubt sensation” (yi qing). The practitioner meditates on such baffling questions as: “What is Nothingness?” “Where am I?” or “Who is reciting the Buddha’s name?” One does not rely on experience, logic, or reasoning. Often, these phrases are taken from kung–ans; at other times they are spontaneously generated by the practitioner. The term “hua–t’ou” is often used interchangeably with the Japanese usage of “koan.”

HUA–YEN (Avatamsaka): Lit. “Flower Adornment,” one of the most important and influential scholastic schools of Chinese Buddhism to develop during the Tang dynasty (618–907). The fundamental teaching of this school is the equality of all things and the unobstructed interpenetration of, and interrelation between, absolute reality with all phenomena.

HUA–YEN JING (Avatamsaka Sutra): A massive Mahayana Buddhist sutra translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in the fifth century, seventh century, and late eighth century. The sutra became quite popular among Chinese Buddhists, who believed that this sutra was a revelation from the Buddha’s enlightenment while still absorbed in the ocean–seal samadhi (hai yin san mei) under the bodhi tree. In China, this sutra eventually became the basis of the Hua–yen school. The Ch’an school has always held it in especially high regard.

KALPA (jie): An old Indian way of calculating an unimaginably long period of time – an eon. These are of various lengths. The basic kalpa is 13,965 years long. One thousand such kalpas constitute a small kalpa (hinakalpa; xiao jie). Twenty small kalpas make a medium kalpa (antarakalpa; zhong jie), and four medium kalpas make a great kalpa (mahakalpa; da jie). The creation, continuation, destruction, and emptiness – four phases of a world cycle – are four kalpas.

KARMA (ye): Lit. “action.” Basically, the law of cause and effect to which all sentient beings – indeed all things – are subject. Karma is broadly construed in Buddhism to include physical, verbal, and
mental actions. It is also the cumulative causal situation affecting one’s destiny as a result of past acts, thoughts, and emotions.

KUNG–AN: Lit. a “public case,” as in a law case. A Ch’an method of meditation in which the practitioner energetically and singlemindedly pursues the answer to an enigmatic question either posed by the master or that arises spontaneously. The question can be answered only by abandoning logic and reasoning, through directly generating and breaking through the “doubt sensation” under natural causes and conditions. Famous kung–an encounters were recorded and used by masters to test their disciples’ understanding, or they served as a catalyst for enlightenment. The term “kung–an” is often used interchangeably with “hua–t’ou.”

MAHAYANA (da cheng): Lit. “great vehicle,” a branch of Buddhism, whose followers vow to attain Supreme Enlightenment for the sake of delivering all other sentient beings from suffering.

MANI JEWEL (mo ni zhu): Symbolic of the precious inherent Buddha–nature (fo xing) in all sentient beings.


NIRVANA (nie pan): Total extinction of desire and suffering, the state of liberation through full enlightenment.

NO–SELF (anatman; wu wo): The Buddha’s central teaching that there is no isolated, self–existing entity that can be grasped as the self; it is merely a conceptual construct from the illusory mind.

PARAMITAS (bo luo mi): “Perfections” or ways for transcendence to liberation. The six paramitas are the main practices of Mahayana bodhisattvas: giving (dana; bu shi), morality (sila; chi jie), patience (ksanti; ren ru), diligence (vira; jing jin), meditation (dhyana; chan ding), and wisdom (prajna; bo re). The ten paramitas, practiced by great bodhisattvas above the Ten Grounds, consist of four more additions to the six paramitas: expedient means (upayakausalya; fang bian), vows (pranidhana; yuan), power (bala; li), and all–knowing wisdom (jnana; zhi).

PLATFORM SUTRA (Tan Jing): A scripture attributed to the seventh century Ch’an master, Huineng (638–713), who was the Sixth Patriarch in the Ch’an school and perhaps the most famous of Chinese patriarchs. He was the founder of the southern school of Ch’an, which emphasized sudden enlightenment.

PRATYEKABUDDHA (bi zhi fo): A self–enlightened being (du–jue), one who has attained liberation from all suffering by contemplating dependent origination (yuan–jue).

RETRIBUTION BODY (bao shen): “Sambhogakaya.” One of the three bodies of the Buddha: body of beatitude – the form of the Buddha that enjoys the fulfilment of vows in the Pure Lands.
SAMADHI (**ding**): Like dhyana, samadhi also refers to states of meditative absorption, but it is a broader and more generic term than dhyana. Although numerous specific samadhis are mentioned in Buddhist scriptures, the term “samadhi” itself is flexible and not as specific as dhyana. In Mahayana sutras, the term samadhi is inseparable from wisdom.

SAMATHA (**she mo ta**): A term designating the practice of calming or stilling the mind. However, in this sutra **samatha** refers to a practice after enlightenment, in which a practitioner emphasizes the cultivation of the still, mirrorlike nature of mind. See the chapter on Bodhisattva at Ease in Majestic Virtue for further inquiry.

SAMAPATTI (**san mo bo ti**): A term referring to the four formless states of meditative absorption. However, in this sutra **samapatti** refers to a practice after enlightenment, in which a practitioner relies on illusory means of delivering sentient beings to eliminate illusions. See the chapter on Bodhisattva at Ease in Majestic Virtue for further inquiry.

SAMBHOGAKAYA: See Retribution Body.

SAMSARA (**lun hui**): The relentless cycle of birth and death and suffering in which ordinary, unenlightened sentient beings are deeply entangled. There are three realms within samsara: the desire realm (**yu jie**), the form realm (**se jie**), and the formless realm (**wu se jie**).

SAMSKRRTA (**yo wei**): With many nuances, **samskrta** can mean activity, production, contrived effort, conditioned things, or any process that results from karma. In this sutra, “practicing with **samskrta**” can mean practicing with attachments.

SASTRA (**lun**): One of the “three baskets” of the Tripitaka. Sastra is a book of treatise, discourse, discussion, or commentary clarifying, or sometimes systematizing, Buddhist philosophical ideas from the sutras.

SRAVAKAS (**shen wen**): Associated with the Hinayana tradition. Literally, “sound–hearer,” one who has attained arhatship or at least the first of the four levels of sainthood from having heard the Buddha’s teaching.

SRIMALA SUTRA (**Sheng man**): A Mahayana scripture, it is outstanding for its commentary on the Tathāgatagarbha theory and for the teaching that all sentient beings have the potential for Buddhahood.

SURANGAMA SUTRA (**Leng yen Jing**): This Mahayana sutra is extremely important in shaping the uniqueness of Chinese Buddhism. It describes twenty-five different perfect penetration samadhis to reach thorough enlightenment, the positive and
negative experiences a practitioner may encounter, and fifty different outer-path practices that one can stray into.

SUTRAS (jing): Generally, scriptures. Specifically, the recorded “open” teachings of the Buddha that can be practiced by anyone. The distinctive mark of a Buddhist sutra is the opening line, “Thus have I heard.” This indicates that what follows are the direct teachings of Buddha, as remembered and recorded by his disciples.

TATHĀGATA (Ru lai): One of the ten epithets of a Buddha, which can mean “thus–come” or “thus–gone.” The Chinese translation of Tathāgata means “thus–come.”

TATHĀGATAGARBHA (ru lai zang): Womb, or store of the Tathāgata – the potential for Buddhahood in each sentient being. Another name for Buddha–nature.

TEN DIRECTIONS (shi fang): An expression for all directions: the four cardinal directions, the four intermediate directions, and the directions above and below.

TEN TITLES OF THE BUDDHA: Thus–come, Worthy of Offering, Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect Clarity and Conduct, Understanding the World, Unsurpassable Worthy One, Instructor of People, Teacher of Heavenly and Human Beings, Buddha, the World Honored One.

TEN POWERS (shi li): The complete knowledge of a Buddha: what is right or wrong in every situation; what is the karma of every being in the past, present, and future; all stages of dhyana and samadhi; the powers and dispositions of all beings; the desire and moral direction of every being; the actual condition of every individual in all the different vehicles of practice; the direction and consequence of all teachings; all causes of morality and the good and evil in their realities, i.e., to know all previous fives of sentient beings and their causes for rebirth; to know the future lives of all beings and their entrance to nirvana; and the destruction of all illusions of every kind.

THIRTY–SEVENTY AIDS TO ENLIGHTENMENT (san shi qi dao pin): The thirty–seventy aids to enlightenment are: four foundations of mindfulness (si nian chu), four proper fines of exertion (si zheng qin), four advance steps to power of ubiquity (si ru yi zu), five positive capacities (wu gen), five forces intensifying the five positive capacities (wu li), seven aspects toward enlightenment (qi jue zhi), and the eight fold noble path (ba zheng dao).

TRANSFORMATION BODY: (hua shen) Nirmanakaya. One of the three bodies of the Buddha, the form that a Buddha manifests to facilitate the deliverence of sentient beings.

TWENTY–FIVE EXISTENCES (er shi wu you): This is a classification
of the samsaric realm of existence: the four continents, the four evil destinies, the six heavenly realms of desire, the four dhyana stages, the four stages of formlessness, the realm beyond conceptualization, and the realm of anagamin (a na han, those arhats who are reborn into the heavens in the realm of form or formless heavens where they will attain nirvana).

TWELVE ENTRANCES (shi er ru): The six sense faculties and the six sense objects, or “dust.”

TWO VEHICLES (er cheng): Paths or approaches to Dharma practice. The two vehicles refer to the vehicles of sravaka and pratyekabuddha.

VAJRA (jin gang): A term that means as indestructible as a diamond and powerful as a thunderbolt.

VEXATION (klesa, fan nao): The innate mechanism to possess and to act, tainted by an attachment to self, which in turn continues the cycle of samsara. Vexations include all kinds of mental states such as joy and resentment, sadness and happiness, as well as greed, hatred, delusion, arrogance, and doubt.

WISDOM–EYE (hui yan): That which perceives the true empty nature of all phenomena.
NOTES

1 Great Illuminating Storehouse of Spiritual Penetration (shen tong da guang ming zang). Spiritual (shen) signifies inconceivability; penetration (tong) refers to nonobstructedness; great illuminating (da guang ming) signifies the manifestation of the Buddha’s merit and wisdom; storehouse (zang) refers to the repository or essence from which all dharmas arise and manifest. One can understand the Spiritual Penetration and Great Illumination as the function (yong) whereas the Storehouse is the essence, (ti).

2 Quiescent–extinction is a rendering for ji mie, which is a Chinese rendering for the Sanskrit word nirvana. Quiescent, ji signifies the stillness of the nature of emptiness; extinction (mie) signifies the purity of nirvana, free from defilements.

3 “Equal and identical” is one of the many shades of meaning of ping deng. Ping can be translated literally as level or equal but also connotes impartiality. In this context, deng may be rendered as identical, same, or indistinguishable. Within the context of time (past, present, and future), the translator has chosen to render ping deng as equal and identical. Elsewhere, the term has been rendered as impartial equality.

4 Literally, this should be translated as “joined his palms together with the tips of the fingers crossed” (cha shou). This is one of the ancient Indian gestures for respect. It symbolizes the nonduality of the realm of the Buddhas (the left hand) and the realm of ordinary sentient beings (right hand).

5 Causal ground (yin di) can also be understood as the mind–ground (xin di). It refers to both the circumstance when the Buddha first initiated the bodhi–mind (chu fa pu ti xin) and to the intrinsic nature of mind (xin xing) or Buddha–nature (fo xing). Original arising, ben qi simply means the fundamental starting point of Dharma practice (fa xing), which refers to the practice that accords with the nature of all dharmas (fa xing), that is, emptiness, (kong xing).

6 Dharani (zong chi) means universal control. See glossary for further information.

7 From the perspective of the result, Complete Enlightenment (yuan jue) refers to the state of Buddhahood. From the perspective of the path, where practice is still necessary, Complete Enlightenment refers to the state reached by bodhisattvas first bhumi and above. From the perspective of the cause, it designates the perfection and completeness of Buddha–nature intrinsic to all beings (yuan man xian cheng zhi fo xing).

8 Ignorance (wu ming) is avidva in Sanskrit. See glossary for further information.

9 The four great elements (si da) are: earth, water, fire, and wind. Together, they constitute the physical body of a living human being.

10 Impressions (ying) may also be translated as reflections or shadows.

11 Tathagatagarbha (ru lai zang) is synonymous with Buddha–nature (fo xing). See glossary for further information.

12 The four conditions (si yuan) of vision, hearing, perception, and awareness (jian, wen, jue, zhi) refer to the ability to experience external phenomena. These four qualities occur because of the illusory six sense faculties. When the internal six sense faculties and the external four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind combine, they create an “energy” (qi) that comes into existence due to these different conditions. In this case, “energy” refers to the conditioned impressions (yuan yin) or mental images of the perceived external sense objects. Because of attachments, this energy or impression does not disperse, and thereafter gives rise to the six
corresponding consciousnesses, or awareness of these impressions. In this process, there
seems to be a separate existing mind which is cognizant of the illusory external world.

13 See glossary for further information about these technical terms.

14 Here, nature, (xing) should be understood as te xing or characteristics and activities.

15 Resolute faith (jue ding xin) is a stage where one’s faith no longer backslides (xin xin
cheng jiu). This is a stage where a bodhisattva has reached at least the first level of the Ten
Faiths. This level in the doctrinal system is referred to as the Path of Seeing. See glossary for
further information on Bodhisattva positions.

16 “In motion” refers to “samsaric.”

17 Illness or yi refers to ignorance.

18 Flower signifies birth and death and nirvana

19 These four terms – affection, love, craving, and desire (en, ai, tan, yu) – are subtle
distinctions of attachment and desire, which, despite their role in the secular world, are all
causes for the continuance of cyclic existence. Here love (ai) should be understood as
attached love (zhi ai) or self–centered love. The translator has simply translated this term as
attached love or grasping in some later passages. The same word is sometimes translated into
like, as in the case of like and dislike, in later paragraphs and chapters.

20 “The different types of births in the world ... are created by sexual desire” points to the fact
that all samsaric beings still have within them the roots and potential of sexual desire (yin yu
xing), and (yin yu xi qi), which perpetuates cyclic existence. This sentence does not mean
that all births literally come into being through sexual activity, because births through
humidity and transformation are not results of sexual activity. Births through humidity and
transformation are either caused by the combination of various conditions in the natural
environment such as moisture, sunlight, and air or by the power of a deity or spirit.
Bodhisattvas can also manifest transformation bodies for the purpose of liberating sentient
beings.

21 Activity is a rendering of xing, which is usually translated as nature, as in “the nature of
Complete Enlightenment.” However in this context, xing refers to te xing, which means
characteristic, quality, function, or activity.

22 Obstruction of principle (li zhang) is an obstruction one may have in understanding or
accepting the ultimate truth or view of Reality.

23 Obstruction of phenomena (shi zhang) refers to all the vexations and afflictions one may
have that bind one to samsara.

24 Here, nature (xing) should be understood as capacities or dispositions.

25 The Two Vehicles (er cheng) are the sravaka (sheng wen) and pratyekabuddha (bi zhi fo)
vehicles.

26 This sentence is difficult to understand because in each case the word xing – sometimes
translated as nature – refers to different things. One interpretation is: even though there are
five distinct natures or capacities as mentioned previously, each nature or capacity is
endowed with the intrinsic nature of Complete Enlightenment. What the sutra is saying is
that the five distinct natures make the nature of Complete Enlightenment possible. For
example, one perceives existence because of nonexistence; one perceives nonexistence only
through existence. Therefore, the five natures are not apart from the nature of Complete
Enlightenment.
“Those who extinguish vexations” refers to sravakas and pratyekabuddhas; “those who do not” refers to bodhisattvas.

“The succession of arising and perishing thoughts” refers to the sixth consciousness (di liu shi). The mind or self is just the continuous stream of deluded thoughts (wang nian). “That which grasps on to the self” refers to the seventh consciousness (di qi shi). Because of attachment, this continuous flux of thoughts creates karmic seeds (ye zhong) which are planted in the eighth consciousness (di ba shi), the alaya (a lai ye shi). Although the alaya cannot grasp itself – it is just a storehouse of karmic seeds – the seventh consciousness attaches to the alaya as the self. See glossary for an explanation of the eight consciousnesses.

There are two sets of five desires (wu yu). The most obvious or coarse desires are for wealth, sex, food and drink, fame, and sleep. The subtle desires refer to the five sense objects. In themselves the sense objects are not defilements, but they are potential objects of desire.

This stage is equivalent to an ordinary person’s realization of emptiness. In the Ch’an tradition, it is referred to as seeing one’s self–nature (jian xing). In the doctrinal system, this is referred to as the Path of Seeing (jian dao wei) within the stages of Ten Faiths (shi xin). After perceiving emptiness, usually one’s realization is not deep enough to eradicate all vexations. Therefore, one is still an ordinary person and still needs to continue ones practice. However, after reaching the position of Ten Faiths, one’s faith will never regress (xin bu tui). Beyond the position of Ten Faiths are the Ten Abodes (shi zhu), Ten Practices (shi xing), and Ten Transferences (shi bui xiang), which elevate one to the level of sagehood (xian wei). After one fulfills all the practices and realizations in the position of Ten Faiths, one enters the position of Ten Abodes, which is the beginning of Path of Practice (xiu dao wei). When one fulfills the three stages of Ten Abodes, Ten Practices, and Ten Transferences, one enters the position of Ten Grounds (shi di) or bhumis and moves to the position of sainthood (sheng wei). This is referred to as the Path of Ultimate Attainment (jiu jing wei). The above are gradual levels of realization and practice. However, depending on the depth of one’s realization of emptiness, it is possible for a practitioner to ascend to the highest position, bypassing (dun chao) the lower stages.

This is the attainment of one of the three positions (san xian wei), of Ten Abodes, Ten Practices, and Ten Transferences, depending on one’s realization. These three positions are all subsumed under the Path of Practice (xiu dao wei).

Illumination is a literal translation of zhao. In this context, zhao refers to understanding, as in understanding (jie) of Dharma. Realization is a rendering for (jue), which can mean awareness of, awakening or realization. In this case, jue refers to realization or perception (jian).

This section refers to the attainment of at least the first stage of the Ten Grounds. At this stage, one’s practice will never regress (xing bu tui). If one attains the eighth ground or bhumi, one’s position will never regress again (wei bu tui).

These are what are known as the Three Higher Studies (san zeng shang xue), which subdue the three poisons of greed, anger, and delusion.

Wisdom of All Aspects (yi qie zhong zhi) is one of three wisdoms of a Buddha. Wisdom of All Things (yi qie zhi), sarvajnata in Sanskrit, is the omniscient wisdom that realizes the emptiness of all things. Wisdom of the Path (dao zong zhi), margajnata in Sanskrit, refers to the wisdom of knowing all there is to know about the conventional realm, especially with regard to saving sentient beings. Wisdom of All Aspects, or Universal Wisdom, sarvakarajnata in Sanskrit, refers to the perfect knowledge of Reality as it is.
“Body and mind” refers to the six sense faculties (liu gen) and consciousnesses (liu shi). “Guests and dust,” (ke cheng) refers to the six sense objects (liu cheng).

At this stage one is free from the bondage of the five skandhas and the eighteen realms of existence.

There are different degrees of “lightness and ease” (qing an). Sometimes it means an experience of physical and mental pliancy. On a deeper level, it is an experience of enlightenment, where one is free from the burden of body and mind. In this case it refers to an enlightened state since it is experienced in the state of quiescence and stillness (ji jing).

In this paragraph, “quiescence” signifies the state of dhyana, while the wisdom derived from “stillness” signifies the previous practice of samatha. Therefore, even though the bodhisattva in this section solely practices samapatti, since the bodhisattva is holding dharani – which means the essence of all methods – he is actually upholding all three Dharma doors of dhyana, samapatti, and samatha.

The nature of enlightenment is quiescent and extinct, free from all dualities. Therefore, this state refers to dhyana.

The essence of all dharma natures is stillness. Therefore, this state refers to samatha.

Phenomena are illusory projections. Therefore, this state refers to samapatti.

“Practices of purity” refers to, on the one hand, severing sexual desire, and on the other hand, the bodhisattva practice of overcoming afflictions and benefiting sentient beings.

Sign (xiang), includes many shades of meaning such as form, mark, trace, appearance, feature, characteristic, aspect, and phenomenon. These words differ slightly in meaning. The translator will choose one of these words to bring out the meaning of the text.

“Principle” refers to enlightenment.

“Realized” (Iiao) in this and next paragraph actually means to be done with or to end.

“Practicing with attachments” is a rendering of you wei, samskrta in Sanskrit. See glossary for further information.

Storehouse consciousness (a lai ye shi) is also known as the eighth consciousness (di ba shi), alayavijnana in Sanskrit.

“Attachment to the dharma of nirvana” (fa at) refers to the arhats who have realized the emptiness of the self (ren wu wo) and have not yet realized the emptiness of dharmas (fa wu wo).

In this context, the Bodhisattva of Universal Enlightenment is referring back to the answer that the Buddha gave to the previous bodhisattva about the teaching as a guiding vision for future practice. Therefore, the translator has taken the liberty to add this line in the text.

“Perfect enlightenment” refers to anuttara–samayak–sambodhi.

Walking, standing, sitting, and lying down.

“Wisdom of Equality” (ping deng xing zhi), samatajnana in Sanskrit, is the enlightened realization that self and others are equal and identical.

“The three kinds of periods of retreat” refers to 120 days, 100 days, or 80 days.

“Counting” is a literal translation of (shu). This approach actually includes methods such
as counting and following the breath, Five Contemplations of Stilling the Mind (wu ting xin guan), Four Foundations of Mindfulness (si nian chu), Sixteen Special Practices (shi liu te sheng) associated with the Four Noble Truths (si shen ti), and Contemplation of the Four Immeasurable Minds (si wu hao xin).

56 The mind of Complete Enlightenment.

57 The seven treasures are: gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, mother-of-pearl, red pearl, and camelian.

58 Thunderbolt.

59 Mahabrahma–devaraja (ta fan wong) is the king or controller of the world of samsara.

60 Twenty-eight heavens are the three realms in samsara. There are six heavens in the realm of desire, eighteen heavens within the realm of form, and four heavens within the formless realm.

61 Yojana (you xun) is a measurement in India. One yojana is approximately forty miles.

62 The eight groups are: devas, nagas, yaksas, gandharvas, asuras, garudhas, kinnaras, and mahoragas.